

# Practical Church Planter Training



*The Alliance for Saturation Church Planting*

**Omega Course:  
Practical Church Planter Training**

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# MANUAL ONE

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# PREFACE

## THE PURPOSE OF THIS MATERIAL

Church planters are often recruited and sent out with little or no training for the task that is before them. Church leaders who are overwhelmed with ministry difficulties often lack a clear vision of what God desires to accomplish through them. Both church planters and church leaders need training and vision, but Bible schools and seminaries are not realistic options for many.

This material is designed to provide not only vision for the church planter and church leader, but also the biblical foundation and practical ministry skills in order to see that vision become reality. It is not an educational "program." Rather, it provides necessary biblical and educational foundations, as well as practical ministry skills, which are required for church planting. Although the *Omega Course* was designed for Central/Eastern Europe and the Former Soviet Union, we've been encouraged by reports that it is already being found useful when adapted for use in other contexts.

This curriculum has been designed to accomplish two goals:

1. To provide the necessary training for churches to be planted.
2. To encourage mobilization in the whole Body of Christ toward a church planting movement.

Today we see church planting movements taking place in many countries throughout the world, including Brazil, Romania, the Philippines, Nigeria, and others. We believe that the local church is God's primary instrument for world evangelization, and that church planting based upon multiplication principles is the most effective means of working towards the completion of the Great Commission. New churches must be planted with a vision for multiplication and the ability to plant other new churches. When this happens, there is potential for a movement of churches which is able to sweep across a nation and transform the lives of people throughout the land.

A church planting movement needs people involved in all levels of the church planting task, from young believers who are excited about their new faith, to leaders of denominations. Church planters by themselves can never be the catalysts for a church planting movement. This material is applicable and has much benefit for all levels of church workers and church leaders who can directly and indirectly support the efforts of church planters as they strive to fulfill the ministry to which God has called them.

## CURRICULUM OVERVIEW

This manual is one of five manuals, each of which contains approximately 26 one-hour lessons. In order to accomplish the goals stated above, the curriculum covers a wide range of subjects that are necessary for the church planting task. These include SCP vision, cell group ministry, discipleship, Church, evangelism, inductive Bible study, leadership, prayer, spiritual character and more.

The curriculum was divided into five manuals in order to provide an ever-expanding approach to the learning process. As each participant completes a manual, he or she spends time before the next manual putting into practice the principles that have been learned. Therefore many of the later sessions build upon principles and skills which have been learned and practiced in earlier lessons.

In other words, the curriculum has been designed to be learned and used in parallel with the actual planting of churches. As the participant actively works towards starting a new church, he or she will need certain skills and knowledge, and will encounter various problems along the way. The skills and knowledge needed at the beginning of the church plant are provided in the first manuals, while the activities and principles needed at a later stage in a church plant are presented in the later manuals. Each manual has been designed to provide skills, answer questions, and discuss potential problems that relate to the corresponding phase of church planting in which the participant is actively working. After this Preface you will find a list of key development activities or "thresholds" that trainees are prepared for and expected to apply between training seminars.

The lessons are grouped by subject, and each of the five manuals includes lessons from some subjects. Some of the themes, such as "vision" and "church" are included in all five of the manuals. Others, such as "discipleship" occur later in the curriculum, when the participant is at the point in his or her ministry when these themes are necessary. A curriculum overview containing a list of the lesson titles for each of the five manuals is included later in this section.



## **USING THE MATERIAL**

### **Advice for the Participant**

Much time, prayer and effort has been put into the preparation of all five of the manuals in this curriculum. Each manual is designed to address specific ministry skills and knowledge that are required during the process of starting a new church. Therefore it is highly recommended that you begin with the first manual, and not with one of the later manuals. In the same respect, each lesson has been carefully chosen and crafted to be useful, applicable and indispensable for the church planting task. It is to your benefit not to skip lessons.

Be aware that real learning takes place when you apply the concepts presented in these lessons to your personal life and ministry. Most lessons include an action plan at the end. These action plans are designed to help you apply the ideas in the lesson and should be completed before you begin working with the next manual. It can be extremely helpful to have a mentor to encourage and advise you as you apply yourself to church planting. A mentor can also serve your need for accountability as you apply the concepts being learned to your life and ministry. Having someone to come alongside you is not only effective pedagogy, but many church planters testify to the help this provides in their life and ministry. Therefore, we strongly encourage you to prayerfully seek some form of mentoring to enhance and strengthen your church planting ministry.

### **Advice for the Trainer**

This material can be used in a variety of settings such as a Bible school, seminary or a church-based seminar. However this is not primarily educational material. It is training material. Education focuses on knowledge and information. The intent of the material is not merely to impart knowledge, but to motivate toward action employing biblically sound ministry skills. This manual is for 'doers.'

Although the method you choose to teach the lessons for each manual will depend on your particular context, each manual can be taught in a weeklong seminar. From this ideal, many training locations have successfully used other arrangements that fit better with the flow of life and existing ministries. They have sometimes opted for two intensive weekends or regular weekly sessions. It is recommended that the action plans at the end of each lesson be emphasized so that they are completed before the next seminar. Four to six months is a reasonable time to expect between seminars. The advantage of this type of training method is that it combines principles learned in the seminar with hands-on practice between seminars.

During seminars it is not necessary to teach every point of every lesson since participants can read the material on their own. Sometimes having trainees read the lesson and interact on how it relates to their own experience is a good method. At other times, a lecture from someone who is an expert in the subject being covered may be the best way to impart the concepts. But **DO NOT DWELL ON THE LECTURE APPROACH**. Be creative as you try various methods to convey the principles and skills contained in the lessons. Other trainers have found variations such as discussion groups, workshops and role playing to be helpful and interesting.

You have a sacred trust. The Lord of the Church wishes to disciple the nations, and leaders are needed. You have the awesome potential of helping to equip many who could foster church planting movements and to facilitate others in ministries of church multiplication.

### **Further help**

Do not hesitate to contact us if we can be of further assistance to you in spreading the vision of saturation church planting or practically equipping church planters.

Jay Weaver, General Editor  
Budapest, Hungary, January 2000  
JayWeaver@compuserve.com

## ABOUT THE ALLIANCE

This curriculum has been prepared by *The Alliance for Saturation Church Planting* in cooperation with Project 250 of Peter Deyneka Russian Ministries. *The Alliance* is a partnership of churches and mission agencies committed to mobilizing believers to saturate each country in Central/Eastern Europe and the Former Soviet Union with evangelical churches. Saturation Church Planting is a strategy that seeks to establish local churches in every town, village and neighborhood so that those who accept Christ will have a local fellowship in which to grow in Christ and be equipped for ministry. *The Alliance* is built on the premise that joining forces will increase effectiveness, reduce duplication, and demonstrate unity within the body of Christ.

### WHAT WE BELIEVE:

- The local church is God's primary tool for evangelism and discipleship.
- Partnership with churches and mission organizations is crucial for the multiplication of local churches and the development of saturation church planting movements.
- Training leaders is essential to church planting and church growth.
- The Lausanne Covenant is the statement of faith for *The Alliance*.

### WHAT WE DO:

#### Church Planter Training and Mentoring

*The Alliance* provides skill-based training in seminar fashion with practical ministry assignments geared towards starting reproducing churches.

#### Information Gathering

Accurate information leads to good decisions in the church planting task. *The Alliance* can help with training and consultation for your information gathering needs in the areas of church planting and church growth.

#### Prayer Movement Consulting

A church planting movement starts with vision, which is discovered and refined through seeking God's heart in prayer. *The Alliance* can help you better understand the role of prayer movements in the church planting task, and how you can facilitate a prayer movement in your region.

#### Vision Casting

What does God want for your country? He wants churches everywhere! *The Alliance* can help foster a vision for new churches with conceptual seminars on the principles of saturation church planting.

### FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:

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# THRESHOLDS

## For the *Omega Course* Church Planting Curriculum

**Thresholds** are concrete ministry activities which have been incorporated into this curriculum. Each threshold can be thought of as an individual stepping stone within the larger process of starting new congregations. The thresholds provide concrete action points which help the trainee to practically apply the concepts contained in the *Omega Course*. They are both milestones that indicate progress, as well as signposts which help give further direction. Following is a list of thresholds and emphases in the *Omega Course*.

### **MANUAL ONE: Emphasis On SCP Vision, Purpose Of The Church, Inductive Bible Study, and Research**

#### **Specific action items:**

- Examining the purpose of the Church in light of the Great Commission
- Developing an overall ministry strategy based on "Z-thinking" vision
- Investigating "form and function" in the early Church and in today's Church
- Learning and practicing inductive Bible study
- Writing and sharing a personal testimony
- Initiating prayer support groups for evangelism and church planting
- Completing a comprehensive research project for the target area

### **MANUAL TWO: Emphasis On Evangelism and Cell Groups**

#### **Specific action items:**

- Sharing of findings from the research project with others in the target area
- Writing a church purpose statement
- Developing a philosophy of church planting ministry
- Developing a personal evangelism strategy, including one-on-one evangelism
- Beginning cell groups with an emphasis on evangelism
- Using inductive Bible study personally and in the cell groups

### **MANUAL THREE: Emphasis On Discipleship, Spiritual Warfare, Teams and Teamwork**

#### **Specific action items:**

- Identifying and training potential leaders for cell groups
- Spending time in prayer and fasting
- Evaluating the worldview of the church planter as compared to the biblical worldview
- Using scriptural truths to withstand spiritual attack in the life and ministry of the church planter
- Creating individual disciple making plans for the people involved in the church planting ministry
- Performing team development and evaluation activities
- Analyzing the spiritual gifts of the church planter and the church planting team

### **MANUAL FOUR: Emphasis On Leadership and Stewardship**

#### **Specific action items:**

- Evaluating the strengths and weaknesses of the church planter's leadership style, with an emphasis on methods of personal interaction with others
- Incorporating principles of servant leadership into the life and ministry of the church planter
- Tracking the use of time in the life and ministry of the church planter, setting priorities, making schedules
- Evaluating the financial giving of the church planter, as well as that of the church plant itself
- Reviewing the biblical roles of a husband and wife and the responsibilities that church planters have to their families
- Leading existing cell groups through the process of multiplication
- Preparing a strategic plan for working towards saturation in the church planting ministry

### **MANUAL FIVE: Emphasis On Multiplication, Mobilizing Others, and Promoting SCP Movements**

#### **Specific action items:**

- Initiating ministry cooperation with other evangelical groups in the target area
- Planning and implementing a supervisory structure for cell groups that will promote ongoing growth and multiplication
- Teaching people to pray for saturation church planting; mobilizing prayer at a city, regional, and national levels
- Developing and implementing a plan for the church planter to train and mentor new church planters
- Empowering and releasing new leaders for church planting ministry
- Promoting a vision in new churches for missionary involvement not only in their target area, but also to "the ends of the earth"



## CURRICULUM OVERVIEW

### MANUAL ONE Overview

Addresses primarily the **FOUNDATIONS** phase of the Church Planting Cycle

SCP Vision (VI)	The Church (CH)	Spiritual Character (SC)	Prayer (PY)	Bible Study Methods (BS)	Evangelism (EV)
<b>Lesson 1:</b> "Z" Thinking  <b>Lesson 2:</b> The Great Commission and Church Planting  <b>Lesson 3 (3A):</b> Church Planting Cycle 3A: <i>Church Planting Models</i>  <b>Lesson 4 (4A,4B):</b> Principles of Research 4A: <i>Understanding Your Target Area</i> 4B: <i>Sample Questionnaires</i>	<b>Lesson 1:</b> Biblical Foundations for the Church  <b>Lesson 2 (2A):</b> The Purpose Of The Church 2A: <i>Great Commission Worksheet</i>  <b>Lesson 3 (3A):</b> Form And Function 3A: <i>Form &amp; Function Applied</i>  <b>Lesson 4:</b> Defining The Local Church	<b>Lesson 1 (1A):</b> Justification by Faith  <b>Lesson 2:</b> Living by the Gospel  <b>Lesson 3:</b> Christian Growth  <b>Lesson 4:</b> The Transforming Power of the Gospel  <b>Lesson 5:</b> Keeping a Spiritual Journal	<b>Lesson 1, 2:</b> Concert of Prayer: Praying for Revival  <b>Lesson 3 (3A):</b> How To Facilitate Prayer 3A: <i>Prayer Triplets</i>	<b>Lesson 1 (1A):</b> Intro to the Inductive Bible Study Method 1A: <i>How We Got The Bible</i>  <b>Lesson 2 (2A):</b> Observing God's Word 2A: <i>The Language of the Bible</i>  <b>Lesson 3:</b> Observation Workshop  <b>Lesson 4 (4A):</b> Interpreting God's Word 4A: <i>Bible Charts</i>  <b>Lesson 5:</b> Interpretation Workshop  <b>Lesson 6:</b> Applying God's Word  <b>Lesson 7 (7A):</b> Application Workshop 7A: <i>Ephesus - an I.B.S.</i>	<b>Lesson 1:</b> Introduction to Evangelism  <b>Lesson 2, 3:</b> Developing Your Personal Testimony
4	4	5	3	7	3

Numbers in brackets ( ) refer to appendices

Addresses primarily the **WINNING** phase of the Church Planting Cycle

## MANUAL TWO Overview

SCP Vision (VI)	The Church (CH)	Spiritual Character (SC)	Prayer (PY)	Leadership (LD)	Cell Groups (CG)	Bible Study Methods (BS)	Evangelism (EV)
<b>Lesson 5:</b> Biblical Foundations of Saturation Church Planting  <b>Lesson 6:</b> Research Workshop  <b>Lesson 7:</b> Mobilizing Resources through Research	<b>Lesson 5:</b> The Nature of the Church  <b>Lesson 6 (6A):</b> Corporate Functions of the Church 6A: <i>Baptism in the New Testament</i>  <b>Lesson 7:</b> Developing A Church Purpose Statement  <b>Lesson 8 (8A):</b> Philosophy of Church Planting Ministry 8A: <i>Developing a Philosophy of Church Planting Ministry</i>	<b>Lesson 6:</b> Living Like Sons Instead of Orphans  <b>Lesson 7 (7A):</b> Learning to be Sons 7A: <i>Orphans vs. Sons</i>	<b>Lesson 4:</b> Concert of Prayer: Worship and Meditation	<b>Lesson 1 (1A):</b> Biblical Principles of Leadership 1A: <i>Leadership Case Studies</i>  <b>Lesson 2 (2A):</b> Profile of a Leader 2A: <i>The Leader</i>	<b>Lesson 1:</b> Functions and Benefits of Cell Groups  <b>Lesson 2 (2A, 2B):</b> Principles of Cell Group Leadership 2A: <i>Cell Grp Ice Breakers</i> 2B: <i>Sample Activities</i>  <b>Lesson 3 (3A):</b> Starting a Cell Group 3A: <i>Planning Worksheet</i>  <b>Lesson 4 (4A):</b> Cell Group Evangelism 4A: <i>About "Oikos"</i>  <b>Lesson 5:</b> Cell Group Demonstration  <b>Lesson 6:</b> Philosophy of Cell Group Ministry	<b>Lesson 8 (8A):</b> Various Ways to Use Inductive Bible Studies 8A: <i>Biographical Study - Barnabas</i>  <b>Lesson 9 (9A, 9B):</b> Leading Inductive Bible Studies 9A: <i>Study of Mt 20:17-28</i> 9B: <i>Study of Lk 15: 1-7</i>  <b>Lesson 10,11 (10A):</b> Workshop Leading Inductive Bible Studies 10A: <i>Passages for IBS</i>	<b>Lesson 4 (4A):</b> Evangelism and Church Planting 4A: <i>Evaluating Evang Strategies</i>  <b>Lesson 5 (5A, 5B):</b> Barriers to effective Evangelism 5A: <i>"A Church in Every People"</i> 5B: <i>Answering Common Objections</i>  <b>Lesson 6, 7 (6A, 6B, 6C):</b> The Process of Conversion 6A: <i>Profile of persons to Evang</i> 6B: <i>Three Principles</i> 6C: <i>Examining Jesus' Approach</i>
3	4	2	1	2	6	4	4

Numbers in brackets ( ) refer to appendices

# MANUAL THREE Overview

Addresses primarily the **ESTABLISHING** phase of the Church Planting Cycle

SCP Vision (VI)	The Church (CH)	Spiritual Character (SC)	Prayer (PY)	Leadership (LD)	Cell Groups (CG)	Evangelism (EV)	Disciple Making (DI)	Spiritual Warfare (SW)
<b>Lesson 8:</b> The First Advance  <b>Lesson 9:</b> Elements of Church Planting Movements	<b>Lesson 9, 10:</b> The Church and Spiritual Gifts  <b>Lesson 11:</b> Social Dynamics of the Church	<b>Lesson 8,9:</b> The Law and The Gospel  <b>Lesson 10 (10A):</b> Repentance as a Way of Life 10A: The Sinner's Place	<b>Lesson 5:</b> Prayer and Fasting  <b>Lesson 6, 7:</b> Concert of Prayer: Praying to Spread the Gospel	<b>Lesson 3:</b> Spheres of Leadership  <b>Lesson 4:</b> Introduction to Team Work  <b>Lesson 5:</b> Team Development	<b>Lesson 7 (7A):</b> Cell Group Discussion Dynamics 7A: Discussion Questions  <b>Lesson 8:</b> Caring for People in a Cell Group  <b>Lesson 9:</b> Training New Cell Group Leaders	<b>Lesson 8:</b> Relational Evangelism	<b>Lesson 1:</b> Introduction to Disciple Making  <b>Lesson 2(2A):</b> Your Role in Making Disciples 2A: Character-istics of Christian Love  <b>Lesson 3(3A):</b> Know Your Goal, Know Your People 3A: Faith, Hope & Love  <b>Lesson 4(4A):</b> Helping Disciples Grow Spiritually 4A: Spir Grth Need Evaltn  <b>Lesson 5(5A):</b> Forms for Disciple Making 5A: Disciple Making Plan	<b>Lesson 1:</b> Understanding Worldview  <b>Lesson 2 (2A):</b> Dynamics of Spiritual Warfare 2A: Study of Eph. 4:17-5:21  <b>Lesson 3 (3A, 3B):</b> Spiritual Battles 3A: Bible Study 3B: Case Studies from Around the World
2	3	3	3	3	3	1	5	3

Numbers in brackets ( ) refer to appendices



Addresses primarily the **TRAINING** phase of the Church Planting Cycle

## MANUAL FOUR Overview

SCP Vision (VI)	The Church (CH)	Spiritual Character (SC)	Prayer (PY)	Leadership (LD)	Cell Groups (CG)	Disciple Making (DI)	Stewardship (ST)	The Family (FA)
<b>Lesson 10 (10A,10B):</b> Strategy Components for a Church Planting Movement <i>10A: Faith and Obedience Vs Fear and Unbelief</i> <i>10B: Things that Promote Natural Growth</i> <b>Lesson 11:</b> Signs of a Movement <b>Lesson 12:</b> Shepherding within a Movement	<b>Lesson 12:</b> Dynamics of the Emerging Church <b>Lesson 13:</b> Characteristics of Growing Churches <b>Lesson 14:</b> Church Government And Church Offices	<b>Lesson 11:</b> Love as the Foundation for Ministry <b>Lesson 12:</b> Understanding the Father's Heart <b>Lesson 13:</b> Grace is for the Humble	<b>Lesson 8,9:</b> Concert of Prayer: Praying Biblically	<b>Lesson 6 (6A):</b> Servant Leadership <i>6A: The Leaders Checklist</i> <b>Lesson 7:</b> Leadership Dynamics <b>Lesson 8:</b> Styles of Interaction <b>Lesson 9:</b> Leadership Needs <b>Lesson 10 (10A):</b> Training New Leaders <i>10A: Qualities to Encourage in a New Leader</i>	<b>Lesson 10:</b> Discussion of Cell Group Questions and Problems <b>Lesson 11:</b> Cell Group Multiplication	<b>Lesson 6:</b> Disciple-making Workshop	<b>Lesson 1:</b> Introduction to Stewardship <b>Lesson 2:</b> Financial Stewardship <b>Lesson 3:</b> Time Management <b>Lesson 4:</b> Strategic Planning Process <b>Lesson 5:</b> Strategic Planning Process Workshop	<b>Lesson 1:</b> Biblical Roles in the Family <b>Lesson 2:</b> Parenting
3	3	3	2	5	2	1	5	2

Numbers in brackets ( ) refer to appendices

Addresses primarily the **MULTIPLICATION & MOVEMENT** phases of the Church Planting Cycle

## MANUAL FIVE Overview

SCP Vision (VI)	The Church (CH)	Spiritual Character (SC)	Prayer (PY)	Leadership (LD)	Cell Groups (CG)	Preaching (PR)	The Family (FA)
<b>Lesson 13:</b> Vision and Telescoping <b>Lesson 14:</b> Mobilization <b>Lesson 15:</b> Next Steps <b>Lesson 16:</b> Training As Part Of A Church Planting Movement <b>Lesson 17:</b> Mobilizing Leaders Through National Initiatives	<b>Lesson 15:</b> Church Discipline <b>Lesson 16:</b> Corporate Worship In The Local Church <b>Lesson 17:</b> How To Lead Corporate Worship <b>Lesson 18:</b> The Local Church and the Bigger Body of Christ <b>Lesson 19:</b> The Historical Impact of the Church in _____ (History of the Church in country context)	<b>Lesson 14:</b> Reconciliation Ministry <b>Lesson 15:</b> Moral Integrity of Church Planters	<b>Lesson 10:</b> Facilitating Prayer for a Church Planting Movement <b>Lesson 11, 12:</b> Concert of Prayer: Thanking God for His Faithfulness	<b>Lesson 11:</b> Releasing Leaders <b>Lesson 12:</b> Movement Leadership 12A: <i>Movement Leaders</i>	<b>Lesson 12:</b> Cells That Saturate Through Local Churches <b>Lesson 13 (13A):</b> Supervising Cells 13A: <i>Final Step</i>	<b>Lesson 1:</b> Biblical Preaching I: Understanding the Message <b>Lesson 2:</b> Biblical Preaching II: Understanding the Audience <b>Lesson 3:</b> Biblical Preaching III: Understanding Yourself	<b>Lesson 3:</b> Ministry to the Family
5	5	2	3	2	2	3	1

Numbers in brackets ( ) refer to appendices

**TOTAL CURRICULUM HOURS: 127**



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# SCP VISION

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SCP VISION

1

LESSON

# "Z" Thinking

## WHAT DOES GOD WANT?

### ☛ Lesson Purpose

The purpose of this lesson is to emphasize the role that vision plays in the church planting cycle.

### ☛ Main Points

- "Z" Thinking involves considering what God wants to see accomplished for His glory in any region.
- Saturation church planting is completing the Great Commission through church planting in such a way that every man, woman and child has a chance to accept or reject the Gospel through the witness of a local church.

### ☛ Desired Outcomes

When the content of this lesson has been mastered, each participant should:

- Have a vision for reaching the world, their nation, their region, city, village and neighborhood with the Gospel.
- Know that it is God's will that every man, woman, and child hear and understand the Gospel and have the opportunity to accept Jesus Christ as their personal Lord and Savior.
- Do church planting with "Z" thinking, or end-result vision.

### ☛ Suggestions to Trainers

"Z" Thinking communicates the idea of a vision for what God *ultimately* wants for a nation, region, city, village, or neighborhood; that is, that every man, woman, and child hear and understand the Gospel and have the opportunity to accept Jesus Christ as their personal Lord and Savior. Consider how to most clearly communicate the idea of end-result vision in your cultural context.

## INTRODUCTION

If Christian leaders were to ask themselves the question, "What is the ultimate end toward which God is working in history?" or "What does God want for the people in the place where I serve Him?"... how would it affect the way they minister there? The answers to these questions should describe the vision and define the tasks of their ministries.

### I. WHAT IS "Z" THINKING?

What is the ultimate end toward which God is working? The answer can be called "Z"—the end result of what God ultimately wants for a nation, region, city, village, or neighborhood. To work towards that end means knowing clearly what "Z" is. The Bible makes it clear that God's love is for the whole world (Jn 3:16). In writing to Timothy, Paul emphasized the need to pray for all men because "This is good and pleases God our Savior, Who wants all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth" (1Ti 2:3-4). Peter also writes concerning this, "He [the Lord] is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance" (2Pe 3:9).

If God wants all people to come to repentance, shouldn't this be our desire as well? Can we possibly be used by God to mobilize others toward this end? What would happen if all the Christians in a country, region, city, village or even a neighborhood were completely convinced that God wanted everyone there to know Him and see Christians living like Jesus in their midst? (1Pe 2:12).

The balance of Scripture indicates that not all will be saved. Our sovereign God alone knows who will be saved. The task of the Church is to make sure that everyone has the opportunity to hear the Gospel.

Before going further, ask yourself these questions:

- What does God want for \_\_\_\_\_? (my nation, region, city, village, or neighborhood). Write the answer in one paragraph.

- How does my answer above affect my ministry? Does what I am currently doing reflect what I believe God wants?

It is easy to see how "Z" thinking can effectively describe the vision and define the tasks for any ministry.

## II. SATURATION CHURCH PLANTING

In order to see "Z," saturation must happen. By "saturation" we mean that it is the church's ministry to reach out to "every person," "anyone," "and everyone" as stated in 1 Timothy and 2 Peter. These passages make it clear that God wants every man, woman, and child to hear and understand the Gospel and have the opportunity to believe in and fully obey Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior. An important part of the Christian life is being a part of a local church where God's Word is believed and taught.

Saturation church planting (SCP) is thoroughly biblical. It is completing the Great Commission through church planting in such a way that every man, woman and child has a chance to accept or reject the Gospel through the witness of a local church. SCP is the vision, strategy, and ministry of filling nations, regions, cities, villages, and neighborhoods with churches that will take the Gospel to every person in their language and through their culture.

Saturation church planting is completing the Great Commission through church planting in such a way that every man, woman and child has a chance to accept or reject the Gospel through the witness of a local church.

### A. Is It Realistic to Expect "Z" from God?

Besides the fact that God wants "Z" more than we do, it is exciting that Scripture clearly promises that "Z" will happen. The promise that God will saturate the world with knowledge of Himself and His glory is stated in Isaiah 11:9, "For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the sea."

In the book of Revelation, the apostle John saw visions of heaven from which we learn about the ultimate result of all God's work in the world, the "Z" towards which all history is moving. John reports seeing multitudes of people from every nation, tribe, people and language worshipping the Lord (Rev 7:9)! Yes, it is realistic to expect "Z" from God.

### B. What Does God Say about "Z"?

In one of his most intimate moments with the Father, Jesus prayed that there would be unity among those who believe in Him, ". . . to let the **world know** that You sent Me and have loved them even as You have loved Me" (Jn 17:23b). Jesus desired that the world would know who He was! This is the "Z"! He repeated this request twice (Jn 17:21-23). Imagine! God the Son in conversation with God the Father discussing "Z"! "Z" is clearly important to God.

### **C. Jesus Taught the Disciples about "Z"**

Jesus taught the disciples "Z" thinking, promising that "... the Gospel must first be preached to all nations" before His return (Mk 13:10). He also promised that the Gospel would saturate the nations in Matthew 24:14 and Luke 24:45-47.

## **III. SOME ESSENTIAL STEPS TO GET TO "Z"**

"A" through "Y" are the things we do in ministry so that "Z" may happen. Scripture gives us some essentials for the "A" through "Y" stage that must take place before "Z" can effectively happen. Notice that these all deal with the elements of "Z." Having "Z" always in mind allows us to make strategic choices as we do "A" through "Y."

### **A. Prayer**

In numerous ways, prayer is clearly an essential part of seeing God's desires fulfilled on earth. Notice the following references:

- 2Ch 7:14 If God's people pray the way they should, "Z" will happen.
- Mt 9:38 God's people are commanded to pray so that workers may participate towards "Z."
- 1Ti 2:1-4 God's people are to pray so that conditions for "Z" may exist. Paul told Timothy that churches should pray for leaders in society to create favorable conditions for the spread of the Gospel.
- Rev 5:8-10 "Z" is the result of "the prayers of the saints."

### **B. Love and Unity**

When Jesus said, "By this all men will know," He referred to love among Christians (Jn 13:35). He made it clear that "Z" requires quality relationships. Only when believers love one another will people know that we belong to Christ. Growing in numbers only causes the world to see us as another religious movement if we lack love.

"That the world may know that you are My disciples" requires that believers be united as Jesus and the Father are united. As Jesus talks about His unity with the Father, He always points to a love relationship and an inseparable connection. He prays that our unity would be a model of that unity between Jesus and the Father, and that we should maintain an inseparable connection with Him (Jn 17:21,23).

### **C. Vision**

As the verses below show, "Z" is a global task and includes all people of all nationalities from all places. "Z" thinking for any one area requires seeing the whole world as God does.

- Because God loves all people, He sent His Son so that "... whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life" (Jn 3:16).
- Jesus is the atoning sacrifice "... for the sins of the whole world" (1Jn 2:2).
- The Holy Spirit "... convict[s] the world of guilt" (Jn 16:7-11).
- The Holy Spirit gives Christians power to witness "... to the ends of the earth" (Ac 1:8).
- Jesus commands his followers to "... go and make disciples of all nations" (Mt 28:18-20).
- Jesus promised that many are ready to receive Him "The harvest is plentiful..." (Mt 9:37).

### **D. Evangelism**

For 'Z' to be realized, the church must send evangelists where there are few or no believers. "Z" requires that people go to those who have not heard the Gospel and deliver the message of salvation. As Paul writes, "... how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them?" (Ro 10:14-15).



Christians must continue to discover where the Gospel has not been preached, and who has not yet heard, in every village, city, region, and country. As believers spread the Gospel and plant churches in and among those places and people, "Those who were not told about Him will see and those who have not heard will understand" (Ro 15:21).

## E. Church Planting

For "Z" to happen, the church has to be everywhere, on display to everyone. Through the church, both the invisible (the spiritual realm) and the visible world will know the manifold wisdom of God (Eph 3:8-11). As the body of Christ, the church is the literal presence of Jesus Christ on earth. As Jesus Christ takes first place in the life of the church, the world will know that He is "head over everything" (Eph 1:22-23).

For "Z" to happen,  
the church has to be  
everywhere, on  
display to everyone.

By "the blood of the cross," people are reconciled to God. In His Church, Jesus Christ brings people together who would otherwise be separated by a "dividing wall of hostility." Among people who formerly lived in hate, "His purpose was to create in Himself one new man out of the two, thus making peace . . ." (Eph 2:13-16).

In the same way that the love and faithfulness of a husband and wife can be witnessed by others in the community in which they live, the relationship between Jesus and His church is on display (Eph 5:22-23).

In the church, as in a body, members are joined to serve "as each part does his work." The work of the body is always for the purpose of making Jesus known. When this happens, the church "grows and builds itself up" (Eph 4:11-13). The full-grown body is one that has members from every nation (Rev 5:9-10).

## IV. "Z" THINKING RESULTS IN "Z" ACTION

### A. "Z" Giving

"Z" thinking requires "Z" giving. Paul quotes Jesus' words when he exhorts the Ephesian elders at Miletus, "It is more blessed to give than to receive" (Ac 20:35). Giving is an important ministry of the church. As Paul, speaking with apostolic authority, commanded the church in Corinth, ". . . see that you also excel in this grace of giving" (2Co 8:7).

The giving church not only heaps for itself credit in a heavenly account, but God provides the church's present needs "according to His glorious riches." By blessing the act of giving in heaven and on earth, God will release the "Z" thinking church to provide the finances for the task (Php 4:15-19).

### B. "Z" Strategy

The great revival leader, John Wesley said, "In every act reflect on the end." Applying "Z" thinking ministry has a tremendous impact. Unfortunately, many servants of God go about their ministry without ever considering the effect of their efforts toward God's "Z." When this happens, it is easy to get into a 'rut' and miss God's blessing. However, the ultimate question "What does God want for the place where we serve Him?" can have an inspiring effect on God's servants. When it is answered, it inspires faith and leads to increased ministry for God.

#### ***An Example of "Z" Thinking in Romania.***

Nelu Sofrac, a church planter in Romania, saw that God wanted more for his county, called Alba Iulia, than the four churches he had planted. He could have been occupied and secure in accomplishing the remarkable feat of planting, leading, and pastoring these four churches but "Z" thinking spurred him on.

He realized that it was impossible for him to reach his county alone, but he knew God wanted to fill Alba Iulia County with churches that preach the Gospel and teach the Scriptures. To accomplish this

effectively, 500 churches needed to be planted in Alba Iulia. Nelu began training fifteen young people from his home church and the new churches he planted. His wife Dorina began a prayer group with three women. He shared his vision with other pastors who were reluctant to accept his message at first. With persistence, and believing that because God wants "Z" for Alba Iulia, He would be with Nelu to work for this end, Dorina now leads fifteen cell groups of women who are praying for new churches, and Nelu leads a multi-church interdenominational outreach called EVANGALBA. This outreach is growing and planting new churches in the county of Alba Iulia by mobilizing existing churches to get involved. Their main activities are prayer, training and evangelizing, and church planting.

The congregations of Alba Iulia are praying, uniting in vision, growing in love, sending evangelists and planting churches in their county. The issue of giving is beginning to take its place and though they see themselves as very poor, some are committed to giving as well.

Nelu's "Z" thinking has given him a nationwide platform. He trains church planters and infuses Christian leaders in other counties of Romania with vision for saturation church planting. He also hopes to be sent out as a cross-cultural missionary outside of Romania.

## CONCLUSION

Saturation church planting is the focus of "Z" thinking because only through the church can the other tasks of praying, lovingly uniting, vision, evangelizing, and giving happen all over the world. Because the church must reach everyone, saturation church planting must drive "Z" thinking. God wants "Z," and when the church works in accordance with God's will, the work of saturation church planting will accelerate. The saturation or filling of nations with churches works toward the goal of all people hearing the Gospel.

## QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION, REVIEW AND APPLICATION

- What is the difference between a "Z" thinking church planter and other church planters?
- Do you pray for whole nations? Regions? Cities? Villages and neighborhoods?
- Do you pray for more workers for God's harvest? If Jesus commanded us to pray for this, will He be faithful to answer if we are faithful to pray? Why are there too few workers?
- Are you willing to work with and love brothers of different denominations and opinions in non-essentials toward "Z"? Will Jesus' prayer for unity be answered or did He pray in vain? Will you be a part of the answer to His prayer?
- Do people on the outside see your church as just another denomination or religion, or as people who love?
- Is your vision to plant one church or to be part of a movement that will fill the world with Gospel-preaching churches?
- Do you excel at financial giving? Does your church excel at giving? Do you teach on giving? If not, since giving is taught in Scripture, why do you not teach it?
- Is the goal of your evangelism only to make your church bigger, or is it also to plant new churches?

## ACTION PLAN

- Begin thinking about a strategy for saturation church planting that includes prayer, unity and love, vision, evangelism, and church planting. Write down some initial ideas and share them with your mentor or the trainer of this session.
- Think about your neighborhood, village, city, region, or country. Consider your answer to the question, "What does God want for \_\_\_\_\_?" List three things that you will do to help see "Z" happen in your area.



SCP VISION

LESSON 2

# The Great Commission and Church Planting

## SATURATION DISCIPLE MAKING

### Lesson Purpose

The purpose of this lesson is to communicate the vision for the mobilization of saturation church planting movements, in obedience to the Great Commission.

### Main Points

- Understanding the Great Commission is crucial to saturation church planting.

### Desired Outcomes

When the content of this lesson has been mastered, each participant should:

- Know why Matthew 28:18-20 is known as the Great Commission.
- Understand how the church will go and make disciples of all nations as it multiplies.
- Understand how church planting fulfills the Great Commission.
- Develop a vision for a saturation church planting movement in his or her nation.

## INTRODUCTION

In Matthew 28:18-20, we learn that there is an ambitious task facing us. The Great Commission is a command that is to be obeyed by every generation of Christians. With this command, Jesus promises His presence until the task is completed. This command is called the *Great* Commission because of the magnitude of the task Jesus commissions His followers to fulfill.

## I. UNDERSTANDING THE GREAT COMMISSION

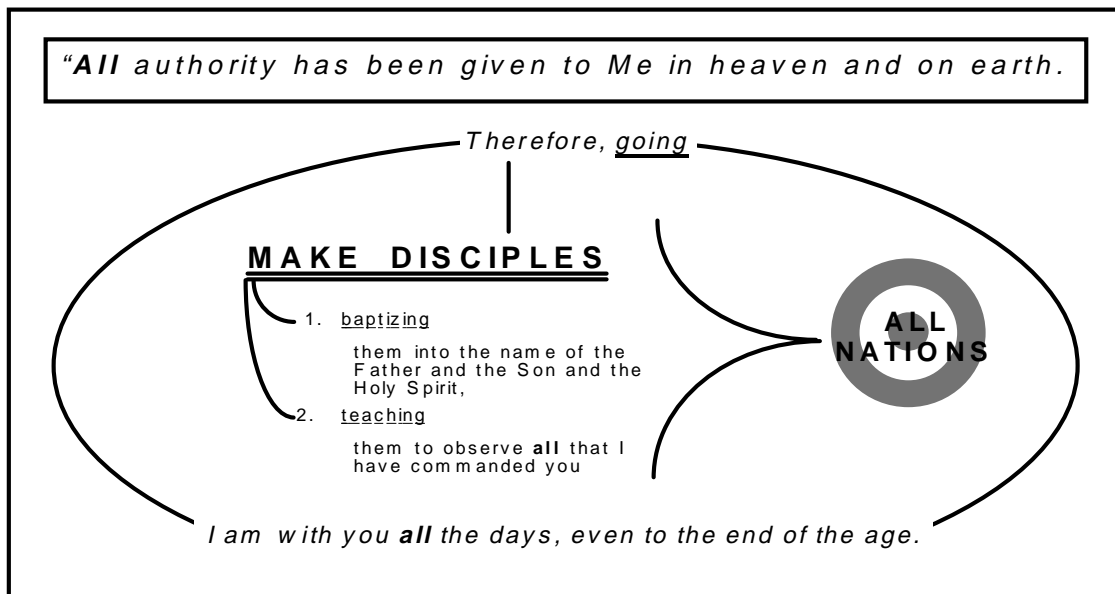
In the Great Commission, Jesus makes clear His purpose for His Church until His return. These words are very important and deserve careful reflection. Below is a literal translation of Matthew 28:18-20 from the original Greek:

*"All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Therefore, going, make disciples of **all** nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe **all** that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you **all** the days, even to the end of the age" (a literal translation of Matthew 28:18-20).*

In the Great Commission, Jesus makes clear His purpose for His Church until His return.

The central and most important word in the Great Commission is "make disciples." As the only imperative verb in the Great Commission, it carries to the greatest extent the desire Jesus has for his followers. Making disciples then is the heart of the Great Commission. Two other verbs, both participles, "baptizing" and "teaching," with their complete phrases, expand and explain the main action "make disciples." The act of making disciples through baptizing and teaching has an object expressed in the phrase "all the nations." The command assumes that the one making disciples is "going." Furthermore, the promise that Jesus is with those who are doing these things "and I am with you all the days, even to the end of the age" surrounds the entire command.

**Figure 2.1 The Great Commission**



#### **A. The Assignment: Make Disciples**

The main emphasis of the Great Commission is on the central command to "make disciples." The main task of the Church then, is to make disciples, not just converts. Two subordinate participles reveal important aspects of the disciple making process.

##### *1. Baptizing - 'turning to Christ'*

Baptism is the public testimony concerning conversion, an indication that someone has been evangelized. In order for a person to become a follower of Jesus Christ, he or she must repent and believe (Mk 1:15; Ac 20:21). Baptism is a sign and seal of regeneration, of forgiveness of sins and of new life in Christ (Tit 3:5; Mk 1:4, Ro 6:3-4).

The Great Commission indicates that baptism is 'into' the Trinity. From this we learn something of the nature of the disciple's new identity. One of the amazing qualities of the Trinity is the community the Father, Son and Spirit share. In a similar way, a believer is baptized into the church community; the community which Jesus desires to have the same kind of unity (Jn 17) as the Trinity.

##### *2. Teaching - 'becoming like Christ'*

Upon conversion, new disciples must be trained concerning whom they have determined to follow. Conversion involves a relationship with a personal God. We are commanded to train converts to be "followers," or "learners" of Jesus, by teaching them to obey His commandments.

It is the task of the church to teach obedience to Christ. Note carefully that the verse does not say the goal is to teach commandments, rather, the goal is to **teach obedience** to all that Jesus commanded. This means churches must teach obedience to the whole will of Christ, leaving nothing out. Partial obedience, which can so easily become the norm, is not sufficient. Rather, we must constantly search the Scriptures, asking ourselves, "Have we obeyed everything that is written here?" And "How can we obey each command more faithfully?" The teaching of full obedience is an ongoing process. Note that it is not a temporary act that *precedes* baptism, but in the text, it *follows* baptism and *continues* throughout the life of the believer.

## B. The Scope: ALL

The Great Commission was not a temporary plan only for those who originally heard it. The reoccurrence of the word "All" indicates its far-reaching application.

### 1. *The basis for the command is Christ's authority.*

Jesus declared His supreme rank in the universe before commissioning His disciples. When someone with authority declares his rank before giving an order, it is to emphasize the importance of the command. Therefore, all those who acknowledge Jesus Christ's authority must obey the Great Commission.

Jesus Christ is the head of the Church (Eph 1:22-23). Those people who acknowledge His headship comprise His body, the Church. The task of discipling the nations is not only the task of the evangelist; it is the task of all who submit to the sovereign authority of Jesus. The Great Commission gives believers a great sense of purpose.

### 2. *The posture of the command is "going."*

The original Greek for the 'going' could easily be translated 'as you are going' or 'having gone.' It assumes that those who obey the Great Commission are "going." In contrast to "coming" to the Jerusalem temple to see God's glory, we go with God's glory within us (2Co 3:18). Jesus did not make disciples in the sterile isolation of a classroom, but in the context of going about life. The ministry of the church ought also to be active—going into the world instead of the world coming to it.

Jesus made it clear that He intended the good news to reach all nations (Mt 24:14). In parallel Great Commission passages (Lk 24:47 and Acts 1:8) we read that the spreading of the Church would begin at Jerusalem. However, since the apostles whom Jesus commissioned remained in Jerusalem, it seems the early church had very little missionary vision until Acts 8. The early church, it appears, only understood the words, "beginning at Jerusalem" and not the words "to all the nations."

- All Authority
- All Nations
- All Things
- All The Days

#### *Going due to persecution*

Jesus will use His sovereign authority to cause the church to go to the nations if necessary. After a time of persecution and the martyrdom of Stephen, the Church began to take the Gospel further out. Acts 8:1 records, *"On that day a great persecution broke out against the church at Jerusalem, and all except the apostles were scattered throughout Judea and Samaria."* Acts 11:19-20 says, *"Now those who had been scattered by the persecution in connection with Stephen traveled as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus, and Antioch, telling the message. . ."* Jesus allowed persecution to cause Christians to do, in response to a crisis, what they should have done on His command.

#### *Going due to obedience*

In Acts 13:1-3, the church in Syrian Antioch was obedient to the Great Commission. As instructed by the Holy Spirit, they sent Paul and Barnabas to Cyprus, where *"they proclaimed the word of God in the Jewish synagogues"* (Ac 13:4-5). From Cyprus, Paul and his companions traveled extensively before returning to Antioch (Ac 13:6ff).

God has given the Church the responsibility of proclaiming the Good News. As Paul writes to the Church in Corinth, "All this is from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: that God was reconciling the world to Himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them. And He has committed to us the message of reconciliation" (2Co 5:18-19). Like the church in Syrian Antioch, the Church should reach out to the nations in obedience, but if the Church is not obedient, Jesus has used crises to accomplish His work.

3. *The target of the command is "all the nations."*

The phrase "all the nations" stands in direct contrast to the last record of Jesus sending out His disciples, at which time the target was the lost sheep of Israel (Mt 10:5,6). Here we are called to take the Gospel to all the nations since Jesus purchased with His blood men "*from every tribe and language and people and nation*" (Rev 5:9). The apostle John had the privilege of seeing this command fulfilled in his vision of heaven that included people from every nation worshipping the Lord (Rev. 7:9).

What is a nation? The Greek word for nations in this text is the word *ethnos*<sup>1</sup>. This is the word from which "ethnic" comes. An ethnic group is a people group united by their language, culture, and customs. A country may contain several ethnic groups within its borders. In order for a saturation church planting movement to be successful, often several nations (*ethnos*) must be reached within a single country. Every ethnic group must be reached in its own language and according to its own culture and customs if we are to obey the Great Commission by taking the Gospel to 'all the nations.'

4. *The duration of the command is "to the end of the age."*

With the words "to the end of the age," Jesus shows that these instructions are for the whole Church until He returns, not just for the twelve disciples. We are to persevere in these three things "to the end of the age," i.e. until Jesus returns for His Church. At which time, Christ will have been "*preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations*" (Mt 24:14).

**C. The Promise**

Making disciples of all nations may seem overwhelming. However, as we go to make disciples, we can go with confidence. We are assured of our ultimate success because Christ now has **all authority** and has promised to be with us in **all the days** to the end of the age. Christ Himself is the guarantee of success, as we abide in Him, depending on His authority and presence (Jn 15:4-17). Jesus gives His Church both her main assignment until He returns and the promise upon which her success is guaranteed!

Jesus gives His Church both her main assignment until He returns and the promise upon which her success is guaranteed!

In the remainder of the New Testament, we see how the early church lived out its obedience to this command. The Apostle Paul, sitting in jail, wrote with assurance to the Philippian church (Php 1:6) "I am confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will bring it to completion until the day of Christ Jesus." Because He recognized that God was at work and that God's Spirit was resident in believers and the believing fellowship, he knew his work was not in vain. That's good news for us as we consider how to fulfill the Great Commission.

**II. THE GREAT COMMISSION AND SATURATION CHURCH PLANTING**

Saturation church planting fulfills the directives and goals of the Great Commission. According to Matthew 24:14, Mark 13:10, Luke 24:45-47 and Acts 1:8, the Great Commission will be fulfilled when there are disciples in every nation. As churches are planted in every nation, disciples are made in that nation.

**A. The Great Commission and The Purpose of The Church**

Fulfilling the Great Commission is the task of the CHURCH. The Church does not exist to serve itself, or perpetuate its own programs but to take the Gospel to "all the nations." The outreach of the church is not just one of many ministries; it is its reason for being. The Church should grow through evangelism and multiply itself through church planting so that more and more people will become disciples of Jesus. Programs and ministries of the Church should be evaluated and

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<sup>1</sup> ἐθνος

developed according to how well they serve this purpose. Do they result in the kind of disciple making that Jesus intended when He gave the Great Commission?

Church leaders should empower members to fulfill the Great Commission by training them to share their faith with the lost, by exposing them to missions realities, and by giving them a vision to pray and to give financially toward the harvest. Church leaders often become so preoccupied with carrying out a ministry themselves that they neglect to train others to do it. However, through training, the ministry can be being carried out by many rather than by only one. Remember that Jesus entrusted His message and His ministry to His disciples, and in doing so, multiplied the impact of His work.

## B. The Great Commission and Church Planting

If the heart of the Great Commission is making disciples of the nations, then we must continually search for the best methods to accomplish this. After all, many have devoted their lives to the fulfillment of the Great Commission. It is prudent to compare several ministry methods to fulfill the Great Commission. Do they each reflect the principles demanded by the Great Commission? Do they honor all of the intentions of the Great Commission? Which methods best make disciples according to the Great Commission? To help answer this question, we will look at three methods of ministry to see how they compare in the accomplishment of the Great Commission.

The first method for comparison will be the established church. For purposes of this lesson, an “established” church will be defined as one that is more than 10 years old. The second method is called “non-church outreach.” Non-church outreach is a term used to describe any non-church oriented evangelistic effort such as traditional crusades, radio evangelism, etc. The key idea is that it is a type of evangelistic outreach that does not originate in the church and is not oriented (necessarily) towards a local church. The third method we will explore will be a new church plant. By church planting, we mean making contacts, leading people to repentance, instructing converts, baptizing them, and beginning worship services resulting in congregations that fulfill the New Testament functions for followers of Jesus.

**Figure 2.2 The Great Commission and Church Planting**

<b>GREAT COMMISSION</b> <i>Principles:</i>	<b>EVANGELISM</b> <i>“Baptism” Turning to Christ</i>	<b>TEACHING</b> <i>“Teaching Obedience” Becoming like Christ</i>	<b>Result:</b>  <i>“MAKING DISCIPLES”</i>
<b>Established Church</b>	<b>NOT ALWAYS</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>MAYBE...</b>
<b>Non-church Evangelism</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>NOT ALWAYS</b>	<b>MAYBE...</b>
<b>Church Planting</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>YES!!</b>

As seen on figure 2.2, comparing these three methods reveals that church planting best fulfills the Great Commission. Established churches often emphasize discipleship without effectively making new converts, while non-church evangelism produces converts but often without sufficient emphasis on teaching (certainly there are exceptions in both of these cases). Church planting, however, combines both of these elements, making new converts and then providing a natural environment for their discipleship.

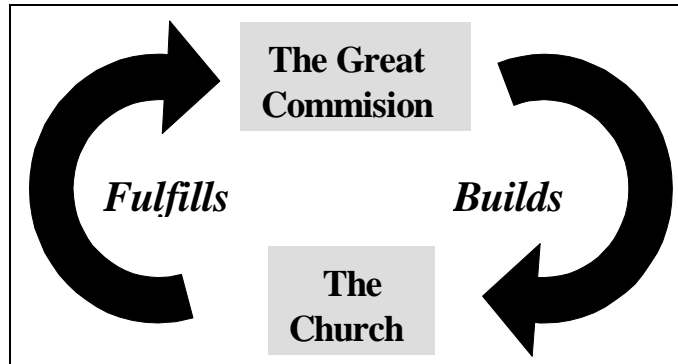
Obviously, many methods are used to fulfill the Great Commission, any of which could be compared to church planting. The examples listed above were used simply to highlight the fact that church planting

Church planting deserves ever-increasing priority due to the fact that it best embodies the Great Commission given by our Lord.



completely fulfills both the principles and intentions of the Great Commission as new disciples are made through evangelism and discipleship. Other methods are available, but church planting deserves ever-increasing priority due to the fact that it best embodies the Great Commission given by our Lord.

**Figure 2.3 The Great Commission and the Church**



## CONCLUSION

The Great Commission is a command to make disciples as we baptize new converts and teach them obedience to Christ. Our task involves going out into the world to make disciples in all ethnic groups, not waiting for them to come to us. Our authority and assurance is in Christ Himself, who promised to be with us until the task is completed.

The Church exists to make disciples in all nations and thereby fulfill the task that Christ gave. All ministry programs and efforts should in some way contribute towards this goal. The Great Commission will be completed as the Church recognizes the authority of Jesus Christ and is obedient to the task He has given.

A new church plant fulfills the command to “make disciples” through evangelism of new converts, followed by ongoing discipleship and training of the new believers. Churches that understand their purpose and reason for existence will start new churches with this same reason for being, and in doing so will provide the means to reach “all the nations” with the Gospel. Church planters and all who are involved in starting new churches are in a very unique and strategic ministry, since it so completely embodies the principles taught in the Great Commission. To put it simply, church planting is the best method for fulfilling the Great Commission.

Our task involves going out into the world to make disciples in all ethnic groups, not waiting for them to come to us.

## QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION, REVIEW AND APPLICATION

- Have you accepted the authority of Christ by carrying out the Great Commission? Does your church understand the authority of Christ’s command to “go and make disciples of all nations?” Are they driven by this purpose?
- How can you help mobilize your church to fulfill the Great Commission?
- Does your church respond to the Lord’s authority by discipling your nation and other nations?
- Will Jesus still use persecution, economic crisis, and/or obedience to fulfill the Great Commission?
- Have you chosen to “go” out of obedience, or are you waiting for a crisis?
- Are you focusing your church planting work on making followers of Jesus, or growing your denomination?
- Do you and those you train have a vision to reach all the nations?
- Do you train people for practical obedience, or is your teaching mostly theoretical?

## **ACTION PLAN**

Develop and disciple a group of people to pray for your nation and for other nations, start giving money to national and foreign missions, and begin the first steps of church planting with a vision for reaching all the nations.



SCP VISION

LESSON 3

# Church Planting Cycle

## GETTING THE BIG PICTURE

### ☛ Lesson Purpose

The purpose of this lesson is to introduce the “Church Planting Cycle,” emphasizing the critical phases involved in a local church plant and a church planting movement.

### ☛ Main Points

- The church planting cycle should not be a haphazard series of events.
- The church planting process includes laying a foundation, winning the lost, establishing believers into fellowships, training them in ministry, and multiplying congregations, resulting in a movement of new churches.
- The goal of church planting is not just one church but a movement of churches in the target region.

### ☛ Desired Outcomes

When the content of this lesson has been mastered, each participant should:

- Understand the course of church planter training and the church planting process.
- Be able to identify six critical phases in the reproduction of churches.
- Understand that the goal of saturation church planting is not just one new congregation, but multiple churches and a church planting movement in each country.

### ☛ Appendix

3A Church Planting Models

### ☛ Suggestions to Trainers

Make a transparency or poster from figure 3.1 and refer to it at the beginning of each training session to remind church planters where you are currently in your instruction and where you are headed in the church planting process.

Discuss with the trainees the various church planting models described in Appendix 3A. Which of these models have proved successful in their context and which have not? Which ones seem to lead more readily to church planting movements?

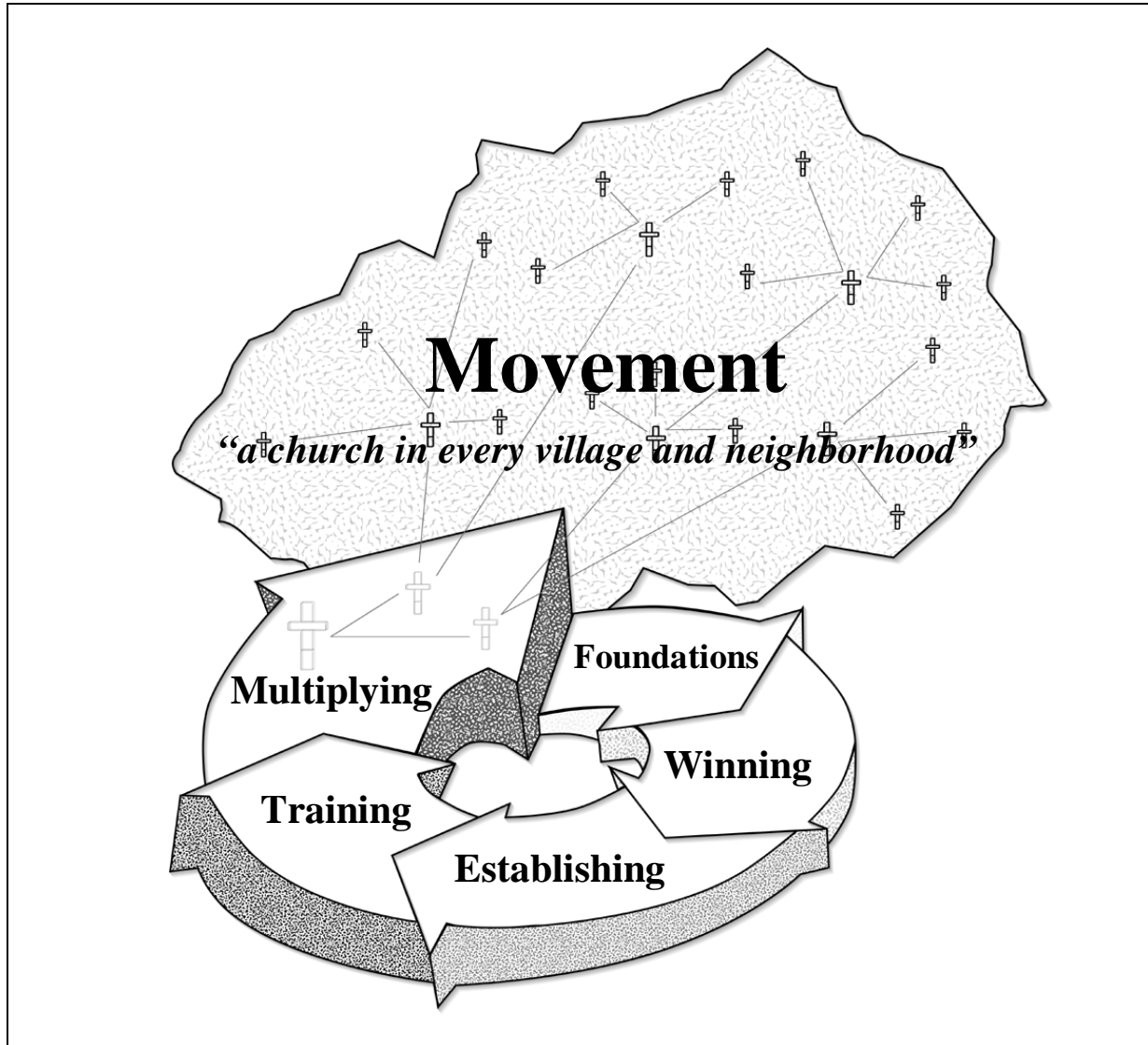
## INTRODUCTION

Engineers often use models to communicate an idea. A blueprint is an example of a model an engineer might use. By looking at a blueprint, an engineer is able to see how the various aspects of a building work together and relate to one another before the building is actually constructed. It is also used as a guide for how to construct the building. It allows the engineer to more easily visualize in what order the separate components of the building should be assembled.

In the same way, saturation church planting is not a haphazard series of events. It is a goal-driven process. The goals of the saturation church planting process can be stated on several different levels, depending on the vantage point to the process. People must be won to faith in Christ and nurtured and established in local communities of believers. Leaders must be trained to assume the direction and development of the church. Maturing churches must multiply themselves through new church planting efforts. The result of all this is that your region and nation be filled with vibrant, reproducing churches. Indeed, the ultimate goal is that the bride of Christ be prepared for eternity with Him.

The “Church Planting Cycle” (Figure 3.1) is a diagram of the church planting process that visualizes, from a particular point of view, the interrelationship of the key principles and practices at work within that process. Appendix 3A contains different models of ways in which this process has been applied to plant churches.

**Figure 3.1 Church Planting Cycle**



## I. PHASE I—FOUNDATIONS

The beginning can be critical in any complex process. Church planters begin the church planting process by developing the personal walk with Christ needed to be a minister of the Gospel. The apostle Paul warns against building on any other foundation other than Jesus Christ (1Co 3:11). Taking this for granted only leads to ministry failure.

Not having a clear picture in mind of the church to be planted can stifle the church plant. Therefore, clarifying vision and making strategy plans for the church plant are crucial at this level. Research is an important part of this. Strategic information about the harvest force and the harvest field will help shape strategy. The goal of the research is to gain understanding of those people the church planter desires to reach... and also to learn what resources are available to reach them.

### A. Key Scripture Verse

*"By the grace God has given me, I laid a foundation as an expert builder, and someone else is building on it. But each one should be careful how he builds. For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ" (1Co 3:10-11).*

### B. Activities and Goal

#### **Activities:**

- Establish the vision with prayer.
- Research the target population.
- Develop personal confidence in your faith.
- Develop personal confidence in Bible study.
- Begin to determine church planting strategy and methods.

**Goal:** Prepare yourself, your vision and the direction for the church planting mission.

### C. Key Issues To Consider In This Phase

- What is the mission of God on earth? How does the church fit into that mission?
- What is my personal harvest field? What does God want from me in my area?
- What are the unique aspects of the calling and vision that God is giving me?
- What kind of church is able to meet these needs? Should it be reproducible?
- What are the main hindrances to reproductive church planting?
- Who is going to help? Who is the harvest force? How do we do research?

## II. PHASE II—WINNING

Evangelism never stops in the church, yet this distinct stage is a period when the church planter focuses almost exclusively on evangelism. The church planter's example during this phase will be key in being able to lead and equip others to do evangelism in later stages.

It is impossible to plant a church without evangelizing. Too often, church planters focus on finding other Christians to be in their new church, rather than on focusing on personal evangelism. Not spending necessary time relating to non-Christians, and just hoping that God will send them to the new church, rarely yields evangelistic fruit.

Church planters should start evangelistic groups that focus on building relationships, and include discussions on how the Bible applies to life situations, prayer for personal needs, and encouragement. If people are not used to sharing on a personal, open level, this must be developed over time. Spending time individually with members of the cell groups will deepen relationships and improve the fellowship. Cell group leaders should seek to develop group leaders as soon as possible. Meetings should be kept simple so that they will be reproducible. If they are dependent on the leader, his style, or knowledge then it will be difficult to find leaders later.

### A. Key Scripture Verse


*"Though I am free and belong to no man, I make myself a slave to everyone, to win as many as possible. To the Jews I became like a Jew, to win the Jews... To the weak I became weak, to win the weak. I have become all things to all men. so that by all possible means I might save some. I do all this for the sake of the Gospel, that I may share in its blessings" (1Co 9:19-23).*

### B. Activities and Goal

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**Activities:**

- Contact key leaders and build relationships.
  - Evangelize the lost.
  - Start evangelistic group Bible studies.
  - Model ministry for the converts.
  - Disciple new converts in obedience to Christ.
- 



**Goal:** Contact and evangelize key members of the target population.

### C. Key Issues To Consider In This Phase

- What evangelistic methods are most effective for us to reach our goals?
- How do we make contacts with key leaders? Who are they? How do we find them?
- How do we train new converts to be witnesses to their friends and family?
- How do we begin to disciple them and prepare them for ministry? What and how do we teach them?
- How do you discover their network of friends and begin evangelizing them?
- How many cell groups should we start before we gather them in a larger meeting?

### III. PHASE III—ESTABLISHING

Though it may take a year or more to get to this phase, many church leaders consider this to be the place where the church is officially and formally 'born.' Establishing the group as a local church has its own set of unique dynamics. By this phase, cell groups should be growing and multiplying and can begin gathering together for celebration services, even initiating regular public worship. If it is appropriate, a hall may be rented for this, but be aware that this is often done too soon. Church planters should have several strong cell group meetings with about 30-40 people attending before renting a hall. Cell groups continue even after the large worship gatherings have begun and are still the foundation for nurture and growth of the church.

The discipleship focus continues throughout the life of the church. But during this stage, the church planter especially emphasizes discipleship in the lives of the new converts, thereby setting a pattern for future on-going discipleship. A common problem during this phase is not adequately understanding new Christians. Some church planters expect new converts to need exactly what everyone else needs, or they are not prepared to give new Christians a step by step approach to spiritual growth. Others may be too hard on new Christians, enforcing rules and legalistic practices without grace, or seeking maturity too quickly from spiritual babes. Acceptance and patience are key attitudes in helping young Christians.

#### A. Key Scripture Verse

*"And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds. Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another - and all the more as you see the Day approaching" (Heb 10:24-25).*

#### B. Activities and Goal

##### **Activities:**

- Disciple converts.
- Mentor emerging leaders.
- Expand evangelism efforts through the network of friends.
- Multiply cell groups.
- Begin ongoing regular worship.

**Goal:** *Gather converts and all participants for celebration services.*

#### C. Key Issues To Consider In This Phase

- How will new cell group leaders be trained and released?
- When do we baptize converts? When and who gives them communion?
- How do you establish new converts in the assurance of their salvation?
- How will you establish 'body life?' How will new believers be assimilated into it?
- When we gather, where do we meet? How do we invite people?
- What forms will we use to reach our intended purpose? What style of worship will we use?



#### IV. PHASE IV—TRAINING

During the first three stages of the new church, the mission worker often takes the bulk of responsibility for the church, much like parents have to do the bulk of the work in a family with young children. In the same way that children need to take on more and greater responsibility as they grow, so the converts need to take greater responsibility as they mature. During this phase, the church planters pass on the responsibility for evangelism, discipleship and new leadership roles.

Through first trusting in the Lord, the church planters must have enough confidence in others to prepare them to lead ministries of the church. God has gifted every believer, and all have a responsibility to serve. If the church planter does not take the time to delegate responsibility, provide training and release others into ministry, then the church will not grow beyond the capacity of one to pastor and minister to others. He is stretched beyond his limits, and new Christians simply cannot find a home in the new church. People in the church can grow disillusioned too, without significant responsibility for ministry to motivate them to stay involved. They become spectators. Poor models in the culture allow for this in Eastern Europe.

If the church planter does not take the time to delegate responsibility, provide training and release others into ministry, then the church will not grow beyond the capacity of one to pastor and minister to others.

##### A. Key Scripture Verse

*"And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others" (2Ti 2:2).*

##### B. Activities and Goal

###### **Activities:**

- Build a profile of leaders needed in each area of ministry.
- Identify the spiritual giftedness of all members.
- Train cell group leaders.
- Assign and release leaders to ministry.
- Organize the structure and ministry positions you envision for the ministry.

**Goal:** Train leaders and church workers to train others.

##### C. Key Issues To Consider In This Phase

- How do we get new converts to discover their spiritual gifts? Who will train them?
- What are the areas of training that are needed? Where and how will this training be provided?
- Who are the potential key leaders? What are their gifts and abilities? Are they faithful, serving people?
- Where will those trained have a ministry? What are the basic needs and issues in that area? When will their ministry in that area begin? To whom will they report? What is their job description?

## V. PHASE V—MULTIPLYING

For the Great Commission to be fulfilled, multiplication should be a normal part of church ministry at every level. A good Bible teacher does not seek to produce only students, but more Bible teachers. The mark of a good leader is not only followers, but also new leaders. The ministry of an evangelist does not result in only new converts, but in new evangelists. In the same way, once a church has been established, multiplying and producing daughter churches should become the norm.

Rather than multiply, many new church leaders are tempted to focus on maintaining or adding to what they already have. They may become satisfied with the size of the church, and not really press on to do the work of multiplication. The desire to build a building as part of being “a church” is often overwhelming by this phase.

These leaders need to realize that there is a limit to growth. In nature, all living things sooner or later plateau, and even die, while their fruit or offspring live on. The principles are similar in church ministry. In a sense, the true ‘fruit’ of a church is not a new convert, but a new church. The most effective way for a church to have a wider impact is through reproducing itself, planting daughter churches. The best leaders for the daughter churches come from within the church itself, rather than from a distant place such as a seminary or Bible school. Leaders need to encourage vision for multiplication so that more churches can be established in the city and region.

### A. Key Scripture Verse

*“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth” (Ac 1:8).*

### B. Activities and Goal

#### **Activities:**

- Coach leaders to form church planting teams.
- Train workers for several levels and various ministries.
- Research new regions where you feel led to start ministry.
- Plan and conduct strategic evangelistic efforts.
- Establish and appoint leaders for the organizational part of the ministry.

**Goal:** Establish a base of leaders to form church planting teams.

### C. Key Issues To Consider In This Phase

- What research needs to be done? Who will do it? Are there ethnic populations nearby that are still unreached with the Gospel? Are there potential leaders among them that can be trained?
- What goals need to be set and published? Who is heading up the prayer effort to support this ministry?
- Who assigns and oversees all new ministries? Who will train them in continuing education?
- Are there other ministries that could be included in this effort? Who should invite them to join forces? What special contribution will they make to the overall mission effort?
- Do we need any higher education ministries to train different levels of leadership for this movement? Who will do the training? How will it be financed?

## VI. PHASE VI—MOVEMENT

The goal of church planting is not just one new congregation, but multiplying churches in each and every region. A church planting movement can be described as the planting and growing of churches in a particular region in an unusually rapid fashion under the direction of the Holy Spirit. Church planting movements are characterized by the unity, training and mobilization of the whole body of Christ, and common vision and goals.

Paul, the Apostle and church planter was used by the Holy Spirit to lead a church planting movement in Asia. Having planted a church in Ephesus, he spent two years there training disciples in the hall of Tyrannus. He worked in such a way that *"all the Jews and Greeks in Asia heard the word of the Lord"* (Ac 19:10). The Churches that were planted in Asia (Ephesus, Colossae, Laodicea, Myra, Hierapolis, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyratira, Sardis, Philadelphia, etc.) give evidence to this church planting movement and were the basis for Paul's statement that all of Asia heard the word of the Lord.

Church planters and leaders should establish their ministries with vision for a Church planting movement. Modern examples of this are available as the Gospel is being spread through church planting movements in several countries around the world today. Through studying these movements in light of biblical ministry principles, church planters can begin with the end in mind, greatly increasing the impact.

### A. Key Scripture Verse

*"...for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea" (Isa 11:9).*

### B. Activities and Goal

#### **Activities:**

- Cover all ethnic pockets of the population.
- Establish guidelines for the propagation of the movement.
- Determine cross-cultural mission projects the groups will sponsor.
- Conduct prayer and praise rallies.
- Set regional and/or national goals.
- Establish higher levels of training for key leaders of the movement.

#### **Goal:**

*Churches multiplied to saturate the region, nation and beyond.*

### C. Key Issues To Consider In This Phase

- Is the movement self-propagating, self-supporting, and self-governing? If not, what needs to be done to make sure that it is?
- What regions or peoples are still unreached? What mission projects is the Lord leading us to initiate?
- What kinds of training are needed for the movement? How will it be supported?
- Who are the "apostle type" leaders for the movement? How do we work together with them? How can we encourage and support them? What are their needs?

## QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION, REVIEW AND APPLICATION

- What seems like the most difficult phase for you and your church planting situation?
- How does the church planter's role change over the course of the process?
- Why is it important that the church multiply itself?
- How long do you suppose it will take to get to the movement phase in your context?
- Are there ministry efforts in your region (evangelism, discipleship, training) that are not part of the church planting cycle? How could these ministries become part of the church planting cycle?
- Consider the various church planting models described in Appendix 3A, "Church Planting Models." Which of these have been tried in your context? Which ones have been successful and which ones have not?

## ACTION PLAN

Together with those you are working with in your church planting effort, answer each of the questions listed for each of the phases of the cycle. At this point in the church planting process, it is understood that you cannot realistically answer all the questions. However, answering them as best as you can will be very good preparation for later ministry.

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APPENDIX

3A

# Church Planting Models

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*There are many ways to plant churches; context usually determines what works best. Below are several models. Undoubtedly, your church planting situation could include elements from several of the models described here.*

## I. THE DAUGHTER CHURCH MODEL

This daughter model is probably the most widely used and is usually the one that comes to mind when the subject of church planting is raised. This model offers the greatest likelihood of a healthy, growing church plant since the mother church provides resources, support and accountability from the beginning. There are three common situations that stimulate the planting of a daughter church.



### A. Members Come From Another Geographic Area

If a number of people participating in a particular church travel from outside the area that the church primarily serves, the church may see that as an opportunity to plant a new church by sending out a group from the mother church.

### B. There Is A Need For Different Styles Of Worship

It is possible that the style of worship in the mother church works well for many, but there are others in the church and in the community who would respond better to another style of worship. If the new style cannot be introduced into the church without causing disruption, then a daughter church in the same building or nearby is a good option. The daughter church may attract unchurched people who enjoy the new style of worship.

### C. There Is A Desire To Reach Other Socio-Economic Groups

Even when a church is growing and reaching new people in a given area, it still might be failing to reach certain groups of people in the region. Difference of class, race or age can be such that some would not feel comfortable worshipping in a particular church. The needs of these groups may call for a new church that will accommodate their cultural norms and minister to them more successfully.

## II. CHURCH PLANTING ON THE 'STRAWBERRY RUNNER' PRINCIPLE



In nature, a strawberry plant will send out stems, or shoots, above the ground a short distance from itself. This stem is called a 'runner.' A new daughter plant often develops at the end of the runner. In time, the daughter plant will send out runners itself to start other plants so that there are several individual plants, but they are all interconnected by runners.

Some mother churches plant new congregations which are not intended to become independent churches, but which have a measure of independence and a degree of continuing relationship. Such congregations are close enough geographically to the mother church so that they can meet together for joint services weekly or monthly. Thus, for example, the various congregations might meet separately for morning worship and have a joint evening celebration.

## III. CHURCH PLANTING BY ADOPTION

Sometimes an existing group (prayer group, cell group, or Bible study group) invites a congregation or denomination to take over their work. The adopted group looks to their chosen mother church to supply vision, direction, leadership and sometimes additional resources of money and/or people so that they can begin to function as a church.

## IV. MODELS FOR PLANTING CHURCHES AT A DISTANCE

### A. Church Planting by Colonization

The colonization model is where one or a number of couples are sent out to a location some distance from the sending church to begin a new work. In such a situation the distance involved is often so great that the mother church does not send out a large group of members because this model requires the pioneers to have new homes and possibly employment in the area of the new church plant.

### B. Planting Using an Evangelistic Mission Team

Some denominations and agencies use mission teams to provide leadership and assistance during the church planting process. A small team of two to five might stay for a year in a particular region to evangelize, lead cell groups and launch a church. They may receive backup from short-term teams during this year.

### C. Planting a Church by Means of a Special Event

Some groups use crusades or the Jesus film as a means of planting churches. This may start with a small group of strong believers in an area where there is no church. Ideally, a part-time pastor or evangelist may lead the group to develop new contacts. Wherever possible, new converts are made so that a group of at least twenty people is formed before the evangelistic crusade takes place. Volunteers from elsewhere may publicize and help lead the event, which can last from one week to a month. The goal might be, for example, to see at least fifty new converts totaling seventy people with a pastor already in place, in order to create 'an instant church.'

## V. PLANTING WITH AN INDIVIDUAL

### A. Planting with a pioneer

Some individuals are, by nature, pioneers. They simply have to start churches! It seems that even if they were marooned in the desert with no one around them, somehow they would discover water and cultivate an oasis in order to draw people to them. Such people can often see the potential for a church in places where nobody else even imagined one. Pioneers are all different. Some are able to work with a large denomination or a church planting agency. Others are so active that they find it difficult to fit into organizational structures and so work best on their own. Pioneers may start many churches in their lifetime. Once a congregation is established, it is time for pioneers to move on. To stay would be detrimental to what they started because they do not have the giftedness to maintain things.

### B. Planting with a founding pastor

Often, those with pastoral gifts, when moved by compassion and vision, also plant churches. They may not have all of the gifts needed to plant a church. But the gifts that they do not have will be evident in the lives of the members of the broader team. These church planters lead the team over a long period of time so that, once the church has been established, they stay on as the long-term pastor.



## SOURCES

Robinson, Martin and David Spriggs. *Church Planting, The Training Manual*. Oxford, England. Lynx Communications, 1995.

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4

LESSON

# Principles of Research

## INFORMATION FOR STRATEGIC PURPOSES

### ☞ Lesson Purpose

The purpose of this lesson is to understand the role of gathering and analyzing information for developing effective church planting strategies.

### ☞ Main Points

- Research is gathering information for strategic purposes.
- Research is a biblical concept.
- Church planters can use research to develop strategy and mobilize resources.

### ☞ Desired Outcomes

When the content of this lesson has been mastered, each participant should:

- Be able to identify, train, and empower researchers to collect and use information to fuel vision and compassion for the church planting task.
- Be able to initiate a research project in a church planting target zone.
- Know the need for and potential of research to motivate and prepare people for church planting.

### ☞ Appendices

- 4A Understanding Your Target Area
- 4B Sample Questionnaires

### ☞ Suggestions to Trainers

If possible, have a sample survey, a map and a local case study. These visual aids will help to encourage research. Also, students will be required to do the research assignment contained in Appendix 4A. Allow time to discuss this assignment with the participants.

## I. WHAT IS RESEARCH?

### A. Research Is a Way of Gathering Information

Research is a tool that helps mobilize churches toward fulfilling the Great Commission. It helps agencies and churches know where churches need to be planted, and which methods of evangelism are successful / unsuccessful among various people groups. Research also helps Christian workers understand the big picture of what God wants to do in their nation or people group, helps them to stay focused on the task of fulfilling the Great Commission, ensures that their strategies remain flexible and effective, and helps them to know when the job is complete.

As the people of God prepare to do a task in an unknown place, information is a bridge from the known to the unknown. Information helps them make the difficult first step of faith.

Before entering into the unknown venture of missionary church planting, Paul and Barnabas went to Cyprus, Barnabas' home, where he knew and understood the situation firsthand (Ac 13:4-5). The more familiar people are with any area, the more confidence they will have working there. Research gives knowledge, which can become a bridge from the known to the unknown. When



doing research, it is advisable to practice our research techniques in a familiar place before moving on to study unknown places.

The goal of research is not to determine whether to plant churches, but simply how to plant churches most effectively. Jesus plants His church through those who venture to do church planting. Since He has commanded His church to grow and multiply, His church must obey in the most realistic and responsible manner, working from realistic and clear data.

Research of the **harvest field**, the area where church planting will be done, and the **harvest force**—those who will be active in church planting—leads to a conclusion. This conclusion can be called, the “call to action.” It is the sum of what research has discovered, interpreted from God’s perspective. For example, the “prophetic word” for Joshua was “take possession of the land” (Jos 1:1-11).

## **B. Research Has a Biblical Basis**

Often when God called people to new ministries, He first led them to take stock of the situation around them. In each of the cases described below, research was part of God’s plan to do His work in a specific time and place with specific people.

- In the book of Numbers, God commanded Israel to fight. Numbers 1:1-46 is an account of available men to fight in the army. God promised Israel victory, but He still demanded that they count the available soldiers to carry on the fight. This allowed Israel to organize their people for possessing the land. For church planting, information obtained from research about those who are available to do the task is a necessary tool for organization.
- God commanded spies to go out and collect firsthand information on the land that Israel was to possess and saturate as recorded in Numbers 13:1-14:38. Through the spies’ observations, Israel was able to see the land that they would possess and determine what kind of strategy to use and what obstacles they would need to overcome as they invaded the land. For church planting, good research of the area where church planting will take place can indicate what type of people the churches will contain, how to approach these people, and what obstacles will need to be overcome.
- Nehemiah researched the condition of Jerusalem before ever beginning the task of rebuilding the walls of the city (Ne 1:3-4; 2:1-6). He wisely evaluated the morale of the people who would do the work as well as the physical condition of the wall. With this information, he could see what practical steps had to take place to accomplish the task, and he was able to prepare himself for the hard work ahead of him. For church planting, these same principles apply.
- Jesus went among the people and saw their needs before sending His disciples out to work among them (Mt 9:35-10:1). As He walked among the people and saw their overwhelming needs firsthand, He felt a deep compassion for them based on personal experience. This observation also motivated Him to mobilize people for prayer and ministry. For church planting, firsthand research generates compassion, mobilized prayer, and ministry.
- In John 4:35, the Lord Jesus commanded His disciples to “look at” or “investigate” (which is the Greek meaning) the harvest of men’s souls. Sometimes we forget how God looks at people. How do we look at people? Do we just overlook them, or do we see them as obstacles? We often get caught up in our own work, solving our own problems. It is easy to forget that God wants us to go out to people and bring them to Him. He uses the analogy of the harvest, the time when the reapers go out into the fields, harvest the ripened fruit, and bring it in to the owner of the land (Jn 4:35-38).
- As the Lord added to their numbers, the early church kept track of the numerical growth of the churches and reported it (Ac 2:41, 47; 4:4; 5:14; 9:31). This kind of information gives a clue as to where and how God is working in the lives of people in any region.

## II. WHERE SHOULD RESEARCH BE DONE?

Researching a region where church planting will take place can bring into focus all that God is already doing and help clarify how to minister. The first and most important step toward researching an area is to first define the target region also known as "the circle."

Find or draw a map of the target area, and find out everything possible about who and what is in the circled zone. Begin with a manageable area for a prototype. Beginning with a smaller area builds confidence to repeat the task in greater portions and numbers. Once you have drawn your circle, the following steps will help you actually do the research:

- Learn as much as you can about the harvest force and the harvest field in the circle.
- Map out the area.
- Modify the map to show important data such as where the churches are located and what types of churches they are, as well as other places important to the task (for example: religious centers, political centers, markets, historical places, etc.).

## III. WHO SHOULD DO RESEARCH?

Any one can do basic research for the ministry that God has called them to. Though the term 'research' may sound technical and complex, it does not have to be that way. Simply put, those who do research collect information and then share it with others.

### A. Those Who do Research Collect Information

People who love gathering facts in a thorough manner make good researchers. They should know how to ask questions that get information. Researchers need to be able to organize and categorize their data in a way that reflects the goals of saturation church planting.

### B. Researchers Must Present the Information Collected

Good researchers know how to abbreviate research data and explain it to others so that they will get an accurate picture of the harvest field and harvest force. They present this in such a way that it inspires compassion and builds confidence for what God wants to do. The presenter should be positive and optimistic and avoid being stuck on details. They must find and point out facts that will grab the attention of church planters and encourage their church planting efforts.

Those who do research collect information and then share it with others.
--

Remember Numbers 13. Only Joshua and Caleb were qualified to present the research even though all 12 of the spies made observations. They all spoke from the facts, but 10 of the spies saw from a negative perspective and focused on the obstacles, forgetting God's promises. Caleb and Joshua recognized the challenges and problems but never doubted that God was going to accomplish His will and presented a positive picture of what God would do from the facts.

- Those who present research should look for significant facts that will correspond to what church planters are thinking.
- The research should address the negative realities to inspire compassion and organize efforts to overcome the barriers.

## IV. WHEN SHOULD RESEARCH BE DONE?

There are at least three places in the church planting cycle where research should be conducted (see SCP Vision lesson 3, "Church Planting Cycle").

### A. The Foundational Phase: In Preparation for a Specific Church Plant

When planting a church, it is necessary to gather concrete data about people, their history, geography, and current situation, and why they think, believe, and act as they do. Learning about the worldview and felt needs of people living in the 'circle' can help to determine evangelism and

church planting strategies. Research at this level can also help to determine available church planting resources that may be mobilized to help with church planting efforts. The research must find the open doors that God has allowed in that zone for people to talk about Jesus.

## **B. The Establishing Phase: Evaluating Church Effectiveness**

Once the church has been planted, it is necessary to evaluate the growth and effectiveness of the ministry. Growth can be measured by charting the number of new small groups and keeping records of attendance. Charting ministry activity will help to discover how people respond to the methods used to reach them.

## **C. Multiplying and Movement Phases: Getting the Big Picture**

A regional (or even national) research project can help to mobilize churches within the given region to evangelize the lost and fill that region with churches. This kind of research may be necessary to discover the socio-economic levels, ethnic groups, age groups, and religious backgrounds of those who have accepted the Gospel and how they compare to the population at large. The general picture of the status of Christianity within a nation can be presented at regional conferences. This kind of research challenges national and local leaders with the need for church planting and reaching the lost.

# **V. WHY SHOULD CHURCH PLANTERS DO RESEARCH?**

## **A. Information Stirs Up Compassion For The People Within The Circle**

Jesus made the region of Galilee His circled zone. When Jesus went among the crowds, He saw their physical and spiritual condition, and He had compassion on them because they were “like sheep without a shepherd” (Mt 9:35-37). Both firsthand information and reporting from personal experience helps mobilize believers in existing churches to plant new churches.

Reports that contain **real life stories** of people's need for the Gospel help bring about unity based on love for lost people. God has given us feelings which, when touched, often motivate us to pray, give or in some other way get involved in ministry. Demographic or statistical information does not always produce the same results as real live stories. Stories almost always come from firsthand experience of going among the people.

*What type of things have you seen that can motivate compassion in others to reach the lost?*

## **B. Information Generates Prayer**

When Jesus saw the needs, He asked for prayer before anything else. Information causes people to cry out to God and depend on Him to do His work in the circle. Jesus commanded His followers to “Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into His harvest field” (Mt 9:38).

- Is the command, to pray for more workers, for spiritual giants only, or for all followers of Jesus?
- When your church prays, what do they usually pray for? Does your church ask God to raise up workers for the harvest? If not, why?

## **C. Information Inspires Vision to Plant Churches**

Good data mobilizes the people God has called to the harvest force in response to prayer. After Jesus commanded His disciples to pray, He sent them out to reap the harvest that was waiting for the workers (Mt 9:36-10:1). In another mission, He sent out seventy-two of His followers with the same command to pray (Lk 10:1-2).

- Do the people in your churches have a sense of the needs of the people in their area?
- Are they inspired to follow that vision?

#### **D. Information Equips The Harvest Force To Be More Effective**

A realistic account of the resources, people, and conditions we have available provides the basis to begin working with intelligence. Research helps the harvest force discover what it has available and what it lacks for the field (Lk 14:28-33). It helps us count the cost and make realistic plans, believing that God will supply what is lacking.

- What was the task in John 6:5-14?
- What available resources were revealed as a result of research?
- What did research show to be the number of people in the target population?
- What did Jesus do with the resources for the target population?
- If Jesus already knew what He wanted to do, why was research necessary?

### **VI. HOW SHOULD RESEARCH BE DONE?**

Research should use all means possible to get information. Different types of information can give different perspectives. Below are several examples of kinds of research.

It is best not to attempt to do research alone. Recruit helpers to work with you. Research done with others is usually more thorough and the analysis is better because you are drawing on more than one point of view. Also, each of us has our own prejudices. Often times, one person will uncover a significant piece of data, which had been overlooked or “not seen” by another person.

#### **A. Observation**

Firsthand information and observation has the greatest impact and should be the most accurate. After personally going to the circled zone, researchers can talk to people, count church attendance, see conditions as they are, observe ceremonies, customs, and cultures, and especially ask questions.

A key to good firsthand research is knowing what questions to start with and what follow up questions to ask. Questions that start with who, what, when, where, why, and how (especially how many and much) get clearer answers. Asking for explanations of what you observe may give an even clearer picture. This type of research is also an excellent tool for developing relationships.

#### **B. Interviews**

Interviews of others who have firsthand knowledge of the target zone are very helpful. After comparing the results of several interviews, it is possible to get a panoramic picture of how people perceive the situation there. It also helps to pick up some details that an outside observer might miss. This also requires skill in relationships.

When interviewing people, know what information you are looking for and be prepared with questions concerning the harvest field and harvest force. Ask these questions naturally in conversation. This makes people feel that you value their opinion. Reading written questions may cause some people to feel that they are being given an exam or are under investigation. They may also feel intimidated being read to from a list of questions.

#### **C. Surveys and Questionnaires**

Written surveys and questionnaires can provide an overall picture of what people think and especially how they believe things are (or would like them to be). However, the data obtained should be verified by firsthand observation. For example, ask ten pastors what their average Sunday attendance is. Then go to their church and actually count the people. How big do you think the difference would be among those you know? Would they tend to report more or less? Sample questions are located in Appendix 4B.

#### **D. Official Demographic Data**

Official demographic data depends on the accuracy of the methods used to gather the data. It also depends on what the intention was for collecting the data by the agency that collected it. It is very valuable, however, and provides a general idea of how to compare the situation in your circle with how the data shows the greater population to be.

#### **E. Literature Review**

If others have done similar research projects, either from the past and especially recent work, it is a tremendous help. When you find important facts that relate to church planting, it is possible to check them and focus research to be more effective because of what others have discovered. Libraries may have books about the region; encyclopedias and even university research projects can give valuable data.

### **CONCLUSION**

Research is an important part of church planting. It reveals different kinds of people living in a target area, what their needs, hopes, fears, and spiritual beliefs are. This gives insight into practical ways and means of sharing the Gospel. Research will also reveal what other people God has working in your target area, churches, mission groups, service groups and how they might cooperate in seeing the target area filled with living churches. In later phases of the church planting cycle, research can help determine the effectiveness of current ministries and give insight into where new churches need to be planted.

### **QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION, REVIEW AND APPLICATION**

- What do you think your research will discover about your target area?
- What are the advantages of taking time to do research in your target area? How will research make your church planting efforts more effective?
- What are five or six pieces of information you feel you need to know about your target area which will increase your church planting effectiveness?
- Do you know people who would do well at research after you train them?
- Are those in your harvest field ready to hear the Gospel? What are some observations you have made that indicate to you that people are open or resistant to the Gospel?

### **ACTION PLAN**

Appendix 4A contains a practical skills assignment in researching a target area. Review the assignment in this appendix and complete it by the next training session. Ask God to use this assignment to give you greater awareness of and compassion for the people in your target area. Ask Him to use this research to give you good ideas in where and how to begin your church planting ministry in this target area. You may want to adapt the sample questionnaires in Appendix 4B to use as part of your research.

### **SOURCES**

- Wingerd, Ray A. Jr. *DAWN Research Handbook: Principles of Research for a DAWN Project*. Pasadena, CA: DAWN Ministries, 1992. A copy may be obtained through DAWN Ministries, 7899 Lexington Dr., Suite 200-B, Colorado Springs, CO 80920 USA. Tel. 1-719-548-7465, Fax. 1-719-548-7475
- *Kui Kristlik on Eestimaa?* (How Christian is Estonia?). Research project of the status of Christianity in Estonia. For information, contact Merike Uudam, Kungla 16, Tartu, EE2400, Estonia Tel/Fax: +372-7-428898. Email: merike.u@online.ee
- *Introductory Research On The Slovak Evangelical Churches And Their Progress Towards Evangelizing Slovakia*. Banská Bystrica, Slovakia: New Eastern Europe For Christ, 1997. A copy may be obtained from *The Alliance for Saturation Church Planting*, Budapest, Hungary. E-mail: scpalliance@compuserve.com.



# Understanding Your Target Area

## RESEARCH ASSIGNMENT

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*The purpose of this assignment is to give you experience in practical research as a tool for effective church planting. You should attempt to do all components of the assignment. You may find certain activities in the assignment easier than others. Whether easy or difficult, God will have things to teach you about the people and region you are trying to reach, through each activity of this assignment*

*You do not have to do this assignment by yourself. You can work with others. In fact it is recommended that you work with others if at all possible. Be prepared to share your research findings with your coach, mentor and others. This assignment is due when you receive Manual Two training.*

*Note to translator: consider making Appendix 4A and 4B into a separate handbook so the participants can put all their research information in one place.*

### STEP 1: IDENTIFY YOUR TARGET AREA

Obtain or make a map of your city, oblast, or region. Get the most detailed one you can find which has all the population centers, street names, and transportation routes. Draw a circle around your target area. This is your area of ministry, the region in which you believe God wants you to make His name known, and where He wants to plant churches.

### STEP 2: GATHER THE HARVEST FORCE DATA

As described in lesson 4--"Principles of Research"--the **harvest force** is all of God's resources already at work in your target area. Determine what resources are available in your circle by studying the following:

#### 1. Existing Local Churches

- a. Mark every local church in your region on your map. Indicate what denomination they are.
- b. If possible, list their adult attendance.
- c. Indicate the year the church was planted or reopened.
- d. Determine the people group each church is reaching (e.g. gypsies, youth, children, homeless, elderly, internationals, etc.) How successful have they been in their efforts?
- e. What relationships exist between the churches in the circle? Are they unified or divided?
- f. Are people meeting together to pray for the lost in their community or for missions outreach?

#### 2. Mission and parachurch groups.

- a. List all mission and parachurch groups in the target region.
- b. Briefly describe the ministry each has (literature, prison, Muslim ministry, youth, etc.)
- c. Are they interested in cooperating with you or others in evangelism and church planting efforts?

#### 3. History of Christianity.

- a. When did Christianity first come to the area and how was it brought? Was it forced upon the people or did they receive the Gospel voluntarily?
- b. Describe the history of each denomination's entry into the area.
- c. What other major religions have had an impact in your target area? What other religions/cults are existing in your area today and how successful are they in winning followers?
- d. How does this history affect your church planting strategy?

### STEP 3: GATHER DATA ABOUT THE HARVEST FIELD

The **harvest field** is the people group among whom you will work and the place where you will plant your church. The following activities will help you to learn about the harvest field in your target area.

#### 1. Demographic information.

- a. Total population
- b. Number and percentage of population who are men, women, youth, children
- c. Number of working adults... include occupation information and income level
- d. Number of retired and elderly, and disabled/handicapped
- e. Percentage and location of ethnic minorities. What languages do they speak?

#### 2. Geographic information

Geographic markers can have a significant impact on church planting strategies. They play a role in how and where people live and relate to others. For example, railroad tracks run through the neighborhood of a city. On one side of the tracks, the people are much wealthier than the other side. People do not readily cross the railroad tracks. Therefore, the tracks are an invisible barrier and people on one side of the railroad tracks are not likely to attend church on the other side of these tracks. Another example may be that because a city is surrounded by beautiful mountains, people usually go out of the city on Sundays and so may be less likely to attend a Sunday morning church service.

- What elements divide the region (rivers, railroads, roads, etc.)? How do these divides impact travel patterns, wealth, etc.?
- Is the city surrounded by mountains? Are there lakes, beaches, parks or other places for outdoor recreation?
- If your target area is a city or town, note on your map the location of industrial and residential areas. Are there special shopping districts? Do people live near work or have to commute a long distance? Also note major modes of transportation. Do most people travel by car, bus, metro?
- Where do people go for leisure and recreation? Do they stay in the city and go to parks? Do they spend most weekends at a garden home or dacha?

#### 3. Sociological and cultural information

By learning about people's worldview and their felt needs, we can gain insight into ways in which they can be meaningfully shown the love of Jesus Christ. The best way to learn about people is to ask them questions and observe their behavior. Go out into your target area and talk with at least 15-20 people. Try and learn the following:

- Views about God  
Do people believe in God? What do they believe about God? Have they heard of Jesus? What do they know of Him? Do they believe in heaven or hell? Do they believe in angels or demons or Satan? When they are sick, where do they turn for help? Do they believe in luck? Do they believe they can control their future or make their lives better for their children? What do they believe sin is? Do they attend church regularly? If yes, how often? If no, why do they not attend church?
- What are major celebrations or holidays in this area? How do people celebrate them?
- What do they like best about their life? What one thing would they change?
- What do they see as one or two major social problems in their community? (alcoholism, orphanages, lack of adequate medical care, elderly without care, etc.)
- What are three of their favorite proverbs? Through proverbs it is often possible to discover ideals and values they hold as well as their outlook on life.
- Who are recognized leaders in the community? Why are they seen as leaders?
- Who are considered heroes?
- List five things people value in others? (honesty, cleverness, generosity, etc.)

#### STEP 4. DATA ANALYSIS OF THE HARVEST FIELD AND HARVEST FORCE

Once you have gathered all of your information, written your summaries and annotated your map, take time to review and reflect on this data. Ask God to give you His compassion for the people in your target area. Ask God to give you creative ideas in how to share His love with these people. As part of this process, analyze your data answering the following questions:

How many churches are needed so that every man, woman and child in this target will be able to see, hear and understand the Gospel message in a culturally relevant way?

- How many churches are needed to fulfill the Great Commission in your target area? How many churches are needed so that every man, woman and child in this target will be able to see, hear and understand the Gospel message in a culturally relevant way? Begin praying and asking God to lead you in doing what He wants done.
- Determine your share: How many of these churches does God want you to believe Him for in your ministry?
- Select your starting location: Where will you begin? Where are the people most responsive? Paul usually found the receptive people first in the synagogue. Then he worked out from there through the network of relationships.
- Select your methods: What were one or two of the greatest needs of the people in the community? What methods will you use to meet the needs of the people? What methods are working with good results in other churches in the area? What resources are available to you for these methods? What are you gifted and able to do?
- Determine your resources: What resources are available and share the same vision? Are there others you can share this vision with and cooperate in the goal being reached? What labor, finances, and gifted individuals are available to you? Do the churches in the area have a desire for evangelism and church planting? Are they open to working together or with you in your efforts? Are they open to pray for evangelism and church planting efforts and for God to make Himself known in the lives of people in their communities?
- Do people have an understanding or belief in God or Jesus Christ? At what point will you have to begin your sharing of the Gospel message? (e.g. Can you start with Jesus Christ or do you have to begin with the existence of a supreme, creator God?)

#### STEP 5. LESSONS LEARNED FROM THE RESEARCH PROCESS

Evaluate your experience in doing this research assignment. What did God teach you through the research assignment about yourself, your desire to be involved in church planting? What struggles did you have doing the research? How did you overcome them? What was easy about the research? If you were to repeat this assignment, what would you do differently?

#### STEP 6: SHARING RESEARCH RESULTS

At the next training session, be prepared to give a report of your research results. Your report should be approximately 10-15 minutes in length and contain the following information:

##### 1. Part One—Basic Data Gathered (5-7 minutes)

- Describe your target area.
- How did you gather your information (surveys, informal interviews, observation/mapping, library research, etc.)?
- Discuss any significant problems or difficulties encountered and how they were overcome. What would you do differently next time?

##### 2. Part Two—Analysis of Research Data (5-8 minutes)

The remainder of the presentation should be focused on results of your research. The presentation should answer the following key questions:



- What was the most interesting information you learned about your target area and the people living there?
- Was there any information that surprised you?
- What specific things did you learn that will help you in determining your strategy for church planting in your target area?
- What one important fact for church planting did you confirm that you already knew about the harvest field?
- What new discovery that is important for church planting did you make about the harvest field that you previously did not know?
- What opportunities did you find as open doors for the Gospel?
- What obstacles did you find and how should they be overcome?
- What further research do you need to do in order to develop a comprehensive evangelism and church planting strategy for your target area?

SCP VISION  
APPENDIX

4B

# Sample Questionnaires

*This appendix contains two sample questionnaires: a local church survey, and a questionnaire for researching a target area. These are only examples and can be modified to suit your own purposes.*

*Note to translators: These questionnaires may be more appropriately published in quantity (perhaps as booklets) in order to make multiple copies available for church planters OR for other church leaders throughout your language group.*

## LOCAL CHURCH SURVEY

### A. PROFILE

1. Name of the church \_\_\_\_\_
2. Denomination (Confession) \_\_\_\_\_
3. Church Address / Location \_\_\_\_\_
4. Where the church meets: Owned by church \_\_\_\_ Rented \_\_\_\_
5. Date Founded \_\_\_\_\_ Date Registered \_\_\_\_\_
6. Name of church pastor/leader \_\_\_\_\_ Age \_\_\_\_\_
7. Does the pastor / leader work in another profession? Yes \_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_
8. Main language spoken in the church \_\_\_\_\_ Other? \_\_\_\_\_
9. Present number of members \_\_\_\_\_
10. Average number of attendees \_\_\_\_\_

### B. PEOPLE

*Try to fill in the number of people who fit the following categories:*

	Attendees		Believers		Members	
	M	F	M	F	M	F
Age 0-10						
11-17						
18-24						
25-30						
31-55						
55+						

*Assumptions:*

- All attendees are not believers and / or members.
- The number of attendees should be higher than believers and members.
- A person can attend and be a believer, but not necessarily be a member.
- A member must be a believer.

- The number of believers should be less than the number of attendees and higher than the number of members.
- Number of baptisms: 92\_\_\_ 93\_\_\_ 94\_\_\_ 95\_\_\_ 96\_\_\_ 97\_\_\_ 98\_\_\_ 99\_\_\_ 2000\_\_\_
- Number of families (husband/wife) who attend the church: \_\_\_\_\_

### C. PROGRAMS

*Check all the activities provided by the church and note participation in them*

Activity	Church Provides	Number Who Participate
Sunday School (by age groups)		
Worship		
Youth groups		
Children's groups		
Women's group		
Men's group		
Missions		
Evangelism		
Discipleship training		
Home Bible study group		
New believer training		
Leadership training		
Teacher training		
Prayer Meeting		
Choir		
Army ministry		
New church ministry		
Literature ministry		
TV/radio ministry		
Prison ministry		
Drug/alcohol ministry		
Hospital ministry		
Orphanage ministry		
Elderly care ministry		
Prayer ministry		

**D. PLAN**

1. Are there specific ministry plans for this year? Yes\_\_\_\_ No\_\_\_\_

2. What are these plans?

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3. Have plans been started for next year? Yes\_\_\_\_ No\_\_\_\_

4. What are these plans?

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5. Is there a leadership team that plans for the church? Yes\_\_\_\_ No\_\_\_\_

6. Does the church have a purpose statement? Yes\_\_\_\_ No\_\_\_\_

7. Does the church have a financial plan? Yes\_\_\_\_ No\_\_\_\_

8. Does the church have a spiritual growth plan for believers? Yes\_\_\_\_ No\_\_\_\_

9. Does the church cooperate with other churches? Yes\_\_\_\_ No\_\_\_\_

10. Does the church cooperate with other denominations? Yes\_\_\_\_ No\_\_\_\_

## TARGET AREA OR "CIRCLE" SURVEY

### A. WHO?

1. Are there any special groups of people in the church's "circle of influence?"

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2. Is there any one class of society that predominates in the "circle?" Yes\_\_\_ No\_\_\_

3. If "yes", which one?

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### B. WHAT?

- What are the outstanding characteristics of the church's "circle?"

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- What special events, local holidays or celebrations do the people in the "circle" practice?

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- What are the most pressing needs of the people within the "circle"?

Economic\_\_\_ Spiritual\_\_\_ Moral\_\_\_ Social\_\_\_ Educational\_\_\_ Cultural\_\_\_ Family\_\_\_  
Religious\_\_\_

- What types of religious groups are present within the church's "circle"?

Orthodox\_\_\_ #\_\_\_ Baptist\_\_\_ #\_\_\_ Pentecostal\_\_\_ #\_\_\_ Roman Catholic\_\_\_  
#\_\_\_ Lutheran\_\_\_ #\_\_\_ Other Protestant\_\_\_ #\_\_\_ Nondenominational\_\_\_ #\_\_\_  
Moslem\_\_\_ #\_\_\_ Foreign mission groups\_\_\_ #\_\_\_ (please note what groups these might  
be:\_\_\_\_\_)

- Is the church trying to address the needs of the people? Yes\_\_\_ No\_\_\_

If so, what specifically is the church doing to minister to the needs of their "circle?"

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- Does the purpose statement of the church indicate a desire to address the needs of their "circle?"  
Yes\_\_\_ No\_\_\_

- Does the church's ministry plan show a concern for ministering holistically to their "circle?" Yes\_\_\_  
No\_\_\_

### C. HOW?

1. Does the church identify with its "circle?" Yes\_\_\_\_ No\_\_\_\_

2. If "yes," how?

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3. If "no," what can the church do to begin identifying with its "circle?"

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4. Are the church's activities designed to reach out to its "circle?" Yes\_\_\_\_ No\_\_\_\_

5. How does the church relate to other evangelical Protestant churches within its "circle?"

Relates well with all\_\_\_\_

Relates well with some, but not very well with others\_\_\_\_

Does not relate well with any\_\_\_\_

### D. RESOURCES

- What kinds of resources are available to the church in its "circle?"

TV/Radio\_\_\_\_ Literature\_\_\_\_ Publishing houses\_\_\_\_ Official permission for "helps" ministries\_\_\_\_  
Other evangelical Protestant Christian groups to partner with in ministry (other local churches\_\_\_\_  
foreign mission agencies/organizations\_\_\_\_ clubs\_\_\_\_ centers\_\_\_\_ associations\_\_\_\_  
educational institutions\_\_\_\_)

- What groups does the church presently partner with in special ministry projects?

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- Have efforts been made by the church to talk with other churches within the "circle" about reaching the unsaved within the "circle" for Christ? Yes\_\_\_\_ No\_\_\_\_
- Would the church leadership be willing to work with the other churches and organizations to reach everyone within the "circle" for Christ? Yes\_\_\_\_ No\_\_\_\_
- If "yes," when will they try to gather the "circle resources" to talk about fulfilling the Great Commission within their "circle?"

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- If "no," why not?

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# THE CHURCH

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THE CHURCH

1

LESSON

# Biblical Foundations For The Church

## THE CHURCH IN GOD'S PLAN FOR THE AGES

### Lesson Purpose

The purpose of this lesson is to show how the biblical foundations for the Church relate to God's Kingdom and redemptive purposes.

### Main Points

- The Church was God's plan from eternity past.
- Unlike Israel, the mission of the Church is to GO and be salt and light among the nations.
- The Church is God's instrument for spreading the Gospel to everyone.

### Desired Outcomes

When the contents of this lesson have been mastered, each participant should:

- Understand the place of the Church in the light of God's Kingdom and redemption program, and consider foundational concepts regarding the Church.
- Be grateful to God for His Sovereign plan for the ages, and for his own personal participation in this plan.
- Consider the role his church planting work has in the bigger picture of God's purposes.

## I. GOD'S PLAN FOR THE AGES

### A. God's Eternal Kingdom (Ps 10:16; 103:19)

The Bible describes God as the Eternal King, sovereign over all creation. God's Kingdom can be described as the realm over which He rules, exercising sovereign and kingly authority. The display of His glory in His rule was the supreme good (Ps 29:10; Da 2:20-21; 4:34-35; 5:21).

### B. The Cosmic Rebellion

All of God's creation was good, but at some point, sin entered into creation. When and how this happened is not clearly stated in the Bible, but certain passages seem to allude to this fact (Isa 14:3-21, Eze 28:11-17).

The prophet Isaiah, in addressing the king of Babylon, seems to be making an analogy between the pride of the king of Babylon and that of a fallen 'morning star' (Isa 14:3-21). This morning star tried to make himself like the Most High. Many biblical scholars see this as a reference to the fall of Satan, a created angelic being who wanted to be like God.

A related passage is found in Ezekiel 28:11-17 where the King of Tyre is being addressed. The description seems to go beyond him to address a guardian cherub who was on the mount of God and was blameless in all his ways. Because of his pride, he was cast down.

### C. The Earthly Rebellion

When God created the earth, authority to rule over it was delegated to Man (male and female) (Ge 1:26). Man, created in God's image to have fellowship with Him, had freedom of choice (Ge 1:28; 2:7). Because true fellowship involves moral choice, the man and woman were tested by being forbidden to eat a certain fruit in the garden. Tempted by Satan to be like God, they chose

deliberate disobedience over compliance. By this deliberate act, Man declared his independence from and opposition to the will of God. Results of Man's sin were:

- Fellowship with God was broken.
- The image of God in the man and woman was marred.
- Man experienced physical and spiritual death.
- The woman would experience suffering in childbirth.
- The man would experience painful toil.
- The ground (nature) was cursed (Ro 8:21-22).
- Fellowship between the man and the woman was broken.
- Rule over the earth was usurped by Satan who became 'the god of this world.'

#### **D. God's Redemptive Plan**

Since the fall of man, God has been working throughout history to restore fellowship between God and man. He chose a man (Abraham), who gave birth to a nation (Israel) among whom was born a messiah (Jesus) to conquer the work of Satan and restore man's true fellowship with God. God's ultimate redemptive plan includes:

- The redemption of Man, restoring him to the image of Christ (2Co 3:18).
- The restoration of fellowship between God and Man and between men (1Jn 1:3-7).
- The restoration of God's reign over the earth (Rev 11:15) and man's reign with him (Rev 22:5).
- The creation of a new earth (Rev 21:1).

God announced His solution over sin with His judgment of the serpent in Genesis 3:15. God's solution to man's sin is the redemptive work of Jesus Christ (Col 1:20; 2:9). In Jesus Christ, God is reconciling people to Himself, restoring their relationship with Him (Eph 1:9-10). This ministry of reconciliation He has given to His church. In fact, the establishment of the church is the most recent step in God's redemptive plan (2Co 5:19).

## **II. THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE CHURCH**

### **A. The Background For The Church: Israel**

The Church is not mentioned in the Old Testament. Paul refers to it as a 'mystery' (something previously unrevealed—see Eph 3:9-10; Ro 16:25-26; Col 1:25-26). Much discussion has centered on the relationship between the Church and Israel. Some emphasize their similarity, viewing them as one people of God in different times. In this sense, Israel is a 'spiritual' people, and the Church is the New Israel. Others view Israel and the Church as distinct phases in God's kingdom and redemptive programs, with both being the people of God. Regardless, it is important to understand the difference between Israel and the Church, as it relates to church planting and evangelistic strategy.

#### **1. The Nation of Israel**

In Genesis 12:1-3 God promised Abraham that through him He would build a great nation and that through him all the nations of the earth would be blessed. The nation He had promised was Israel. One of Israel's kings, David, was promised that his kingdom would be eternal (2Sa 7:8-16). The New Testament declared that Jesus was the 'son of David' through whom these promises would be fulfilled.

One of Israel's purposes was to be the bearer of the Messiah (King). Paul summarizes it like this: "... *the people of Israel. Theirs is the adoption as sons; theirs the divine glory, the covenants, the receiving of the law, the temple worship and the promises. Theirs are the patriarchs, and from them is traced the human ancestry of Christ, who is God over all, forever praised!*" (Ro 9:4-5).


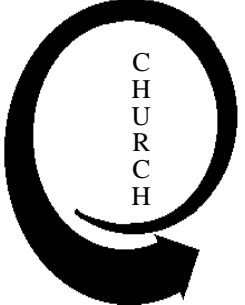
## 2. The Church

The period of time between the first and second coming of Christ has been called 'the Church Age,' or the time when God is at work to accomplish His Kingdom and Redemptive purposes through His Church. The Church is not a plan 'B' after Israel's 'failure' to accomplish a plan 'A,' or an afterthought in the mind of God. He *planned* for it in eternity, provided for it by the death and resurrection of His Son, Jesus (Eph 1:19-23). Christ *prepared* for its formation and development by instructing His followers as to their mission (Jn 16:5-15; Mt 28:18-20). He *created* it on the Day of Pentecost (Ac 2:1-13) and *empowered* (Ac 1:8) it with His forever indwelling Holy Spirit.

The Church is the instrument of God chosen to bear the good news of the Gospel to the ends of the earth. *'Through the church the manifold wisdom of God is made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms, according to his eternal purpose which He accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord'* (Eph 3:10-11). The Church is God's plan to reach the world today, to manifest His progressive victory over Satan, and to enfold those who would be part of the people of God.

## 3. Comparison between The Nation Of Israel And The Church (Figure 1.1)

**Figure 1.1 Israel and the Church**

The Nation of Israel	The Church
<p>The orientation of the 'Nation' was <i>centripetal</i>. God's plan placed Israel as a light to the nations, to which the nations would <b>COME</b> to see and hear of His glory. To participate in His glory meant to come to the Nation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Growth by addition (birth, take by force, God-fearers)</li> <li>• Centralized plan 'when they come to this House'</li> <li>• God's glory temporarily residing in Jerusalem (1Ch 28; 2Ch 6-7)</li> </ul>	<p>The orientation of the Church is <i>centrifugal</i>. God's plan places the Church as a Light to the nations. The people of the Church are to <b>GO</b> and be salt and light among the nations (Mt 5:13-14; 28:18-20).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Growth by multiplication (conversion, church planting)</li> <li>• Decentralized plan '... into all the world'</li> <li>• Released and empowered by the eternally indwelling Holy Spirit (Ac 1-2); God's glory residing in the hearts of men (2Co 3)</li> </ul>
 <p><b>N A T I O N</b></p> <p><i>Growth through attraction (centripetal)</i></p>	 <p><b>C H U R C H</b></p> <p><i>Growth through expansion (centrifugal)</i></p>

## B. The Prediction Of The Church: Matthew 16:18-19

Jesus predicts the establishment of the church in Matthew 16:18-19. The following is a review of Matthew 16:18-19 with applications to church planting.

1. *The church is built on the **rock**: “Upon this **rock**”*

The meaning of “the rock” in Matthew 16:18-19 inspires much discussion. The controversy centers on the interpretation of *petra*<sup>2</sup>, the Greek word for ‘rock’ from which the name Peter comes.

*Petra* = ‘large rock, bedrock’ (Mt 7:24-25; 27:60; Mk 15:46)

*Petros*<sup>3</sup> (*Peter*) = ‘a detached stone’ that might be easily moved

*Major interpretations of ‘the Rock’*

- Jesus the Messiah: *Petra* used of Christ (1Co 10:4; Ro 9:33; 1Pe 2:8)
- The confession of faith by Peter about Christ
- Peter himself

Most evangelical theologians have historically interpreted the rock to be the confession of faith by Peter about Christ. In any case, the metaphor of a rock conveys the importance of a solid foundation, a very important lesson for church planters.

2. *The Church belongs to Christ: “I will build **My** Church.”*

Jesus owns the Church. He created it and it belongs to Him. He gave Himself in death on the cross, that the Church might be born (Eph 5:25; Jn 12:24). He purchased the Church with His own blood (Acts 20:28). He calls His Church out of the world, fits its members together, and sanctifies it in preparation for its final presentation and purpose (Eph 5:26-27). In the future, Jesus will glorify His Church in the presence of the Father and the holy angels (1Th 4:13-18; Rev 4-6).

Paul said he was given authority by Christ to build His Church, not tear it down (2Co 10:8). Though church leaders ought to feel the deepest sense of obligation and participation in their ministry, no pastor or church planter ever owns his ministry. Jesus, not the church planter or pastor, is the head of the church.

3. *Jesus builds His Church through us: “I will **build** my Church.”*

Building the Church is Jesus’ major mission on earth today. Jesus uses born again people as His building material (1Pe 2:5). Jesus will fit and build these living stones as God’s building (1Co 3:9), a dwelling of God in the Spirit (Eph 2:21-22). Jesus uses gifted leaders to equip His people to build His Church (Eph 4:11-12; 1Co 3:12).

4. *The Church will be triumphant: “the gates of hell will not prevail against it”*

This important phrase spoken by Jesus is packed with meaning and is the basis for the overcoming faith and hope that church workers should possess. It tells us that Christ is building His Church as a military force to storm the gates of Hell and be victorious over the powers of evil. Even though we struggle now, someday the Church will be completely victorious (Ro 16:20). Until then, we are to put on the armor Christ has provided and depend on His strength for leadership and victory (Eph 6:10-18; 2Co 2:14). The analogy of the soldier is especially appropriate for the church planter (2Ti 2:3-4; Php 2:25). Paul said he fought the good fight (2Ti 4:7) and so should we.

### C. The Birth Of The Church: Acts 2

The prediction of Jesus came true in Acts 2 when the empowering Holy Spirit was poured out on people from many nations giving birth to the church. The miracle of tongues on the day of Pentecost symbolized that this new event in God’s redemptive plan would reach the entire world, uniting men and women of every tongue into the Church. The church then is international from its birth.

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<sup>2</sup> πέτρα

<sup>3</sup> Πέτρος

### III. THE ROLE AND NATURE OF THE CHURCH TODAY

#### A. The Church—A Called-Out People With Both A Local And A Universal Manifestation

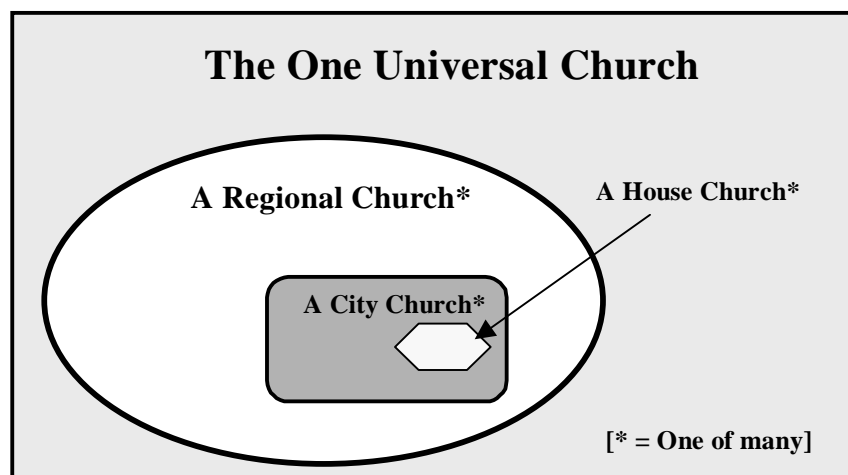
Ever since the fall of mankind, the ultimate purpose of God has been to call out a people unto Himself in what today we call the church (Eph 1:10). The Greek word, *'ekklesia'*<sup>4</sup>, is commonly used to describe the church in the New Testament. *'Ekklesia'* means *a society or assembly of free citizens called out of their homes or businesses to assemble together and give due consideration to matters of public interest* (Ac 19:39). The idea of a 'called out people' has its roots in the Old Testament (Ru 4:11; Jer 33:7), with Israel as the called people of God. In the New Testament *ekklesia* is never used to denote a building or a denomination (two of the most common ways we use the word "church" today) but always refers to a group of people.

Of the 109 times *ekklesia* refers to the church in the New Testament, it most often denotes a group of believers in a particular place or 'a local church' (at least 63 times). Believers are responsible to gather in local fellowships (Heb 10:25). In fact, it was the normal pattern of the Apostles to win people to Christ and gather them into new churches.

Note that the local church may be defined in different ways:

- A house church: 1 Corinthians 16:19 (Church that meets in house of Aquila and Priscilla) Colossians 4:15 (Church that meets in house of Nympha)
- A city church: 1 Thessalonians 1:1 (Church of the Thessalonians) 1 Corinthians 1:2 (Church of God in Corinth) Acts 13:1 (Church at Antioch)
- Regional churches: Galatians 1:2 (Churches in Galatia) Acts 9:31 (Churches throughout Judea, Galilee and Samaria) 1 Corinthians 16:19 (Churches in the province of Asia)

**Figure 1.2 One Church and Many Churches**



Ultimately, there can be only one *ekklesia* (1Co 12:13, Eph 4:4-5). Thus, (at least 27 times) we see *ekklesia* denoting the universal Church which is that body of believers in Jesus Christ, living and dead, from every tribe, language, people and nation. Being part of the universal Church and not being involved in a local church is a concept that is not found in the New Testament. On the contrary, the universal Church is made visible through local churches everywhere.

As 'called out people,' the church is not simply a group of people united by religious faith. It is a creation of God through the Holy Spirit.

<sup>4</sup> ἐκκλησία

## **B. The Church Is The Body Of Christ**

The church is described as His body several places in Scripture (Ro 12:4-5; 1Co 12:12-31; Eph 1:22-23; 4:4-16). When Christ works in the world today, he does so through His Body, the church, us! (Eph 1:22-23; 3:10-11). Note the following implications of this metaphor:

### *1. The Body Is Interdependent*

As the body of Christ, the church has many parts that work together in a very complex and interdependent way. The parts do different things but have the same ultimate purpose, much like the various parts of a human body (Ro 12:3-8, 1Co 12:12-31). The church needs all the parts to function according to their design in order to properly do what God desires.

### *2. The Body Has One Head*

Christ is the head of the church (Col 1:18). Like a body the church cannot have more than one head. No pastor or church planter is truly the head of the Church he serves. All the parts of the body, including the leaders, are subject to the headship of Christ. The body does not function well otherwise.

## **C. The Church Is God's Number One Instrument For Spreading The Gospel**

The Church is the instrument of God chosen to bear the good news of the Gospel to the ends of the earth. Before the cross the *nations* were separated from the hope of salvation (Eph 2: 11-13). But after the death and resurrection of Christ, the church has the responsibility to take the Gospel to the *nations* (Mt 28:19-20). It is clear from the New Testament that the early Church took this responsibility very seriously, for it is impossible to separate the spread of the Gospel and the expansion of the Church in the book of Acts. It was the mission of the Church to take the Gospel from Jerusalem to Judea and Samaria and to the ends of the earth. Today it is unfortunate that we talk about churches and missions as if they are separate. In the New Testament, the mission was the church and the church was the mission.

Evangelistic strategies that are not connected to the church are misguided from the beginning. Follow-up and long-term growth, for example, are common problems when people are evangelized through non-church initiated efforts. God has established the Church through which the nations are to be discipled. The Scripture declares: *'Through the church the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms according to His eternal purpose which He accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord'* (Eph 3:10-11). The Church is God's plan to reach the world today, to manifest His progressive victory over Satan, and to enfold those who would be part of the 'people of God.'

## **CONCLUSION**

In Jesus Christ, God is reconciling people to Himself, restoring their relationship with Him (Eph 1:9-10). God has given this ministry of reconciliation to His church (2Co 5:18-20). So that the Church is God's plan to reach the world today, to manifest His progressive victory over Satan, and to enfold those who would be part of the people of God.

The establishment of the church with this purpose is the most recent step in God's redemptive plan. Involvement in establishing and strengthening the church is no small task. It is an essential activity for every believer and yields eternal results. Never underestimate your role concerning planting or leading the church!

## **QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION, REVIEW AND APPLICATION**

- What are the implications of the Church as centrifugal?
- How does an Old Testament (centripetal) understanding of the Church affect its vitality? When is such an understanding of the local church appropriate? Why?
- What is the foundation of your church ministry? What happens when Christ is not the foundation of a new church work?

- The Church exists for the world (Eph 3:1-10). What are the implications?
- Christ is the head of the Church. What are the practical implications of this? (Eph 1:23; Col 1:18). How do we let Him be both Lord and Master on a practical level?
- Can a believer be part of the universal church and not part of the local church?
- What does it mean for the church to be indigenous?
- Study some of the metaphors used to describe the church (Eph 2:15, 19, 21; 1Pe 2:9-10). Which of these is most meaningful to you personally?

## ACTION PLAN

How is God at work in your country to fulfill His promises? What has God done in the past year, 5 years, or 50 years, that reveals His faithfulness to build His Church? Write at least 10 observations to show God's faithfulness in your country context.

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THE CHURCH

LESSON 2

# The Purpose of the Church

## WHY DOES THE CHURCH EXIST?

### ☞ Lesson Purpose

The purpose of this lesson is to describe how the Church is intended to be a force for the propagation of the Gospel in the world.

### ☞ Main Points

- The Church has three purposes—ultimate, outward, and inward.
- The Church is the agent for mobilization rather than the object of ministry.

### ☞ Desired Outcomes

When the content of this lesson has been mastered, each participant should . . .

- Be aware of the biblical purposes for the Church.
- Recognize that the Church's purpose as an agent for reaching the world requires church planting and ministry.

### ☞ Appendix

2A Great Commission Worksheet

### ☞ Suggestions to Trainers

Be sure that participants can clearly articulate the inward and outward purposes of the church. It would be good if you can use big visuals to impress upon trainees the various paradigms of church purpose. You could make drawings on poster paper. Or, in your context, perhaps a chalkboard or an overhead projector might be more appropriate.

## INTRODUCTION

'Purpose' might be described as *'the end to which our efforts take us.'* Any organization has a purpose. A business exists to make money through the sale of goods or services rendered. The government of a country exists to protect its citizens and rule its people.

The Lord Jesus serves as a great model in the area of purpose. He knew why He came to earth and where He was going. He had a great purpose. 'The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because He has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor' (Lk 4:18-19).

For churches to be truly effective in today's world, they must have a clear sense of purpose. Without it, church leaders and workers can waste energy and resources doing things they have not been called to do. Every church planter should understand the biblical purpose for the Church and think through this purpose in the light of his own church planting work and mission.

A clear understanding of biblical purpose can make a church:

- purposeful and expectant.
- faithful and flexible, innovative yet true to Scripture.
- gracious and relational, emphasizing God's love and forgiveness.
- joyful and celebrative (people are looking for this).

- vital and dynamic, equipping people for real life ministry.
- growing and reproducing, planting new churches.

## I. THE PURPOSE OF THE CHURCH

Jesus has established His Church with a purpose in mind. It is a wonderful purpose, fixed in eternity past, destined for a glorious future. We could summarize the purpose of the church by saying *the Church exists to glorify God through edifying the believers and evangelizing the lost*. Figure 2.1 shows this three-fold purpose of the Church.

**Table 2.1 The Three-fold Purpose of the Church**

ULTIMATE PURPOSE	OUTWARD PURPOSE	INWARD PURPOSE
Exalt the Lord	Evangelize the lost	Edify the laborers
The Church exists for the Lord	The Church exists for the World	The Church exists for itself

### A. Exalt the Lord

The Bible teaches that there is an ultimate purpose to which all creation moves; it is God's own glory. God's glory represents all that is true of Himself: His nature, attributes, character and actions. God's own glory is His chief aim for eternity and man's chief purpose for existence. He is working out His eternal purposes toward this end. God's own glory is the final purpose of the Church (Ro 15:6,9; Eph 1:5ff; 2Th 1:12; 1Pe 4:11).

God is glorified (revealed, made known) when we worship Him (Jn 4:23), offer prayer and praise to Him (Ps 50:23) and live a godly life (Jn 15:8). 'Whatever you do, do all to the glory of God' (1Co 10:31). This is true for individual Christians and for His Church.

- What does it mean for you to glorify God?
- How does the Church glorify God?
- How is God glorified in our midst?

### B. Evangelize the Lost

The Bible clearly teaches that there is an outward purpose for the Church, to be accomplished in this age. It is a purpose that places the Church's focus and efforts outside itself. It is the reason Jesus came to reach a lost and dying world (Lk 19:10). Jesus said, 'As the Father has sent Me, so I now send you' (Jn 20:21). This outward purpose of the Church is outreach to the lost—evangelism and mission.

Perhaps no portion of Scripture better states the outward purpose of the Church than the 'Great Commission' passage of Matthew 28:18-20 (See Appendix 2A, "Great Commission Worksheet").

### C. Edify the Laborers

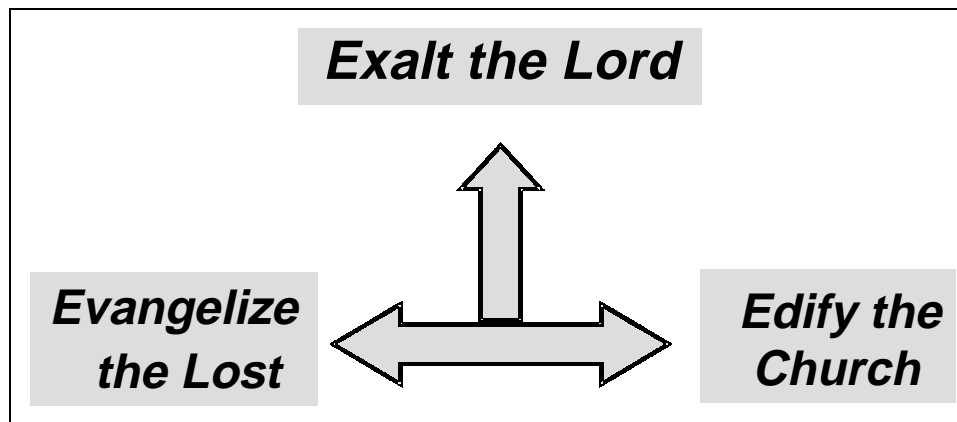
The Bible teaches that the Church also has an inward purpose. It is the edification or building up of its members. The bulk of the New Testament epistles were written to believers to strengthen them in their Christian life and ministry so that they could accomplish the outward purpose of reaching a lost and dying world.

Ephesians 4:11-16 best explains the inward purpose for the Church. The church exists to edify the believers. The training and equipping of God's people as a gathered community (in worship, teaching, fellowship and nurturing functions) leads to the accomplishment of the outward purpose, making disciples.

- Leadership is given (v. 11) to equip the saints for ministry (v. 12), not just to do the work of ministry themselves. What are the implications of this vital truth for your church planting work? How will this affect how you do what you do?
- What observations do you make from this passage about planting a church? Write them now.

The purposes of the church can be simply stated as exaltation, edification and evangelism. The people of God gather for worship and edification, in order to scatter to do the work of evangelism. These are interrelated purposes. None of them should exist apart from the others. The inward purpose (edification) serves the outer purpose (evangelism) and both purposes serve to glorify God (worship). As followers of Jesus gather for the inward purpose of edifying one another (Eph 4:11-16), loving one another (Jn 13:34-35), and practicing the functions of the New Testament church (Ac 2:42-43), they are better equipped for the outward task of outreach and ministry to the lost world.

**Figure 2.2 Three-fold Purpose of the Church**



## **II. PARADIGMS FOR UNDERSTANDING THE PURPOSE OF THE CHURCH**

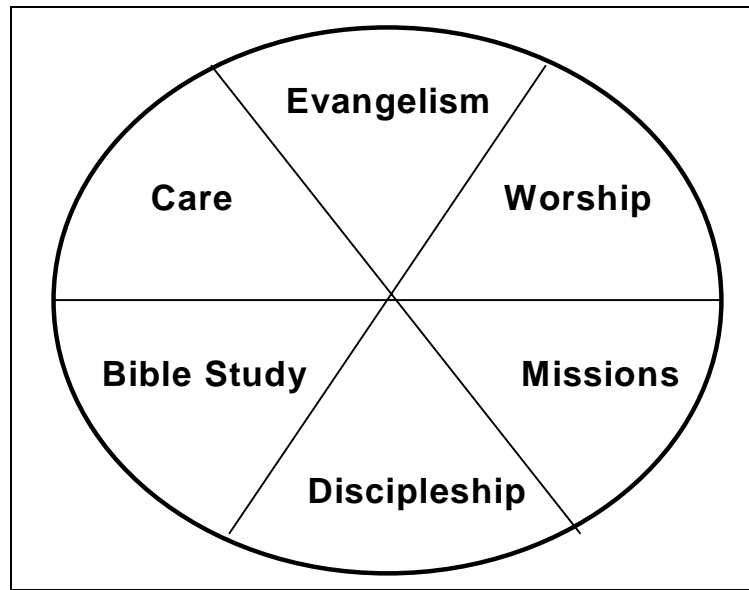
A paradigm is simply a way of looking at something. A paradigm provides rationale and explanation for how a particular system, process or object is and ought to be. The following sets of contrasting paradigms are ways of looking at the church in light of its nature and purpose.

### **A. The Program-Centered Church Compared To The Great Commission Church**

#### **1. *Program-Centered Church***

Churches often struggle in practicing their multifaceted purpose. Failing to integrate all that God has called us to do can lead to a program orientation consisting of various components, each component competing for resources and participants (See Figure 2.3). In this program-centered view, the church may resemble a secular training institution or small business in its structure and organization. Over time, the church becomes more concerned about itself and less concerned about the lost, becoming irrelevant to the society in which it exists.

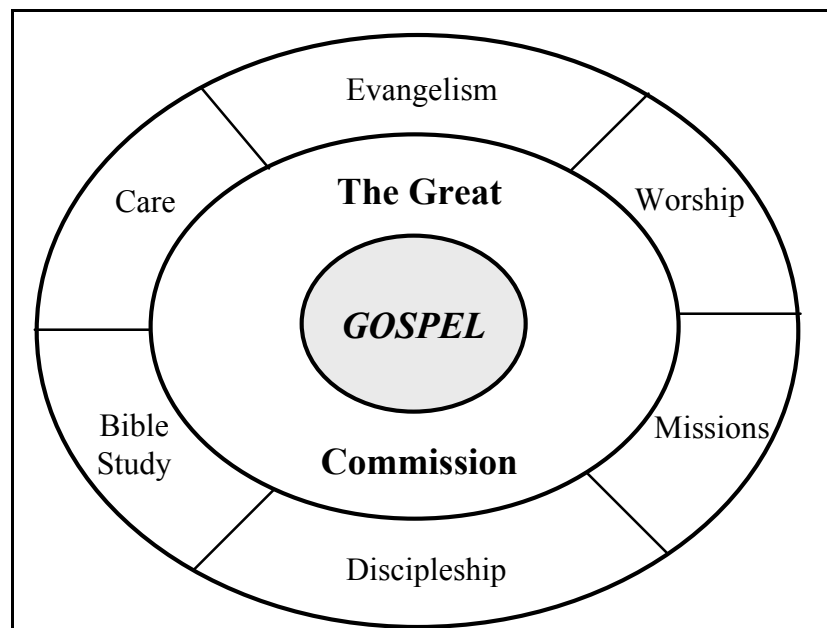
**Figure 2.3 The Program-Centered Church**



2. *The Great Commission Church*

The biblical view of the Church, shown in Figure 2.4, places the Great Commission at the heart of the Church's purpose, and from it proceed programs and equipping ministries. In this model the elements and programs of the gathered church community serve to prepare the believer for the outward task or purpose—evangelism and Great Commission work. The needs of the believers are still taken care of but in their proper perspective in light of God's purpose to bring the lost to Himself.

**Figure 2.4 The Great Commission Church**



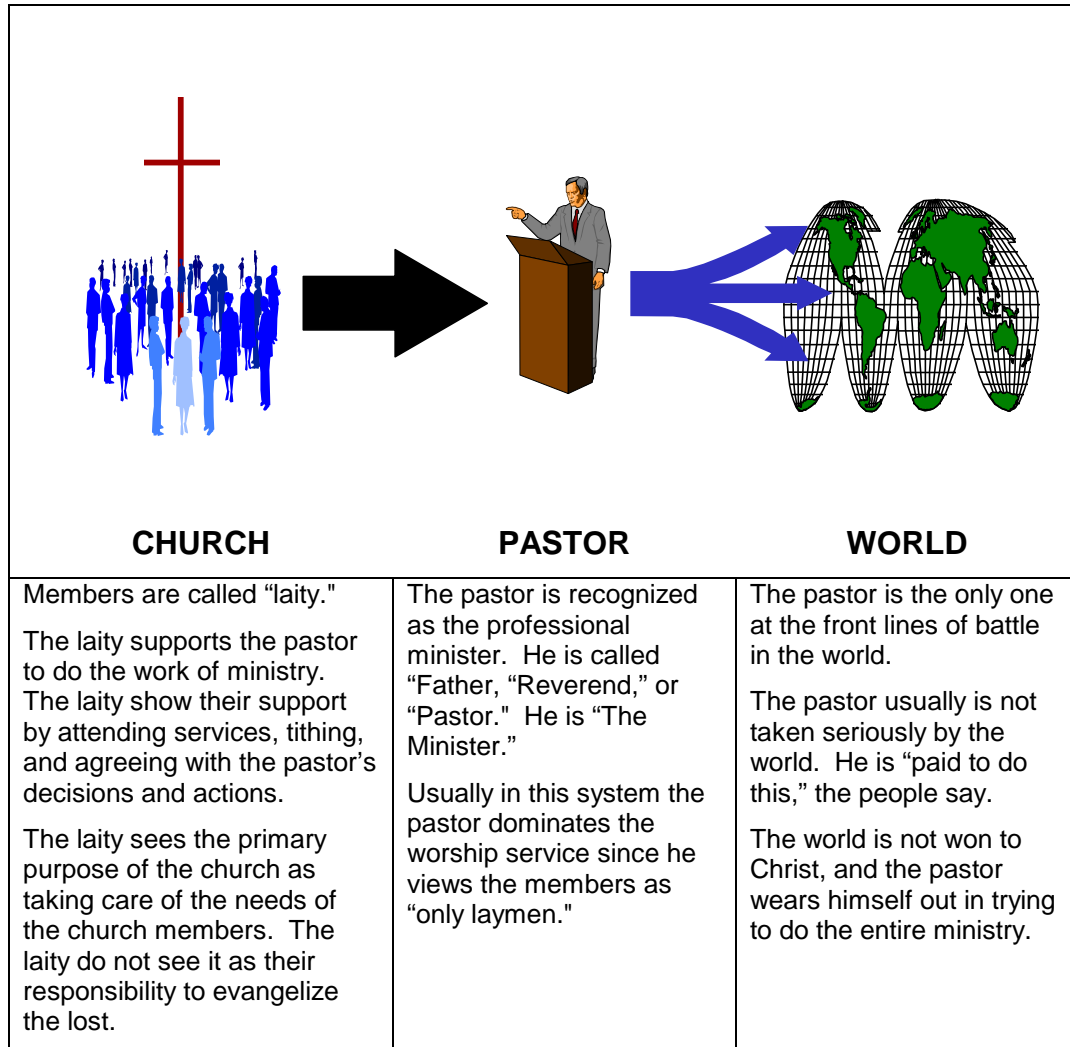
- What are the ramifications for these two approaches to church structures? The mobilization of church members for 'church work'? Leadership development?
- What happens to a church when it recognizes that its 'reason for being' is to spread the Gospel?

## B. The Church as an 'Object of Ministry' Compared to the Church as an 'Agent for Mobilization'

### 1. The Church as an Object of Ministry

Some believers think of the church as a gathering place to be with other believers and to be ministered to by the pastor (see figure 2.5). This is perhaps the most common paradigm for viewing the church. This paradigm is partly true. Church is indeed a gathering where we enjoy fellowship as well as receive spiritual nourishment from spiritual leaders. However, this paradigm fails to put the outward purpose of the church in proper perspective and supposes a non-biblical clergy / laity distinction.

**Figure 2.5. The Church as an Object of Ministry**

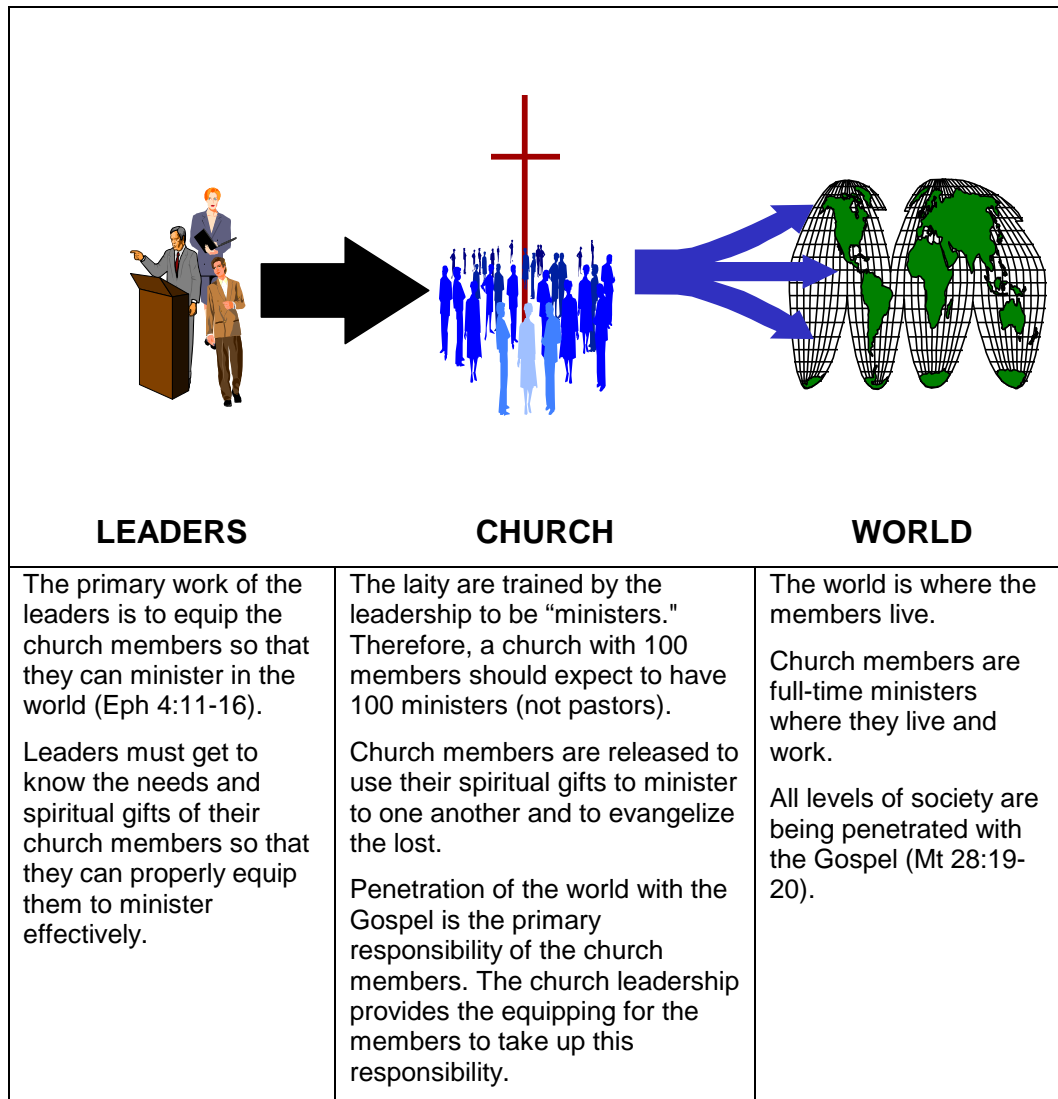


*adapted from Brock p. 66,67*

### 2. The Church As An Agent For Mobilization

The church is not an object of ministry, but rather an agent of mobilization for the Gospel into the world. As shown in the figure 2.6, the role of leadership in the church is to equip (to train and to empower) church members for service in the world. This is the edification purpose of the church. Believers gather together to worship the Lord, to grow in their faith, to learn God's Word, to encourage, pray for, and practically help one another. These church members develop the spiritual character and servant skills needed to evangelize the lost (the outward purpose of the church). Fulfilling the Great Commission is not just the pastor's job, or the job of a few individuals in the church, but it is the function of the entire body of Christ (the church).

**Figure 2.6. The Church as an Agent for Mobilization**



*adapted from Brock p66,67*

## CONCLUSION

A clear sense of purpose helps the church to be effective. Without understanding its purpose, church leaders and workers can waste energy and resources doing things they have not been called to do. Every church planter should understand the biblical purpose for the Church and think through this purpose in the light of his own church planting work and mission.

## QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION, REVIEW AND APPLICATION

- Why is it important that the church understand its purpose? What happens when churches do not understand their purpose?
- How would you summarize the purpose of the church?
- Why should the church reach out to the lost? Who is responsible to evangelize?
- How does the Great Commission relate to the purpose of the church? What other passages in the Bible help us understand the purpose of the church?
- Why should the church be a force and not just a field?

- Do the churches in your region have a clear understanding of why they exist as a church?
- What is the role of leadership in a purpose-driven church?

## **ACTION PLAN**

Reflect on the purpose of the Church by doing the worksheet contained in Appendix 2A, "Great Commission Worksheet."

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# Great Commission Worksheet

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*Read and meditate on the following five Great Commission passages. Then, answer the questions given for each passage.*

## **Matthew 28:18-20**

1. What comfort is there in the truth that "all authority" has been given to Christ?
2. Since He is the Sovereign Lord, what has He asked us to do?

## **Mark 16:15-20**

1. What warning do you find here for the unbeliever?
2. What will be the evidence that follows believers?
3. How did the Lord reveal Himself after His ascension into heaven?

## **Luke 24:45-53**

1. What things are the disciples to give witness to?
2. What promise was Christ making to them?

## **John 20:19-23**

1. What did Jesus mean when He said, "Peace be with you"?
2. How does this relate to his statement in vv. 22-23?
3. What does it mean to be sent?

## **Acts 1:1-11**

1. What is the natural result when we have the Holy Spirit working through us?
2. How far will the results of the Gospel reach?

## **QUESTIONS FOR APPLICATION**

- What fears do I have that need to be overcome by the realization of the sovereign authority of Christ? How can I best "make disciples?"
- How can the Gospel be proclaimed in "all the nations" in my country?
- Do I minister with the power of God on me? How can I allow His power to grow greater for His glory?
- How concerned am I for the state of the lost? How will this affect how I lead the church I plant? What difference does it make?

## GREAT COMMISSION PARALLEL PASSAGES

	PREAMBLE	COMMAND	PROMISE
<b>MATTHEW 28:18-20</b>	All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Me (18).	Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you (19) (20).	And surely, I am with you always, to the very end of the age (20).
<b>MARK 16:15-20</b>	(The testimony of the resurrection) (9).	Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation (15).	Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved; but whoever does not believe will be condemned (16).
<b>LUKE 24:45-53</b>	This is what is written: The Christ will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day (46).	and repentance and forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things (47-48).	I am going to send you what my Father has promised; but stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high (49).
<b>JOHN 20:19-23</b>	"Peace be with you!" After He said this, He showed them His hands and side. The disciples were overjoyed when they saw the Lord (19) (20).	As the Father has sent me, I am sending you (21).	Receive the Holy Spirit (22).
<b>ACTS 1:1-11</b>	After His suffering, He showed Himself to these men and gave many convincing proofs that He was alive (3). "It is not for you to know times or dates the Father has set by his own authority (7).	and you will be My witnesses, in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth (8).	You will be baptized with the Holy Spirit (5)... But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you (8).



THE CHURCH

3

LESSON

# Form and Function

## A BIBLICAL AND CULTURAL PERSPECTIVE

### Lesson Purpose

The purpose of this lesson is to explain the important concept of form and function in the church, from a biblical and cultural perspective.

### Main Points

- Biblical function is *what must be done*—it was given by God and should not be altered.
- Biblical form is how *we do the function*—it is cultural and should be adjusted as needed.

### Desired Outcomes

When the content of this lesson has been mastered, each participant should . . .

- Understand the concept and issues of 'form and function.'
- Recognize how cultural dynamics and personal experience affect the expression and forms of the local church.
- Be motivated to establish church forms based on biblical function and cultural relevancy.

### Appendix

3A Form and Function Applied: Inductive Study of Acts 2

## INTRODUCTION

An understanding of form and function is fundamental to church planting. Our experience largely shapes our understanding of, and dedication to, the forms our churches take. We must be challenged to ask why we do what we do to accomplish the mission God has given His Church. This lesson will provide an opportunity to rethink ministry 'forms' and give guidance for establishing more relevant and effective forms.

## I. FORM AND FUNCTION ILLUSTRATED

In society, a function is *an activity that needs to be performed*. This activity can range from one as difficult as getting food or raising children, to something as easy as sleeping. These are things that need to be done. A form is *the method chosen to carry out* that function.

An example could be how you get food. In the primitive days, you could hunt or you could grow crops. These are two very different methods, but both fulfill the function of getting food.

The question is: how do you decide which is the best form for you? Some of the factors for the decision come from internal sources, such as abilities and preferences. Do you have a good eye and don't mind being alone for long periods of time? Then you might do better as a hunter. If not, stick with farming. Some of the factors are external, depending on your environment. Do you live on or near good productive land? If so, you might do well to be a farmer. Some of the factors are cultural, depending on the ideas of the society you are in. Are farmers prized because they add to the amount of crops in the village, or are hunters prized for their skill in case of war? Some of the factors may be moral. Is the killing of animals looked upon as immoral? Another factor is tradition. What did your parents and their parents do?

- ◆ **Function** = an activity that needs to be performed
- ◆ **Form** = the method chosen to carry out the function

Forms depend on many factors and can also change with time. Your field may no longer produce, or the game may become sparse. With time, new inventions may change your ability to carry out your profession, or make you choose a new profession that had not been available before, such as a shopkeeper.

Transportation is another example of the principle of form and function in society. Transportation is a function that can be fulfilled through many possible forms such as: bicycle, subway, auto, and horse & cart. The question is:

- What will determine the means of transportation you use? Why?
- What makes one way better than the others?
- Can you come up with an example of form and function in your situation?

## II. FORM AND FUNCTION IN THE CHURCH

Form and function can be defined broadly as in the examples above, or it can focus on a particular area. For example, there are also *biblical forms and functions* described in both the Old and New Testaments. However, in order to understand the importance of this concept in church planting, we will focus the definition even more tightly, and look only at *church forms* and *church functions*.

### A. Church Functions

The New Testament includes many commands, laws, instructions, precepts, prohibitions, and principles that the church must carry out. These functions are timeless and supra cultural. They do not change and are mandatory for all believers, regardless of race, culture, age, or language.

Examples: Worship, fellowship, the ordinances, prayer, evangelism, discipleship, giving, teaching, communion (Lord's Supper).

**A Church Function**  
is an activity that the Lord has commanded His church to carry out.

### B. Forms

Church forms include all the structures, traditions, methods, and procedures that the church chooses in order to carry out the functions in a particular age, culture, or situation. These forms can and do vary greatly among local churches—resulting in many acceptable forms for every church function.

Examples: Offerings for the Jerusalem saints, the Jesus Film, greeters at the front door, paid preachers, Wednesday (e.g. “once-a-week”) evening Bible study.

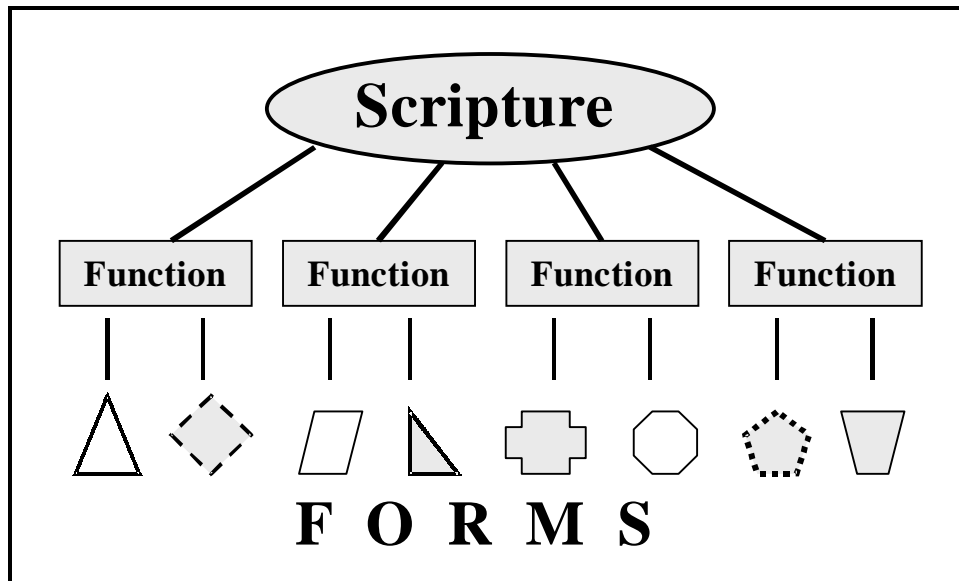
**A Church Form** is the method the church uses to carry out a church function.

### C. Form and Function Together

The life of any local church cannot be taken out of its particular cultural / historical context. Our ‘experience’ of church is not based solely on biblical teaching. The way we ‘do’ church is based upon a mix of historical traditions, cultural (and sub-cultural) practices, and biblical convictions. When we speak of biblical functions (such as worship, prayer, fellowship, teaching, sacraments, evangelism and ministry), it is difficult to do so without describing the forms, traditions, methods, structures and organizations in which these functions find expression and life.

The task of the church planter is to forge church forms first from a biblical basis, then in the light of culturally relevant practices. In Figure 3.1, we see that there are a number of church functions that are mandated by the Scriptures. These do not change with time or culture. However, the bottom row of the figure demonstrates that each local church may need to adopt completely different forms to fulfill these functions in their context. The forms need not resemble those of other churches—they must only fulfill the church functions.

**Figure 3.1 Form and Function**



### III. EVALUATING FORM AND FUNCTION IN THE CHURCH

It can be difficult to distinguish between forms and functions in the church unless we take the time to analyze. In the following chart, a number of functions are listed on the left, and some of the many possible forms of each are on the right.

**Table 3.2 Forms and Functions**

Biblical Function	Possible Forms
Pray	Kneeling or Standing
	Silently or Aloud
	Small Group or Individual
	Before Meal or At Close of Service
	Confession or Supplication
Teach the Word	Sunday School
	Sermon
	Small Group Bible Study
	Family Devotions
Evangelize	Friendship Evangelism
	Crusade
	Invitation during Service

Please note that the list of forms on the right side of the chart is not exhaustive—there are many, many other possibilities. Is one form better than the others are? No. All of them may be appropriate or inappropriate in a given circumstance and cultural setting. None of these forms are commanded in the Bible as the *only* method. Only the *functions* are commanded. We must choose the form as needed.

In the table below, two sample biblical *functions* are listed. Take a few minutes to fill in possible *forms* on the right side. Then compare your ideas with other trainees.

**Table 3.3 Function vs. Form**

Biblical Function	Possible Forms
Give	
Worship	

In the table below, a number of *forms* are listed on the right side. For each *form*, decide what biblical *function* it fulfills and write that in on the left side. Then compare and discuss your responses.

**Table 3.4 Forms vs. Functions**

Function	Form
	Youth Camp
	Church Prayer Meeting
	Church Choir
	Passing an Offering Plate
	Church Building
	Special Music in Service
	Children's Church
	Order of Church Service
	Reciting Poetry in Church

#### IV. PRINCIPLES REGARDING FORM AND FUNCTION

##### A. The Function Is More Important Than the Form

In the Bible, functions are stressed. Jesus was more interested in function than in form. Those who gave Christ the most resistance were those who were addicted to form, rituals and traditions.

- See Matthew 9:14-17. How does Jesus' teaching on clothing and wineskins relate to form and function? What does it mean to start a 'new wineskin' kind of church?
- What do 1 Samuel 15:22-23, Hosea 6:6, and Matthew 12:1-8 contribute to this issue?

Forms are not usually prescribed in the Bible. There is the exception of the temple service, where the design of the tabernacle and its furnishings are spelled out in some detail, but this was done for a different purpose. They were used to teach about God, His work and His attributes. It is not a

form that has been carried over into the New Testament Church because the knowledge already exists.

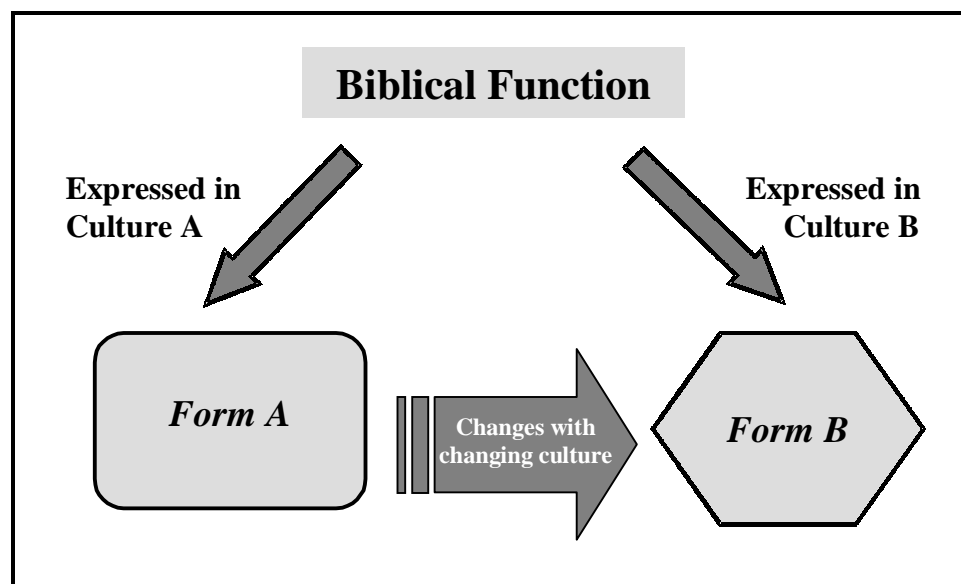
## **B. Functions Are Absolute and Trans-Cultural; Forms Are Non-Absolute and Variable**

When forms are described in the Bible, we see changes being made in them. The Passover was a reminder of God's deliverance of His people from Egypt. Jesus changed this at the Last Supper and used it to highlight the deliverance that God was about to accomplish in the death of Jesus. In the first century church, this again changed and became the Love Feast. But this began to be misused (1Co 11:17-34), so the practice was reduced to the sharing of the cup and bread. But even this takes on many different forms. Some use a common cup and some use individual cups. Some use wine and some use grape juice. The form may be different as long as the function is served.

The forms that are described in certain passages are changed or left out in others. They vary from situation to situation.

- Stewardship (1Co 16:1-2; 2Co 8-9)
- Spiritual gifts (1Co 12-14; Ro 12; Eph 4)
- Discipline of church members (Mt 18; 1Co 5; 2Co 2)
- Baptism (Mt 28; Ro 6; Ac 1)
- Day of Worship (Ex 20:8; Ac 20:7)
- Church government (1Ti 3; Tit 1; 1Pe 5)

**Figure 3.5 Changing Forms**



How would this principle affect the way you develop forms in your new church, based on Scripture?

## **C. People Often Identify More with the Forms Than with the Function**

It is unfortunate, but people tend to get attached to the form and miss the function. They can perpetuate forms that have lost vitality in their respective cultures (e.g. the way a worship service is run). There is an old story told about a newlywed bride who cooked her first roast for her husband. When she served the roast to him, the prime pieces on both ends were cut off. He asked her why. She replied her mother always cooked the roast this way. When the new husband asked the mother-in-law why she did it this way, her reply was, "I don't know. Mom always did it that way." When the husband asked grandma why she cut off the ends of the roast, her response was, "The pan was too small for it." You get the point.



When people believe there are absolutes governing form, they tend to become legalistic in their approach. Often, resistance to the changing form is caused more by insecurity and fear of change than from theological truth. This can be a form of idolatry. An understanding of form and function can help people see that change is not always threatening.

#### **D. Forms Should Not Be Changed Carelessly**

It is not unusual for a young man, just out of seminary or Bible college, with no real pastoral experience, to become the pastor of a church and think that he knows exactly how everything should be done. He has an idea of what the perfect forms are and is determined to change everything to fit his ideas. He has no idea of what the people are like, nor does he know what they want to do. He may not even know whether the ideas have been tried before and the results. This can lead to a situation in which the people begin to feel that their pastor does not value them but sees them as part of an experiment and come to resent him. They also feel as if the church no longer fits them and either the pastor must go or they will.

Forms should be changed only to highlight the function. One time, in order to highlight worship (a function), a pastor started the service with a hymn (as usual) and then gave the sermon. The sermon was normally at the end of the service after the special music, extended singing, greetings and announcements, but this pastor chose to speak about God and His wonderful works, then invited the congregation to worship and thank Him through prayer, singing praises (hymns) and the Lord's supper. The change was very effective. This does not mean that he did it every Sunday. It was done that one time in order to get people to stop and think in a new pattern about the worship part of the service. They then returned to the usual form.

#### **E. When Forms Freeze, Churches Die**

The purpose of the church is to glorify God through the edifying of the members and the evangelizing of the lost. This is the eternal, unchanging purpose. The functions are how we accomplish this purpose. They are also given by God, who has told us how He wants us to glorify Him. They are also eternal and unchanging. A form is only one of many acceptable ways to fulfill a particular function. Forms can change because they are an expression of society.

There are times when the importance of forms can grow to be so great that people will not let them be changed. When forms become so important that they cannot be changed, the church will soon die because the society will change and the church will appear irrelevant. If the church cannot change its expression of the eternal functions, then the church will become irrelevant to that society.

There was a church that chose to reach out to a certain ethnic group in its neighborhood. The congregation was very comfortable with the forms that grew up for this group. But the forms became too important. The neighborhood changed and there were fewer and fewer of this ethnic group in the neighborhood. By the time the church realized that they needed to change, it was too late. They were known as a church that had nothing to offer to the people of that neighborhood and the church building was closed and the remaining membership disbanded.

### **V. IMPLICATIONS OF FORM AND FUNCTION FOR CHURCH PLANTERS**

Church planters must think very carefully about form and function. Many of the forms established at a church's birth can become interwoven in the life and fabric of the church. They may be difficult to change later; and if they are ineffective, they may just have to be tolerated. Furthermore, if church planters do not exercise flexibility concerning form, then the church planting process can become very slow, expensive, and difficult.

Church planters tend to go to one of two dangerous extremes in their ministry. They may:

- Use only traditional church forms so that the approach to preaching, style of music, and methods of evangelism are the same as the existing churches in the region. The result may be that the church will reach the same kind of people instead of the target people.

If church planters do not exercise flexibility concerning form then the church planting process can become very slow, expensive, and difficult.

- Adopt only imported forms that are difficult to reproduce in that culture. When church planters assume that certain programs, equipment or styles of music are necessary because they are effective in some other situation, then the church can have a foreign appearance from the beginning. In your region, 'westernization' or a large population of foreign missionaries may contribute to this problem.

The forms that you choose will largely influence what section(s) of your society you will attract. Forms should emerge naturally from the culture so that the target people can understand what they mean with little or no explanation. Part of research is looking at who lives in your target area, who is not being reached by churches already present, and finding out how to attract them to your church by choosing forms that will be meaningful to them and faithful to biblical functions.

## QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW, CONSIDERATION AND APPLICATION

- Why is 'form and function' so important to church planting?
- How have the forms in your church developed? How have they been maintained?
- Do the forms in your church experience serve a purpose / biblical function?
- How could you improve the forms in your church to fit the culture better?
- Which forms are a hindrance to bringing the Gospel to the lost? To bringing a new convert into the life of the church?
- What kind of resistance would you face if you sought to establish a new church with forms different than other churches in your culture?
- In what ways are your forms strange and foreign to new converts?
- How could you develop forms that would be more comfortable to new converts without compromising biblical principles? Describe how these forms are relevant to your target group culture in worship, fellowship, sacraments, tithing, and biblical instruction
- For additional study, read Acts 6:1-5, and see how the early church leaders dealt with a structural problem, and how they were able to adjust form to create a structure to better serve the need.
- When are forms sinful? Why? Give examples and validate with a biblical principle.

## ACTION PLAN

- Do the inductive Bible study contained in Appendix 3A, "Form And Function Applied: Inductive Study of Acts 2."
- Determine the function behind forms in your local church.

## SOURCES

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# Form and Function Applied

## INDUCTIVE STUDY OF ACTS 2

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### I. OBSERVATION

Read Acts 2:42-47 and note the primary activities and actions of the believers. List each of these activities in the left column of the chart below.

### II. INTERPRETATION

Decide which of these activities is “form” and which is “function” and write your answer in the column on the right. If you decide that an activity is a form, decide what the corresponding function would be and write that in the column with the form. What were the circumstances that led to the choosing of that particular form?

ACTIVITIES	FUNCTION OR FORM

### III. APPLICATION

- Look again at the functions behind each of the forms noted in the table above.
- List at least one other form that could have been used.
- What form does your church use for that function?
- Are there other appropriate forms that could fulfill those same functions today?
- How would you go about introducing a change of form to a congregation or in a cell group? What are important issues to consider when trying to introduce change?

THE CHURCH

LESSON 4

# Defining The Local Church

## “WHAT ARE WE PLANTING?”

### ☞ Lesson Purpose

The purpose of this lesson is to explore the definition of the local church in the light of the church planting task.

### ☞ Main Points

- An inadequate definition of the local church will hinder church planting.
- Biblical functions are key to a definition of the local church.

### ☞ Desired Outcomes

When the contents of this lesson have been mastered, each participant should:

- Understand the importance of developing a biblical definition of the local church.
- Know how personal understanding of what a local church is can enhance or hinder the church planting process.

## INTRODUCTION

No matter what we are doing in church work, whether we are church planting or leading an existing church, we must have a clear conviction about what the church is. This basic question, “What is a local church?” cannot be taken for granted. To be sure we are on track, we must ask it often. How would we define it?

Perhaps the following illustration will demonstrate why this lesson is important. Before World War II, Switzerland made and produced almost 90% of the world's watches. By 1970, the Swiss still had 60% of the market, but by the early 1980's, their share dropped to below 10%. What happened? The quartz watch was introduced in the late 1960's and the Swiss did not utilize this technology while other watchmakers (Seiko and Texas Instruments) did. The Swiss watchmakers rejected the quartz because of their understanding of what a watch was. They could not imagine a watch without gears, springs and wheels. Since the quartz watch did not use these, they rejected it. In summary, we could say they lost sight of the function of watches (to tell time) and instead defined watches by the forms they were familiar with. Thus they missed out on a great marketing opportunity.

Just as the Swiss' working definition of watches resulted in their missing of a great opportunity, so the definition of the church can affect the success of the church planting process dramatically. The definition of the church reveals what the church planter is expecting to produce and determines strategies and forms he uses. The definition will be the reference point, the measuring stick for his sense of success or failure. If the church planter starts with a poor definition of the church then it may lead to failure.

## I. THE DIFFICULTY OF DEFINING THE CHURCH

Churches can be very different from one another. Note the following observations:

- Some churches meet in large buildings. Some churches meet in small buildings. Some churches do not meet in any building. Some churches meet in homes.
- Some churches meet one time a week. Some churches meet two times a week. Some churches meet three times a week. Some churches meet just about every day of the week.

- Some churches have a man who preaches. Some churches have a man who just talks. Some churches have a man who teaches like in school.
- Some churches seem to be fun to be in. In some churches no one smiles.
- Some churches have active services, with people moving around and responding verbally to everything that happens. Some churches have very quiet services in which most of the people sit quietly and listen.

With all these variations, how is it possible to describe the core elements that must exist before a group can be called a church? Are there some basic norms that should be true of local churches in any time and in any culture? And if so, what do we consider to be those core elements?

*Take several minutes and talk in groups of three or four and answer these questions –*

1. When is a group of people a church?
2. What are the criteria for deciding whether it is a church or not ?
3. Respond to the following situations. Is each a church? Why or why not?
  - Eight believers in Aimesville meet every Tuesday night for Bible study and fellowship. They have no official pastor although one man facilitates the gathering. They have been doing this for years. Some of the participants also attend a church on Sunday.
  - In a medium-sized city, there is a beautiful historical church building with a rich history of great preachers and community involvement. On tours of the church which are offered twice a day, one can learn about the unique architecture and history.
  - An evangelist has led 10 young people to Christ in the past year. He would like to see these new believers assimilated into an existing church but the nearest one is 50 kilometers away. Instead, they meet in his apartment every Sunday evening for worship and Bible study.
  - A man and his immediate family are the only believers in their city. The family takes time every Sunday morning to worship the Lord.

## **II. EXAMPLES OF CHURCH DEFINITIONS**

*In groups of 4 or 5, discuss the following definitions and answer the related questions.*

### **A. Example #1**

The following definition is an attempt to define the church by using only specific references from Scripture that describe how God's people are to relate to one another. This definition emphasizes the relationships that should exist between believers.

*"A church is a group of people who are devoted and give preference to one another (Ro 12:10), accept one another (Ro 15:7), care for one another (1Co 12:25), carry each others burdens (Gal 6:2), forgive one another (Eph 4:32), encourage and build up one another (1Th 5:11) spur each another on to love and good deeds (Heb 10:24), confess their sins to one another (Jas 5:16), pray for one another (Jas 5:16), serve one another (1Pe 4:10), and love one another (1Jn 4:11)."*

- How would this definition enhance or hinder the church planting process?
- What kind of a church would be produced by a group of people who subscribed to this definition?
- Is this definition adequate? Why or why not?

### **B. Example #2**

*"A New Testament local church is an organized assembly of baptized believers, in which the unique presence of Jesus Christ dwells; who gather regularly for worship, instruction, fellowship, the Lord's Supper, and baptizing new believers, under the obedience to the Word of God, supervised by elders who are assisted by deacons putting into action the equipping gifts that God has given its members to build up that local congregation, resulting in a Gospel witness locally and world wide."*

- How would this definition enhance or hinder the church planting process?
- What kind of a church would be produced by a group of people who subscribed to this definition?
- Is this definition adequate? Why or why not?

**C. Example #3**

The following definition is much more traditional and may be the definition you would hear from the average non-believer on the street.

*"The local church is a building where people gather to receive religious services from professional ministers who have been specifically trained to lead meetings each Sunday morning as well as the other activities for the people such as weddings and funerals."*

- How would this definition enhance or hinder the church planting process?
- What kind of a church would be produced by a group of people who subscribed to this definition?
- Is this definition adequate? Why or why not?

**D. Example #4**

*"A local church is an organized body of baptized believers, led by a spiritually qualified shepherd, affirming their relationship to the Lord and to each other by regular observance of the Lord's Supper, committed to the authority of the Word of God, gathering regularly for worship and the study of the Word, and turned outward to the world in witness."*

- How would this definition enhance or hinder the church planting process?
- What kind of a church would be produced by a group of people who subscribed to this definition?
- Is this definition adequate? Why or why not?

**III. GUIDELINES FOR DEFINING THE CHURCH**

**A. Avoid prescribing forms, structure and programs in the definition of the church**

There is a tendency to focus on forms and structure rather than on biblical functions when defining the local church. When church planters do this, they can become like the Pharisees, concentrating on the outward appearance of spirituality and not on the internal spiritual reality that reflects a right heart towards God and right relationships toward others, both in and outside of the church. Forms, then, can become a false reference point for success, suggesting that a local church equals such things as choirs, hymnbooks, a piano, a sound system, a building with pews, a Sunday school program, a constitution, etc. While there is nothing wrong with these things, they do not define the church as a spiritual people.

When forms, structures and programs are part of the definition of the church, it severely limits the church's ability to be a dynamic force of change, witnessing to a constantly changing society of God's saving and unchanging love. When biblical functions are key ingredients in the definition of the church, we are on solid ground for designing ways and means for church ministries that are indeed winsome.

**B. Stress the biblical functions that the church must perform**

The most helpful definitions of the local church focus on the functions of God's people as revealed in Scripture instead of the particular forms the church follows. The church is a collection of God's own children. The relationships of God's people to God and to one another then should be the point of reference out of which congregational programming flows. Beginning church planting with a focus on programs can result in structures that do not meet relational needs. It is wiser to focus on biblical relationships and let the organizational structure and programs develop accordingly.

For example, a church planter determined that a Wednesday night prayer time was important for every church. Early in the life of the church which he had planted, he initiated a Wednesday night prayer time, but there was little interest since community commitments kept many church members busy at that time. This was very discouraging to the church planter because he interpreted the poor response as a lack of interest in prayer. However, if he had allowed the function of prayer to take a different form, then perhaps there would have been a greater response.

Another church planter was convinced that a beautifully adorned church building was necessary for worship. After one year of church planting ministry, with 15 believers committed to his church, he decided to establish a building. This required permission from the city officials, raising funds, purchasing land, hiring a construction company to build, etc. This project consumed all of the church planter's time so that he was unable to focus on ministering to the 15 believers in his flock. Furthermore, funds were very difficult to come by and city officials seemed to be doing everything possible to hinder the building process. He wondered if he would ever see the church established.

#### IV. WRITING YOUR DEFINITION OF THE CHURCH

To prepare to develop your definition of the church, read the following passages looking for principles that explain what the church is. Write the principles in the space provided. Use other biblical references if you believe they are helpful.

Ac 2:42-47

Ac 11:26

Ac 14:23

Ac 20:7

Ac 20:28

1Co 1:2

1Co 12:28

1Co 14:33

Eph 1:22

Eph 4:11-16

Eph 5:27

1Ti 3:15

Heb 10:24-27

Other:

*In the space below write your definition of the church.*

*Consider the following questions concerning your definition:*

- Is your definition understandable?

- Is it compatible with Scripture?
- Is your definition basic enough to describe all churches everywhere and at all times?
- Does your definition allow for a church that is reproducible?

Share your definition with others and carefully note their reactions.

## CONCLUSION

Church planters should realize that they do not plant fully developed churches, but sow seeds which grow into mature churches (1Co 3:6). The first converts to become leaders should have some say in the forms, structures and programs. Why? So that the new church will be appropriate to the culture and needs of those whom it will serve.

If we expect to participate with God in the establishing of a church planting movement in this region, then the definition of the church should resemble a 'seed' and not a fully developed 'tree.' It should grow and adapt in order to best reach the lost around it.

## QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION, REVIEW AND APPLICATION

- What unnecessary items are typically added to people's working definition of the church?
- When are buildings necessary for church planting? How can buildings help or hinder the growth of the church?
- Why is it wrong to focus on forms when defining the local church?

## ACTION PLAN

With your church planting team, develop and agree upon a definition of the church that will inform your church planting process. Share your definition with other church planters, your trainer or mentor.

## SOURCES

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# SPIRITUAL CHARACTER

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SPIRITUAL  
CHARACTER

1

LESSON

# Justification by Faith

## THE FOUNDATION OF OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD

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### Lesson Purpose

The purpose of this lesson is to teach the church planter how to be set free from guilt, denial, and a life compelled to maintain his or her reputation, as Christ's righteousness becomes the foundation for Christian living.



### Main Points

- Justification is an exchange of our nature with the nature of Christ.
- Justification by Faith is the foundation for our relationship with God.



### Desired Outcomes

When the content of this lesson has been mastered, each participant should:

- Know what justification by faith means.
- Have a deep appreciation and assurance of God's grace that is rooted in the righteousness of Jesus Christ.

## INTRODUCTION

As believers, our relationship with God is the focal point of our lives. Nothing matters more than how we relate to God and how He relates to us. But in this relationship we have many questions:

- How can we know God intimately?
- Does God truly accept us?
- Where does our acceptance before God come from?
- How can we live a life that is pleasing to Him?
- What happens when we sin?

To answer questions like these, we go back to the very beginning—to the Gospel, the foundation of our relationship with God. The New Testament describes salvation as a matter of “justification by faith.” In this lesson, we will consider what justification by faith means and how this foundation, built upon the righteousness of Jesus Christ, is the only sure foundation for our relationship with God.

## I. JUSTIFICATION IS NOT...

Simply stated, justification means being declared righteous. There are at least two errors that people make concerning this great doctrine.

### A. Justification is not by works

The great philosopher Aristotle believed that **people could become good (be justified) by practice**. Many have agreed with him. In Jesus' day, it seems the Pharisees would have agreed with Aristotle. For them, the way to be good, to be acceptable before God was by practice—specifically by living according to God's law. The well-known theologian Thomas Aquinas agreed with Aristotle; thus a system of salvation by works remains a cornerstone of many followers of Aquinas.

Those who follow Aristotle's view could be classified as following religion. Here, we are defining religion as *an attempt to reach God*. The Gospel however, teaches something entirely different about how we become good. According to the Bible, the only way to be justified is to accept by faith the salvation provided by the death and resurrection of Jesus. The Gospel, including justification by faith, stands in direct contrast to all other religious systems of acceptance before God.

**Table 1.1 The Gospel and Religion**

<b>Gospel</b>	<b>Religion</b>
<i>(God's supernatural attempt to reach man)</i>	<i>(man's natural attempt to reach God)</i>
Grace	Works
Faith	Obedience
Unconditional love	Judgementalism
Transforming Holy Spirit	Personal effort
Grace leads to obedience	Obedience leads to grace

Bible-believing Christians will quickly understand that the Gospel is true and that religion is false. We do not want to replace the Gospel with religion, but we are tempted to mix the two. But when we mix the Gospel with anything, we destroy it (Gal 1:6-7).

Someone may be quick to say, "We do good works." True, but we do not receive God's favor by it. Rather we have received God's favor and therefore we do good works.

## **B. Justification is not a pardon**

Many believers correctly understand that justification before God is by faith and not by works, but they incorrectly conclude that justification is really simply a pardon in which God chooses to overlook our sin. This is a great mistake. God does not simply choose to ignore our sin. His holiness prevents that possibility. Sin must be paid for. Justification is an act by which someone is declared righteous. We are declared righteous on the basis of the fact that Jesus paid the price for our sin.

Those who think of justification as merely a pardon fail to realize the great price that was paid on our behalf and can tend to take their salvation for granted. However, our justification came at a great price that should inspire us to live out of gratitude for what God has done.

## **II. JUSTIFICATION IS ...**

### **A. The Righteousness of God: Romans 3:21-24**

Romans 3:21-24 is one of the clearest passages concerning justification by faith. Studying the passage phrase by phrase reveals many of the various aspects of justification by faith and how Christ's righteousness forms the foundation of our relationship with God.

#### **1. "apart from law"**

The righteousness of God is not obtained on the basis of our obedience to God's Law. Why not? Because not one of us keeps the Law of God perfectly—which is what God requires if we are to be justified by our obedience to the Law (Gal 3:10).

#### **2. "a righteousness of God ... has been made known"**

The righteousness of God expresses His "perfect purity." Righteousness for us is exact conformity to this perfect purity of God. If we take the context into account and the fact that

justification by faith is being explained here, the "righteousness of God" means a perfect purity that comes from God or is given by God.

3. *"to which the Law and the Prophets testify"*

In the Hebrew mind, the two primary divisions of the Old Testament were the Law and the Prophets. In both we find God's revelation speaking of this righteousness obtained apart from our obedience. In other words, the whole Bible testifies to this profound truth.

4. *"this righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe"*

Faith is the means by which we obtain this righteousness. The object of our faith must be Jesus Christ, because He is the One who died in our place, paying the penalty of sin. He alone was able to pay for our sin in full, because He is the perfect Son of God. This is why it is essential to put our faith in Him.

5. *"for there is no difference; for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God"*

All of us need this righteousness through faith in Jesus Christ. There are no exceptions, because we have all sinned and our sin has caused us to fall far short of God's perfection that reflects His true glory.

6. *"being justified freely by his grace"*

The perfect righteousness required to be right with God is imputed to us when we believe. It is a gift given because of the gracious character of God, not because we deserve it. It is a gift in the truest sense; not deserved, not expected, but accepted.

7. *"through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus"*

In love, God wanted to impart this gift of forgiveness and righteousness to us, but His holiness required that the penalty of sin, which is death, be paid. So Jesus Christ came and died in our place, paying our penalty. As a result, He fulfilled the righteous requirement for God to forgive us and to declare us as righteous in His eyes. The redemption from sin was the price paid to purchase our justification.

## B. The Great Exchange

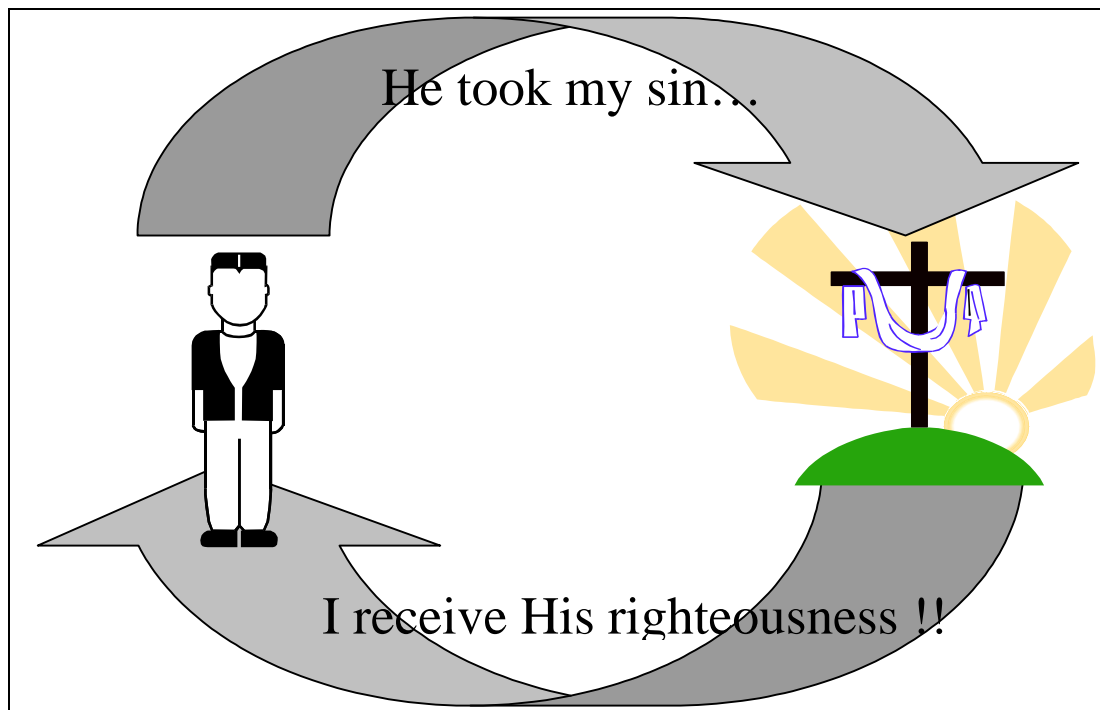
In summary, justification is **the gracious act of God in which He causes a great exchange to take place**. As a sinner approaches God in repentance and faith, God removes the guilt of his or her sin and gives it to Christ. He also takes Christ's perfect righteousness and gives it to the new believer. The result is that the new believer's sin is completely forgiven and he or she receives from Christ the perfect righteousness needed to stand righteous before God (2Co 5:21, Is 61:10, Ro 4:3-5, 8:1, Eph 4:22-24).

Revelation 20:12 speaks of a day when God will open the books that contain the records of our lives and He will judge us according to our deeds. What do you think we will find in our books? The prophet Isaiah explains that under the judgment of a holy God, "all of us have become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous acts are like filthy rags" (Isa 64:6). Most people will be surprised to discover that their books contain long records of sin. However, when we look at Jesus' life, we see that He was perfectly obedient to God for he lived a righteous life without sinning (Hebrews 4:15).

When we repented of our sins and accepted, by faith, Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, God took away our sins and gave them to Christ. He then took Christ's righteousness and gave it to us. The result is that our record of sin was given to Christ, and Christ's record of righteousness was given to us. **Justification can be pictured as the exchange of our "record of sin" for Jesus Christ's "record of righteousness."**

The Great Exchange illustration (Fig. 1.2) helps us understand justification by faith.

**Fig. 1.2 The Great Exchange**



### III. THE CRUCIAL ISSUES OF JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH

#### A. We Cannot Justify Ourselves

Observing these key aspects of justification as a whole, there is an important truth that is woven through these ideas. When we are told that justification is a righteousness given apart from our obedience to the Law, that it is given through faith in Jesus Christ, that it is given to sinners by God's grace, and that it is paid for by the redemption of Christ... all of these ideas express the truth that man has nothing to do with this righteousness.

Explaining the true nature of justification, Martin Luther has rightly described it as "**passive righteousness**", because we have nothing to do with producing it. Jesus Christ earned this righteousness for us and we may only receive it by faith. This truth is the foundation of man's **justification before God and this is where true Christianity finds its great difference with all other religions, as well as with the false forms of Christianity.** This is also where we have the greatest difficulty ourselves, because justification by faith expresses to us the degree of our true sinfulness and our infinite need for grace. It tells us that to be righteous before God, we must look outside ourselves because we do not have this righteousness, and we must humbly accept the only means through which we may be right with God through faith in Jesus Christ.

This is the key issue of justification. If we think that we can stand righteous before God by anything other than the provision of Christ, then we grossly miscalculate the true holiness of God and the depths of our own true sinfulness. How can we think that we are worthy in ourselves to have peace with a perfectly holy God? This is the worst kind of arrogant presumption because it reduces God to the level of sinful man and lifts up corrupt man to the level of a perfect God.

#### B. We Cannot Take Credit for What God has Done

In giving his life, Jesus paid the penalty for all lawbreakers. Because of who Jesus is, we can trust God to justify us. Not fully trusting in the death of Jesus Christ on the cross as the basis of our forgiveness and our relationship with God is insulting to God to say the least.

**Example:**

Consider a man who has done a terrible crime, and is awaiting the penalty of death. As he is waiting, one of his friends goes to the judge and asks for his pardon. The judge replies, "I will let him go, if you give me your son to die in his place." The friend says, "This is ridiculous. How could I ever do this?" But the judge says, "This is the only way that I will let him go free." After much agony, the father decides he will sacrifice his son for the friend...knowing it is the only way. In obedience, the son goes to the judge and agrees to die in the place of his father's friend. The next day the judge executes the son and sets the man free.

Soon after this, the father happens to overhear a conversation between the released prisoner and a friend. When asked, "How were you set free from your penalty of death?" the released man replies, "Well, while I was in prison I kept myself clean, behaved well, and did what the guards asked. Then they let me go because of my good behavior."

How do you think this man responded to what his friend said? How could this man think that his behavior had anything to do with his release after his son had given his life for him?

It is not because of our behavior, or even the greatness of our repentance, that God forgives us of our sins. Even though God's Word teaches that true faith will be demonstrated by our love for and obedience to God, we should not confuse this with the truth that God has pardoned our sin solely because He is loving and gracious, giving His only Son to die in our place on the cross. Jesus Christ paid the penalty for our sin, and it is His sacrifice that bought our freedom from God's wrath.

### **C. We Must Trust God Completely**

Those who believe in religion, and therefore in justification by works, build their relationships with God on their obedience to Him. The problem then is, their conscience keeps telling them that they aren't doing a very good job of obeying Him, and therefore it convicts them that they have no right to believe that God overlooks their sin or will pardon it without justice. This creates a crisis, in which they either conclude that they are not so bad (searing the conscience), or that if they do something that pleases God, God will overlook their sin (compromising the true righteousness of God).

Even Christians face this problem. Our conscience tells us that we do a poor job of pleasing God. **At this point, we are tempted to turn to false cures to soothe our conscience and solve the problem of sin.** Sometimes we try to soothe it by thinking that we are not as bad as someone else is; therefore, we must not be very bad. Or we seek to do much better, trying to make up for our failure. This is a very subtle error because resolving to obey God better is not wrong. But what we are inclined to do is base our relationship with God on our performance, on religion instead of on the Gospel. We commit a critical error when we shift the basis of our trust in salvation away from the work of Jesus Christ on the cross, and onto our performance or obedience. This wrong thinking can cause us to hide from our real sinfulness or become discouraged, and even depressed.

## **CONCLUSION**

As we live the Christian life, we cannot move our faith away from the forgiveness and righteousness Jesus Christ earned for us. The death of Jesus on the cross paid the penalty and allows us to stand just before God. Justification by faith must remain the foundation of our relationship with God. The cross is our only hope for peace with Him. There is no other place that sinners, even justified sinners, can meet God except at the cross.

Building our life upon justification by faith in Jesus Christ should set us free to serve God in bold ways, not because we always obey God perfectly, but because we have the confidence that our relationship with God is built upon Christ's work for us. Justification is not a matter of our own personal effort—but instead is by grace through faith. Justification by faith puts grace before our obedience, which is the way God relates to us in Christ. As we learn that our relationship with God always has been and always will be—based upon His grace, and as we trust in the finished work of His Son, we realize how truly great His love is. We have been saved by grace, and we can only live by grace.



## **QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION, REVIEW AND APPLICATION**

- Can you simply, yet clearly, define justification by faith?
- What does it mean when we describe justification by faith as a “passive righteousness”?
- In our daily walk with the Lord, why is it so hard for we who began in grace to continue in grace, trusting in the finished work of Jesus Christ on the cross?
- How does justification by faith affect the way you relate to God and the way you think He relates to you?

## **ACTION PLAN**

Teach someone else the meaning of justification by faith, and then have him write out the definition on his own. Bring what they have written to the next training session.

SPIRITUAL  
CHARACTER

LESSON 2

# Living by the Gospel

## REJECTING SELF RELIANCE

### ☛ Lesson Purpose

The purpose of this lesson is to help the church planter see the importance of faith rooted in Christ as the means for spiritual growth.

### ☛ Main Points

- The Gospel is central in personal spiritual growth
- We must reject depending on ourselves for our growth in Christ and our success in ministry.

### ☛ Desired Outcomes

When the content of this lesson has been mastered, each church planter should:

- Know how understanding the Gospel effects on-going Christian growth.
- Be more aware of his need for Christ and grow in humble dependence upon Him.
- Understand the difference between living by his own strength and living by faith in Christ and His accomplishments on the cross.

## INTRODUCTION

Most Christians clearly understand that our justification before God is by faith alone. But what does that doctrine mean in our lives from that point on? What should the Gospel mean to those who received it long ago? Many Christians are confused on these points. Many consider concepts related to salvation such as justification by faith to be of little value once one has been a Christian for many years. They may even be tempted to replace these very important teachings in ways that exalt rule keeping and self-reliance. In this lesson, we will explore how the Gospel impacts even a mature Christian while looking at the biblical warnings against replacing the Gospel with anything else.

## I. DISTRACTIONS FROM THE GOSPEL

One of the earliest epistles that Paul wrote was to the churches he planted on his first missionary journey in the region of Galatia. These Christians were confused about how they were justified before God, as well as about how they grew as Christians, also known as sanctification. In addition, they had lost their sense of joy in Christ (Gal 4:15), and were attacking one another (Gal 5:15).

Certainly Paul was sad about the condition of these newly planted churches. Paul opened his letter to them with a strong rebuke for what had happened. He says, "I am astonished at how quickly you turned away ... to a different gospel" (Gal 1:6-7). Later, Paul wonders if he wasted his time on them (Gal 4:11). In Paul's frustration, he even calls the Galatians "foolish" (Gal. 3:1,3).

Paul understood that the Galatians had stopped living in dependence on Christ. He says that they had become "bewitched" (Gal 3:1). This word expresses the idea of "being fascinated" with something. They had been led to believe that they were justified by observing the law. They had turned the Christian life into a stage performance rather than a living dependence on Christ (Gal 4:10-11). They had begun to seek God's favor through obedience to the law and not through the Gospel (Gal 3:1-5). In doing so, they were cutting themselves off from their true source of strength. They had been drawn away from Christ.

This is the reason Paul rebuked the Galatian Christians. They were confused about how growth took place in their lives. They became "bewitched" by the rules and rituals of a religious life and their focus

came off Christ and onto themselves. They had turned to attaining justification through good works, which is really self-reliance, and thus they did not understand their ongoing need for Christ.

## II. THE DANGERS OF SELF RELIANCE

Like the Galatians, we can be drawn away from Christ and the cross. Our lives often reflect a lack of dependence on Christ coupled with an underestimation of the power of sin. For example, we may turn the Christian life into a performance. We attend all the prescribed weekly church services and outwardly, everything looks good, at least in the eyes of others. But even as we participate in these activities, we can become bored with the preaching of God's Word and our worship can become mere lip service. Inside, there is little faith and love for God, but what is really alarming is that we hardly notice this change taking place within us.

This is the subtle and fatal danger that Paul was directly confronting in Galatians 3. It is deadly, because our life becomes a surface Christianity in which we are concerned only about appearances while we are dying inside. It is like a man who has cancer but does not know it, and the cancer cells are spreading and killing everything that they come in contact with. One day he starts to feel bad and he goes to the doctor only to find out that it is too late.

Another example is wrongly thinking that we can handle sin in our own strength. For example, a man may think that he can entertain lustful desires in his heart. "After all," he tells himself, "desires do not dictate behavior." He convinces himself that lust is a minor offense that he can afford... unlike adultery, a sin he would never commit. He believes that he has mastered the sin within him, but the reality is that entertaining a sin, *any* sin, separates him from closeness with God. In Matthew 5:28, Jesus clearly states, "But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart."

Like cancer, sin is a deadly disease. We should not be foolish and think that we can ignore this disease or overcome it through self-effort or by outward conformity to the commandments we find in the Bible. If we continue to rely upon these weak means to overcome sin, it will kill us.

## III. THE CENTRALITY OF THE GOSPEL IN PERSONAL SPIRITUAL GROWTH

It is through our failure to live the Christian life in our own strength that we discover our weakness and the importance of walking by faith in Christ. Several times in Galatians 3:2-5, Paul uses the preposition "by" to express the means through which something is obtained. First, he refers to the beginning of the Christian life and the promise of the Holy Spirit, and he asks, "Did you receive the Spirit *by* observing the law, or *by* believing what you heard?" (Gal 3:2). In other words, how did we receive the Spirit? How did our Christian lives begin? According to Paul, it was "by faith" in the Gospel (Gal 3:8). He then moves on to how the Christian grows, also referred to as the doctrine of "sanctification." He asks, "After beginning with the Spirit, are you now trying to attain your goal by human effort?" (Gal 3:3). In other words, if we could not begin the work ourselves but had to believe God and trust in the work of His Spirit, why do we think that we can now perfect the work by our own effort? Then he asks a final, very poignant question. "Does God give his Spirit and work miracles among you because you observe the law, or because you believe what you heard?" (Gal 3:5). We must think about this last question carefully, because the Bible clearly teaches that in our obedience we experience God's blessings.

Notice the contrast Paul is making. He contrasts *obedience* with *faith* as the means through which God works. We were not saved by obedience, but by grace through faith. Furthermore, not only is faith the means through which we are justified; it is the means through which we are sanctified. We grow through faith in the Gospel and as we accept Christ's accomplishments for us and in us through faith. In both our justification and our sanctification we are called to live by faith.

Trusting in our own resources is perhaps the best practical description of unbelief, but we are called to stop depending on our own resources and to live by faith. God calls us to abandon the pursuit of self-righteousness. We do not have any righteousness but that given to us through our union with Christ. Faith humbly admits our need and looks outside ourselves to Christ and accepts the forgiveness and perfect righteousness He has to offer.

**Example:**

During the Protestant Reformation, Luther and Erasmus were debating about what best portrays our salvation and our need for grace. Erasmus admitted that sin had made man sick, but he went on to say that our need for grace is more like a young toddler who is learning to walk. A person is able to take some steps to God, but sometimes he also needs His heavenly Father to catch him and help him along. Luther was repulsed by such a little need for grace and told Erasmus that he was most assuredly wrong. He said that our salvation is more like a caterpillar that is completely surrounded by a ring of fire. Unless someone reaches down and rescues the caterpillar, it will certainly perish.

Our need for grace in salvation is absolute. God's perfect holiness demands justice upon man who is full of sin. We must completely abandon any hope in our own righteousness and cling to Jesus Christ or we will surely perish. God must rescue us like the caterpillar. But God also calls us to this same abandonment in our sanctification. We have to keep going to the truth of the Gospel and finding our righteousness in Christ if we are going to draw near to God. His holiness will keep exposing our sin to the core, and if we don't believe that we stand justified before God because of our faith alone in the righteousness of Christ given to us, we will be devastated with God's holiness. And if we think that we can cure this disease of sin inside of us by our own strength, we are deceived in measuring the power of sin. Faith is the complete abandonment of our own resources, because we see our woeful weakness. As we sense our great need, faith clings to Christ and all the benefits He alone can provide for us. The more we grow in faith, the more we will seek to attach ourselves to Jesus and seek the life and power which He alone can give.

#### **IV. THE CENTRALITY OF THE GOSPEL IN MINISTRY**

How does this apply to the way God relates to you in terms of ministry to others? Many believers live with the idea that the results of their ministry depend on our how well they perform or how much of God's favor rests on them at any given moment. Reasons for ministry success or failure are numerous. But because of the way that God loves us and because of the nature of the Gospel, success in ministry depends more on God's power than on our performance.

As example, let's compare two days in your life. One Saturday you get up and go to a prayer meeting as is your custom. On the way out, you have a brief but pleasant conversation with your neighbor. You go on to have a wonderful day in which God's presence is obvious in many ways. On the way home, you have an opportunity to share the Gospel with someone, and so you share Christ and His salvation with him. The next Saturday is quite a bit different. You wake up late, miss the prayer meeting, and speak unkindly to your neighbor on your way out. In general, the day is filled with confusion and God does not seem to be near. You begin to feel badly about what you have done, but to your surprise, you have another opportunity to share the Gospel with someone. The question is, would you pass by the opportunity because you feel like you are unworthy to share the Gospel with this person? Do you think that it is possible for God to bless you on a bad day? If not, then why not?

Our worst days are never so bad that we are beyond God's grace, and our best days are never so good that we are not in need of God's grace.

We often think that while we are saved by grace, we either receive or lose God's blessing based upon our performance. But we must understand that if justification by faith in Jesus Christ is the basis of our relationship with God, our worst days are never so bad that we are beyond God's grace, and our best days are never so good that we are not in need of God's grace. We are always in need of grace.

#### **V. LEARNING TO ROOT OUR FAITH IN CHRIST**

God's solution to our inability to please Him in our own strength is not that we try harder. His solution is that we believe more strongly the truths of the Gospel. By believing these truths, we begin to root our lives in Christ.

Often, when we face a barrier in life or some difficult responsibility, we begin to strategize and think of ways in which we can accomplish the task. We often avoid difficult situations, because we cannot imagine how we can do something. The whole concern here is with our own ability.

What happens to us when we are surprised one day with the true sinfulness of our heart? Although we may prefer that our sin remain concealed, God is working to expose our sin. Now and then, even we are shocked by the greatness of our sin. What do we do when this happens? We might want to do a couple of weeks of penance. Or we might start hating ourselves because of our sinfulness. Not until we have suffered awhile do we go to God and confess our sin to Him.

Do you see what is happening? We are trying to atone for our sin through suffering. This is the principle behind penance. We try to make ourselves worthy of God's forgiveness. When we do this, we are resorting to our own resources.

**Example:**

On August 21, 1544, Martin Luther wrote to one of his faithful and trusted friends, George Spalatin. Spalatin had given some advice that he later came to regard as sinful. When he reached this conclusion, he was immersed in grief and guilt. He was convinced that he should have known better and that he, of all people, should not have made this mistake. He could not be consoled. When Luther learned of his condition, he wrote to offer him comfort, saying, "... my faithful request and admonition is that you join our company and associate with us, who are real, great, and hard-boiled sinners. You must not by any means make Christ to seem paltry and trifling to us, as though He could be our Helper only when we want to be rid of imaginary, nominal, and childish sins. No! No! That would not be good for us. He must rather be a Savior and Redeemer for real, great, grievous, and damnable transgressions and iniquities, yea, and from the greatest and most shocking sins; to be brief, from all sins added together in a grand total..." From: *Martin Luther Companion to the Contemporary Christian*.

Have we become small sinners who only need a small Savior or are we real sinners who need a real Savior? Faith connects us to Jesus, and to be connected to Jesus means that we are disconnected from everything else. We cannot add to what Christ has done for us. As one man has said, "Anything we add to Christ's work pollutes it. It becomes like the smell of a skunk at a beautiful sunset. It is a nice scene, but you just don't want to be there."

This is especially true for those with whom we live and who see our real selves. If we try to add our righteousness to Christ's, we become self-righteous and impatient with others. If we live by our own strength, our relationships are very self-serving. We never truly change.

## CONCLUSION

The Gospel must remain central in our walk with Christ. Replacing the Gospel with some other system of justification destroys the value of our salvation. Jesus Christ's accomplishments on the cross fully benefit only those who forsake all other systems of justification and become men and women of faith rooted in Christ. Shifting our confidence from Christ's accomplishment to our own accomplishments and rule keeping, or to anything else, only produces a false righteousness.

The problem is that we too often do not sense our need. Where there is no sense of need, there is no faith. And where there is no faith, there is no dynamic connection to Christ, and His life in us begins to evaporate. Our growth comes as we learn how to abandon our own resources and begin to walk with a faith that is rooted in Christ. It is then that we discover what God so wants us to see: that we need Christ far more than we imagine. It is through our need for Christ that God stimulates our faith.

## QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION, REVIEW AND APPLICATION

- How had the Galatian believers fallen away from the Gospel?
- Are you losing your sense of joy in Christ? If so, why?
- How does the Gospel apply to us as believers?
- What is the difference between self-effort and faith?
- How does living by faith impact our daily thoughts and actions in life?

SPIRITUAL  
CHARACTER

3

LESSON

# Christian Growth

## MAKING CHRIST THE FOCAL POINT OF THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

### ☛ Lesson Purpose

The purpose of this lesson is to see that the cross must become the focal point of our lives if we are to truly grow.

### ☛ Main Points

- There are many misunderstandings concerning spiritual growth.
- The cross plays a critical role in spiritual growth.
- Our misunderstandings hinder growth.

### ☛ Desired Outcomes

When the content of this lesson has been mastered, each participant should:

- Be a Christian who glories in Christ.
- Know that to grow, he must focus upon the cross- relating all of life to the work of Christ.
- Lay his self-reliance at the feet of Christ and, by faith, claim the power that only his risen Savior can provide.

## INTRODUCTION

In this spiritual character track, we seek to build a foundation for dynamic Christian living. This critical area cries out for attention as we see church leaders become spiritually shipwrecked because of one sin or another. How can we ourselves keep from being shipwrecked? How can our love for God grow strong and not become cold? How can we grow in our faith, so that we have a vital, living relationship with Jesus Christ?

We would like to present a picture of how a Christian grows to have a greater love for God and a living faith that enables him to spiritually lead the Church of Jesus Christ. Specifically, we will learn how to make the cross of Jesus Christ the focal point of spiritual life.

## I. WHAT IS SPIRITUAL GROWTH?

**Spiritual growth is the continuing work of God in the life of the believer, making him or her actually holy.** The word holy means here "bearing an actual likeness to God." As we grow as a Christian, our moral condition is brought into conformity with our legal status before God (as believers, we are declared righteous). Spiritual growth is a continuation of what was done in salvation, when a new life was conferred upon and instilled within the believer.

Notice the several facets of our growth. The Holy Spirit regenerated us so that we might become transformed into the likeness of God. But this transformation is an ongoing process, and this process is advanced through a cooperative work between God and the Christian. We are told in Philippians 2:12-13, "Work out your salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you, to will and to act according to His good purpose." Here we see the partnership we must enter into with God. We cannot be passive and think that God alone will produce His likeness in us. We must be active as well. We must "work." But this work is not to gain God's acceptance; rather it is the expression of our understanding and grateful acknowledgment of the forgiveness of our sins through the blood of Jesus Christ and our adoption as children of God.

Many illustrations and diagrams have been used to explain the process of spiritual growth.

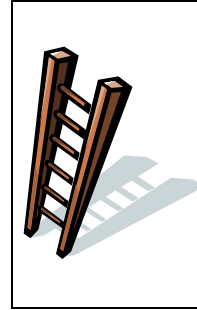
### A. The Ladder or Stairs

Many believers view spiritual growth as a ladder or as a set of stairs that we climb. When we are really spiritual, we consider ourselves to be high on the ladder. However, when we are not spiritual, we are low on the ladder.

### B. The Dying of the old self

Others view spiritual growth as a process of exchanging the old sinful self for the new man created in Christ. As the old man dies, the new man comes into being. When that happens, the person grows spiritually.

Diagrams such as this are not necessarily wrong, but as we will see, there is a better way to understand spiritual growth.



## II. THE ROLE OF THE CROSS IN SPIRITUAL GROWTH

### A. Growing in Knowledge of God's Holiness

The first part of the growth process involves growing in knowledge of God. The Lord declares through the prophet Jeremiah, "Let not the wise man boast of his wisdom or the strong man boast of his strength or the rich man boast of his riches, but let him who boasts boast about this: that he understands and knows me, that I am the Lord who exercises kindness, justice and righteousness on earth; for in these I delight, declares the Lord" (Jer 9:23,24). In John 17:3 Jesus says, "Now this is eternal life: that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You sent."

Knowing God is the purpose and meaning of eternal life. The chief pursuit of the Christian life should be to know God in truth. Therefore, when we continually grow to know Him in all His greatness, we grow to be like Him. The key to knowing God is understanding His holy character. We learn to feel as the Apostle Paul did when he said, "I consider everything a loss compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord" (Php 3:8a). This is part of the sanctification process.

### B. Learning to Recognize Our Sin

As we grow in our knowledge of God in all His perfection, we grow to know ourselves as well. In particular, we come to know our sinfulness in contrast to the perfect character of God. The nearer we draw to God, the further we see that we are from Him. The more glorious we understand He truly is, the more terrible our sin becomes to us.

Growing in understanding one's own sinfulness can be illustrated in the life of Paul, the apostle. In AD 55 Paul described himself as "the least of the apostles" (1Co 15:9). Later in AD 60 Paul describes himself as "the least of all saints" (Eph 3:8). Still later, in the end of his life in AD 64, he describes himself as "chief of all sinners" (1Ti 1:15). Did Paul become a greater sinner as he matured? It certainly does not seem that way. But, it does seem that he developed more and more humility and sensitivity concerning his sin throughout his life. As he matured, he came to realize that some of his own attitudes that did not bother him previously were actually sinful. This is part of the spiritual growth process.

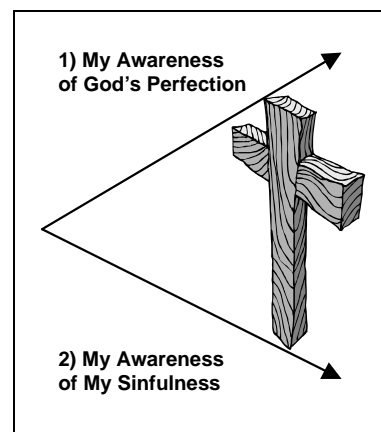
### C. The Resulting Gap

Realization of the gap that exists between sinful man and Holy God was, of course, what brought us to faith in Jesus in the first place. The cross fills the gap whenever a person is saved (figure 3.1).

But even after we come to know Christ as Savior, we should still continue to grow in our knowledge of God's holiness and in the awareness of our own sinfulness. This can be a very fearful experience. To know God and His holiness is to invite self-exposure, and this is a terrifying experience for those who wish to hide their faults and shortcomings. However, for the growing Christian, the gap shows the continued need for Christ and the magnitude of what He has done on the cross.

So the cross continues to increase in importance to us as we grow to know God in His greatness. The greater we know God, the more we feel unworthy before Him. As this knowledge grows, we see the significance of our forgiveness and reconciliation to God through Jesus Christ. As we discover the greatness of God, (as Isaiah did when he saw the glory of the Lord in the Temple, or as the nation Israel did when they met God at Mount Sinai), we discover the true glory of our Savior. His blood washes sinners clean and clothes us with white garments so that we may draw even closer to this God of glory.

Figure 3.1



### III. HINDRANCES TO CHRISTIAN GROWTH

Having at some point accepted the fact that Jesus paid the price to bridge the gap, we strive to move on in our Christian growth. Many Christians have one of two basic problems growing in their faith.

#### A. Phariseeism—the problem of pride

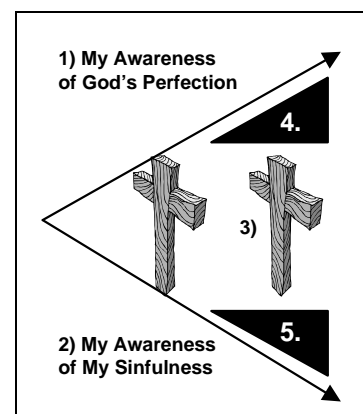
Many believers get caught up in actions and thus fall into the trap of seeking to gain acceptance from God and others through performance. Often, the focus shifts off of the work of Christ on the cross onto their service to God. Like the Pharisees in New Testament times, they live as if the Christian life consists only of what we do for God.

The problem here is that they don't realize that there are other, even more important aspects of the Christian life than service, such as knowing God and having a personal relationship with Him (Lk 10:38-42). Modern day Pharisees falsely believe that they can close the gap that exists between themselves and God with their own good works. Pride, or a desire to look good in the eyes of others, may motivate this. Performance becomes the foundation upon which these people build their reputations.

Sin also influences the modern Pharisee in other ways. He/she may think that his sin does not matter to God (*notice wedge number 4 in figure 3.2*). In such a case, the importance of the cross is diminished. What he is actually doing here is reducing God in his mind to be less than He truly is. Others may think, "I'm not really *that* big of a sinner!" These people put a wedge (*number 5 in figure 3.2*) in the bottom space beneath the cross. Isn't it much easier to see someone else's sin than our own sin? Why is this? Is it true that we have less of a problem with sin than others do? If we think this, we are deceiving ourselves. Because we think too highly of ourselves, again the importance of the cross diminishes.

In order to avoid the pharaseeism, we must grow in understanding of the true holiness of God and the true sinfulness of our own hearts. Seeing this will humble us and reveal our need for God's grace.

Figure 3.2





## **B. Despair—Lack of belief**

Others have a different struggle. They recognize God's holiness, and thus their own sinfulness, and they despair because they do not know what to do about it. They try to fill the gap with good works, but they feel that they can never do enough good works to really please God. They may strive to spend time in God's Word each day, but on days that they fail, they feel terribly defeated about their walk with God. They try to keep their tongues in check, but when they fail, they wonder how God could really love them. Because of all their failures, they conclude that they can never please God. Thus they despair.

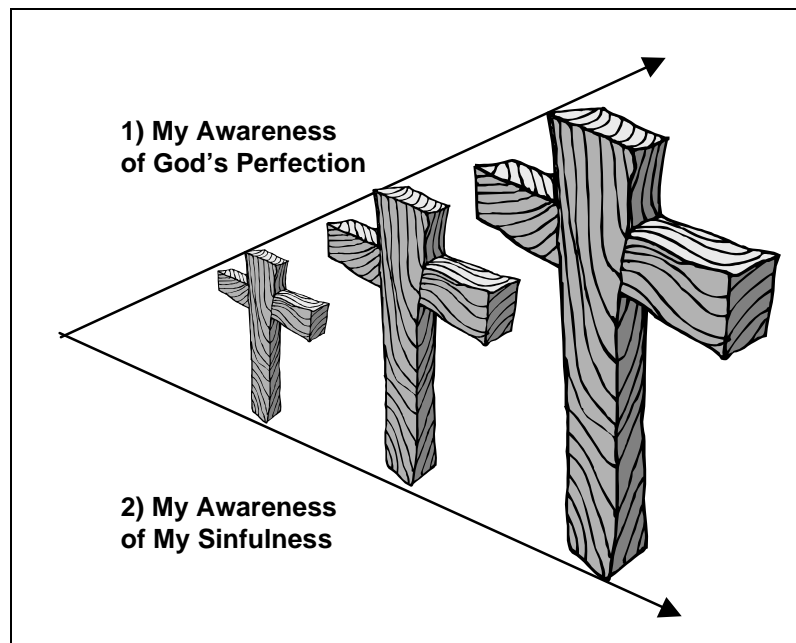
The problem here is a lack of faith in what God has done. God has provided all we need to be acceptable before Him in the sacrifice of Christ Jesus (Heb 10:14). We cannot add to what he has done.

## **C. The Answer: The Cross must grow**

The two problems described above are really similar to one another. The Pharisee incorrectly believes he can earn God's favor with his own works while the one who despairs correctly knows he cannot earn God's favor by his works. But in both cases the standard is wrong. The focus on earning God's favor is the foundational problem.

Since the problems are similar, the solutions are quite the same. Basically, in order for the gap to be closed, the cross must grow. Nothing we do can bridge the gap. As Paul said, "But God forbid that I should boast, except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ" (Gal 6:14a). Jesus Christ and His work on the cross become more and more important to us.

**Figure 3.3 - The Growing Cross**



We must believe the new realities of our life in Jesus Christ. Though we are still prone to sin, God is gracious and forgives our sin. We stand perfectly righteous in Christ only because of His work on the cross. We have become children of the living God and are loved by Him. He delights in us and is committed to making us into the image of Christ.

## **CONCLUSION**

The cross is our only hope for peace with Him. There is no other place that sinners, even justified sinners, can meet God except at the cross.

In order to grow spiritually, our focus should be on understanding more fully the realities of Christ's accomplishments on the cross rather than on trying harder. Day by day, and moment by moment, we must remember what Christ has done for us on the cross by taking away our sin and giving us new life. In this view of sanctification, we understand that our flesh remains evil until the day we die. But we also recognize the life of Christ in us.

As we grow in knowing God, we are also being changed more and more into His image. Our inability to do this on our own becomes clear and we develop total dependence on Christ. The Gospel becomes much more relevant to us, and our need for Christ becomes much greater. We understand more deeply what we first believed. We remind ourselves of the truths of the Gospel. By faith we are making the accomplishments of Christ's death and resurrection more of a reality in our lives.

## **QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION, REVIEW AND APPLICATION**

- What is spiritual growth? How is it related to salvation?
- How do you grow in holiness? Describe the process in daily terms and how you have learned that the accomplishments of Christ apply to this process.
- What is your greatest difficulty concerning your spiritual growth?
- List the accomplishments of Christ's death on the cross and resurrection from the dead. Write a description of how you can make these accomplishments more of a reality in your lives.

## **ACTION PLAN**

Describe to one other person what you have learned about growth in holiness and explain to them how you apply the accomplishments of Christ to your daily life. Give a specific example of changes in your life as a believer as a result of your understanding of sanctification.



SPIRITUAL  
CHARACTER

LESSON 4

# The Transforming Power of the Gospel

## FREEDOM FROM THE MASTERY OF SIN

### ☞ Lesson Purpose

The purpose of this lesson is to explain how we were set free from the mastery of sin as we were united to Christ, in His death and resurrection, so that we might experience the power of the Gospel in our lives as we walk by faith in this new reality.

### ☞ Main Points

- Our salvation means we have been transformed internally.
- Because of our new nature in Christ we have the power to overcome sin.
- God wants us to walk in the Spirit so that we will not fulfill the desires of the flesh.

### ☞ Desired Outcomes

When the content of this lesson has been mastered, each participant should:

- Understand the significance of union with Christ and the power available to render the flesh dead, no longer mastered by sin.
- Walk by faith in the personal, spiritual death and resurrection experienced in Christ and in salvation from the power of sin.

### ☞ Suggestions to Trainers

This lesson makes many references to Romans 6:3-10. Carefully studying these passages in preparation will enable you to teach this lesson effectively.

## INTRODUCTION

The Gospel is the foundation of our relationship with God. From God's perspective, our relationship is built solely upon Christ's forgiveness and perfect righteousness given to us by faith. This truth should bring the ability to conquer sin in our lives resulting in profound personal transformation. Yet most of us still struggle with sin and sometimes wonder how we can be transformed today. Why do believers sin? And, what can be done about it? How can we be truly transformed according to the Gospel?

## I. THE GRACE OF GOD AND THE PRACTICE OF SIN

### A. Can We Go on Sinning?

If God's grace truly abounds beyond all our sin and we are justified by faith apart from our obedience, can we go on practicing sin? If God's grace is offered to those who don't even deserve it but receive it because of their faith in Jesus Christ, it is only natural to ask this question. May we go on sinning and expect God's grace to cover it?

The apostle Paul anticipated this question in his letter to the Galatians when he said, "Do not use your freedom to indulge the sinful nature" (Gal 5:13). And this is the very question Paul responds to in Romans 6 when he asks, "Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase? By no means! We died to sin; how can we live in it any longer?" (Ro 6:1b, 2).

## B. The Biblical Answer

The answer to this question is clearly "no", we shall not go on sinning. We understand this and try hard not to sin. Self-discipline and rules become the norm for the serious Christian who wants to avoid sinning. But the real corrective for sin is related to the inner transformation of the believer.

As we study Paul's answer in Romans 6, we understand not only why we cannot go on practicing sin, but also discover the new freedom we have from the power of sin. This is a vital part of victorious Christian living. In our salvation, God has provided the solution to our two most fundamental needs: He has delivered us from the penalty of sin, reconciling us to Himself, and He has delivered us from the power of sin, that we might live in true freedom to love Him. Romans 6:1-2 instructs us that we cannot continue in the practice of sin, as we did before we were Christians, because we have "died to sin."

In our salvation, God has provided the solution to our two most fundamental needs: He has delivered us from the penalty of sin, and He has delivered us from the power of sin.

## II. BAPTIZED INTO HIS DEATH—RAISED IN HIS RESURRECTION (RO 6:3-10)

In his letter to the Romans as he answers the question concerning sin, Paul uses baptism to illustrate the change that takes place when a person becomes a child of God. Read Romans 6:3-10 carefully.

### A. Our Death with Christ

#### 1. *How did we die?*

In Romans 6:2-5 Paul explains how we died to sin. We were united with Christ and we were baptized into His death. Before we consider our baptism into Christ's death, we ought to focus on the real issue that brought about our death to sin. It happened through our union with Christ. There are several action statements in this passage, which express the union between Christ and ourselves. In verse 3 we see that "all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized *into* His death". In verse 4, "we were . . . buried *with* Him". In verse 5, "we have been united *with* Him," and in verse 8, we have "died *with* Christ."

All of these statements make it clear that through our union *with* Christ in His death we have died ourselves. If we want to be free from the sin nature within us, we have to experience death in our inner man. When God supernaturally united us to Christ, He put to death the inner man even though the outer man continues to live.

The term "united" (*sumfutoi*<sup>5</sup> in Greek) in verse 5, ". . . *we have become united with Him* . . ." is a term that was used to describe the grafting together of two separate plants. When a foreign branch was grafted to a tree, at the time it began to take life from the tree it was said to have been *sumfutoi*, "united" with it. This was a living, organic union. This is the kind of living union that takes place when we believe in Christ. We are supernaturally united to Jesus Christ, and His life gives life to our inner man. But before we can live in freedom, we must first die, so that our inner man can be separated from the sin nature. So we are united to Christ in His death.

So, our death with Christ caused the separation between our inner man and the sin nature, which resulted in our freedom from the mastery of sin. Though the sin nature still exists, and is a very evil force within us, its mastery over us has been broken and we are no longer chained to its power. This is our certain, new reality and we must believe its truth if we are to successfully live the Christian life.

#### 2. *What happened because of our death with Christ?*

Romans 6:6 tells us what happened as a result of our death with Christ: our "old self" was crucified. The old self is simply the inner man that existed before we believed in Jesus Christ and were given new life by Him. It is the old man that was enslaved to sin. However, when we

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<sup>5</sup> συμφυτος

were united to Christ in His death, this inner man was crucified with the result that our body of sin was “done away with.” The Greek word *katarge*<sup>6</sup>, “done away with,” does not suggest annihilation, as though sin has been eliminated from within us. However, it does mean, “to render inoperative or invalid,” in that something is made ineffective by removing its power of control. Paul uses the same word in Romans 3:3 when he says that man’s unbelief does not “render inoperative” the faithfulness of God. In Romans 7:2, he says that a woman is “released” from her husband if he dies. This is the meaning in our context. We have been released from the mastery of sin because its power to control has been removed. The chains of sin have been broken and we are no longer slaves to it.

## **B. The End Result: New Life with Christ**

There is one final idea communicated in this passage that explains the transformation our inner man has gone through. We are told that we are not only united with Christ in His death, but also in His resurrection. We have not only died, but we have also been resurrected to new life. Through our union with Christ, because Christ lives, our inner man now lives. Romans 6:4 tells us that as the power of the Father was demonstrated in raising Christ from the dead, so we are made to walk in newness of life as a demonstration of this same power. The same power that raised Christ from the dead has now also raised us from the dead.

The result of all this is that something very powerful and supernatural has happened to us, and our inner man is no longer what it used to be. The old man has died and a new man lives. What kind of new man is this? In verses 6 and 7 of Romans 6 we learn that this new inner man is free from sin and no longer a slave to it. This is who we now are in Christ.

## **C. Reckoning by Faith Our New Life in Christ**

It is imperative for Christians to bring these truths into their everyday lives. We all know that sin still exists within us, and as we continue in our earthly struggle with sin, we can lose sight of our new life that truly exists in Christ. There are times when we don’t feel very free from sin, and we wonder if anything supernatural has happened in us at all. We can agree with the Apostle Paul who said, “For what I do is not the good I want to do; no, the evil I do not want to do—this I keep on doing” (Ro 7:19).

This is why Paul’s closing words in Romans 6 are so important to us. Three times in this passage Paul has commanded us to “know” this truth (vv. 3, 6, 9). He wants us to understand what has truly happened to us in Christ. Then, in verse 11, Paul concludes, “*In the same way, count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus.*” In this verse, the Greek word *logizomai*<sup>7</sup>, “count,” was a mathematical term used when someone was calculating a problem or counting numbers. It is used figuratively in this passage to “fully affirm” the truths that are taught here. We are being exhorted by Paul to put our confidence in and fully believe this fundamental truth about us. The old man no longer lives within us. He was a slave to sin, but he has been crucified as we have been united to Christ in His death and resurrection, and we are now transformed into new men and women. We now must affirm and believe that we have been made alive in Christ and that we have been made new creatures inside.

Our Christian life is a life in which we walk by faith in this truth. Even though we don’t perfectly experience this all the time, it does not change the reality of what has happened. We must continue every day to repent of our sin and believe that we are one with Christ, and that we now live in union with Him.

## **III. THE POWER NOT TO SIN**

According to Romans 6, because we are united to Christ, we died and were resurrected with Him. His victory over sin was our victory over sin. Sin is no longer our master. But this great Christian reality

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<sup>6</sup> καταργεω

<sup>7</sup> λογίζομαι

does not mean that sin no longer seeks to enslave us. Sin is not our master, even though it is always striving to regain its authority and power over us.

You might be thinking, "But I constantly struggle with sin. How can I beat it?" Be sure that no list of rules or self-discipline alone can lead to a victorious Christian life. We can try and try in the power of the flesh and we will eventually fail because our flesh is prone to sin. The real corrective for sin is related to the inner transformation of the believer. We fight sin by strengthening our awareness of who we are in Christ.

#### **A. Understand the New Nature**

When you became a Christian, you didn't add a divine nature to your old sinful nature. You exchanged natures—you became a new creation (2Co 5:17). You were transferred from the kingdom of darkness to the kingdom of light, when you became a child of God. "Our old self (old nature) was crucified with him" (Ro. 6:6). The old nature is powerless!

If we have a new nature, why do we sin? There's a Greek word used many, many times throughout the New Testament as a source of sin in the believer's life. It's the word flesh. What is the flesh? It's the part of our mind, emotions and will that has been conditioned or trained to sin. Habits and patterns of thinking are passed on to us by the world, by ungodly teachers, and by Satan's direct attacks. Our worldly experiences programmed our brains to live independent from God and according to the world's ways.

#### **B. Live in the Spirit**

Romans 8:5-7 contrasts those who live according to the flesh with those who live according to the Spirit. There you find that it's the mind that's set on either the flesh or the Spirit. Your flesh, which was trained by the world, generates worldly thoughts and ideas leading you to sin. As believers, we are no longer to be in the flesh, but in the Spirit (Ro 8:9, Gal 5:16). But it's possible for us to walk according to the flesh (Ro 8:12,13). Unbelievers have no choice—they walk in the flesh because they live in the flesh. But we are not obligated to the flesh... we have a choice. We must learn and choose to walk by the Spirit, not the flesh. As Paul says: "live by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature" (Gal 5:16).

#### **C. Identify Yourself as a Child of God**

Before knowing Christ we were sinners, but when we became God's children we became 'saints.' Are we saints or are we sinners? The answer can be difficult. But if you think of yourself as part saint and part sinner, part light and part darkness, you will continue to struggle and to live a defeated life. Having come to understand the transformation that has taken place, believers should strive to maintain the awareness of who they are in the resurrected Christ. When we face sin, we should think of ourselves as children of God. If we think of ourselves as sinners, we will tend to live like sinners. We must see ourselves as saints, as children of God, in order to live like children of God.

#### **D. Renew Your Mind**

Many sinful patterns begin with bad thought life. Sinful patterns of thinking must be "transformed by the renewing of the mind" (Ro 12:2). The mind is the focus of the battle against sin. 2 Corinthians 11:3 indicates that just as Eve was deceived by Satan, our minds can be led astray from a sincere and pure devotion to Christ. Satan influenced the minds of David, Solomon, Ananias, the Christians in Corinth, and he can influence your mind as well. He can bring his thoughts into your mind and deceive you into thinking they are your thoughts, or even God's thoughts. But we "take every thought captive to make it obedient to Christ" (2Co 10:5).

#### **E. Know the Truth**

Where is sin's power? Satan, according to John 8:44, "is a liar and the father of lies." When we are tempted to sin there is always a lie behind it. But Jesus says in the same chapter, "and you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (Jn 8:32). Our defense against sin is the

truth. By knowing our true, victorious identity as believers in Christ, we find freedom from the power of sin.

## **CONCLUSION**

The Gospel is the foundation of our relationship with God. From God's perspective, our relationship is built solely upon Christ's forgiveness and perfect righteousness given to us by faith. This truth should bring the ability to be honest about our sin before God, and the assurance of His abundant grace toward us. It should inspire us to live as righteous ones not because we have made ourselves righteous, but because that is what God, by His grace, has declared us to be.

What is truly important concerning victory over sin is a growing, dynamic faith in Christ, a faith that is founded on Christ's accomplishments on the cross, so that His power mightily works in us revealing sins and weaknesses more clearly. This faith understands and appreciates the grace of God more deeply and leads us to know God more intimately.

## **QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION, REVIEW AND APPLICATION**

- How do you allow your feelings instead of your faith in God's Word to affect the way that you view your life in Christ?
- When fighting against sin, which brings more power into your life: trying harder or believing more?
- How is "count" in Romans 6:11 related to faith?
- What has happened to your sinful nature according to Paul's letter to the Romans?
- How can you live by the Spirit?





**SPIRITUAL  
CHARACTER**

**5**  
**LESSON**

# Keeping a Spiritual Journal

## ☛ Lesson Purpose

The purpose of this lesson is to introduce journaling as a practical tool that can help believers focus on personal spiritual growth and ministry growth.

## ☛ Main Points

- Why keep a spiritual journal?
- Daily time with God
- Daily journaling

## ☛ Desired Outcomes

When the content of this lesson has been mastered, each participant should:

- Be able to use a journal as an effective tool to record personal devotional insights, prayer requests and answers, ministry contacts, cell group and notes, and daily reflections.

## ☛ Suggestions to Trainers

You may want to make or order a journal to hand out to participants to use during the training seminar. The Church Planter's Daily Journal from The Bible League is a very simple and useful journal (see Sources for address information).

## INTRODUCTION

In the fast pace of life, few people find the time and place to meditate upon God and his Word, and the application of it to their lives personally. Since a disciple has a desire to grow and change, he continually evaluates his life. Like King David, he asks the Lord to examine his heart and life to reveal all of his faults and sins so he may change and grow (Ps 139:23-24). There is a great need for us to take time to be still before God each day and break the bonds of busyness (Ps 46:10; 37:7).

Keeping a journal will be a great help to you throughout the church planting process. The following lesson describes elements of a church planter's daily journal that you can use in your own journal keeping.

### I. WHY KEEP A SPIRITUAL JOURNAL?

When the Israelites crossed the Jordan River to enter the Promised Land, God commanded them to take twelve stones from the river and to build a memorial. The purpose of that memorial was to serve as a reminder to the current and future generations of Israelites of God's faithfulness and power in their midst (Jos 4:1-9).

In a similar way, when we record lessons the Lord has taught us, or experiences we have had, or prayer requests and answers, they, too, serve as reminders to us of God's love and faithfulness in our lives when we face struggles or discouragement. Keeping a regular journal is one of the most effective ways for developing accountability in our spiritual growth and ministry life. A journal forces us to reflect on our lives and adjust priorities. It also helps us to grow in faith by seeing how our knowledge and understanding of God has grown over time, as well as seeing how God has answered our prayers.

Over the centuries, Christians have learned much from the journals of famous Christians such as Jonathan Edwards, Hudson Taylor, and Amy Carmichael. They have been a written testimony of how God has lived in relationship to a particular person and an encouragement of the intimate relationship we can have with Him as well.

In addition to being a record of our personal spiritual growth, a journal can be an effective tool in developing our ministry. If God is calling you to plant a church or be part of a church planting team, you will be involved in particular tasks—evangelism, discipleship, small group development, etc. A journal can be helpful for recording contacts made with people, insights and goals for cell group meetings, questions and concerns you want to discuss with your mentor, etc. It serves as a visible reminder of your ministry and also allows you to see how God uses you in specific ways to bring people to Himself and establish a church. A journal also provides a record that you can review with your trainer or mentor.

## II. DAILY TIME WITH GOD (FIGURE 5.1)

Figure 5.1 is a sample form for recording reflections from your daily devotional time in God's Word and then prayer requests and answers to prayer. Note the following on the form:

- **Today's Passage:** Note the Bible passage you are reading during your devotions.
- **Personal Insights:** Read the Bible passage, take time to think and pray about it. Note any insights the Holy Spirit gives you about this passage. What does the passage say? What do you observe? How can you apply this passage to your own life today?
- **Promises to Claim:** Are there any promises in this passage? Note them and thank God for these truths.
- **Commands to Obey:** Does this passage note any commands you need to obey?
- **Prayer:** List any prayer requests for which you have a particular burden and also answers to previous requests. Be as specific as possible. This will help you see God at work through your prayers.

## III. DAILY JOURNALING (FIGURE 5.1)

Figure 5.1 is a sample daily journal entry. The daily journal helps you to monitor the progress of your church planting ministry. Note the following topics you can record in your daily journal:

- **Action Plans:** Note any work you have done on your action plans. List activities accomplished for an action plan or work in progress.
- **Contacts:** List your evangelistic contacts for that day. Note the results of your time together. Did you share your testimony? How did they respond? Are they open or closed to the Gospel?
- **Meetings:** Make notes concerning any cell group, home group meeting or special function. When and where was the meeting held? Who led it? What did you do (Bible study, prayer group, showed Jesus Film to friends)? How many people attended? How many are regular attendees? Visitors? Did anybody make a commitment to Christ? Note any problems or special concerns needing further attention.
- **Reflections:** Take time to think about the day. Is there anything that stands out to you? Did you learn or observe anything about your personal life or ministry you want to note? These reflections are personal notes you make about your own life. **They do not need to be shared with anyone.** They help you to put your day in perspective and note anything the Holy Spirit is teaching you.

Figure 5.1. Daily Devotions and Daily Journal

DAILY DEVOTIONS									
<b>Today's Passage:</b> <u>1Corinthians 13</u>	<b>DAILY DEVOTIONS date:</b> _____								
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Personal Insights:</b> <u>All my actions must be motivated by love. I demonstrate my love by my actions. Love always perseveres. I need to persevere in my love towards others. I need to be others-centered and not self-centered.</u></li><li>• <b>Promises to Claim:</b> <u>Now we are imperfect, but in heaven we will be perfect and will see God face to face as He really is. Now we only understand in part.</u></li><li>• <b>Commands to Obey:</b> <u>Demonstrate love according to the attributes listed in this chapter, make sure my actions are motivated by love, otherwise they are meaningless.</u></li></ul>	<b>Action Plans:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <u>Established prayer triplet</u></li><li>• <u>Identified target area</u></li><li>• <u>Began inductive Bible Study of John 17</u></li></ul>								
<b>PRAYER</b> <b>Prayer Requests and Answers to Prayer</b>  <b>R:</b> For opportunity to share my faith with Dr. M.  <b>R:</b> For a ministry team to develop  <b>A:</b> My mother's health is much better	<b>Contacts</b> <table border="1"><thead><tr><th>Name</th><th>Comments</th></tr></thead><tbody><tr><td><u>Dr. Miller</u></td><td><u>Shared Testimony</u></td></tr><tr><td><u>Aunt Sally</u></td><td><u>Showed Jesus Film</u></td></tr><tr><td><u>Mrs. Jones</u></td><td><u>Shared testimony, Repented!</u></td></tr></tbody></table> <b>Meetings</b> <b>(cell groups, home meetings, specials)</b>  <u>Jane's house 7 p.m. Prayer triplet met. (Jane, Mary and me) Prayed for 2 hours. Agreed to meet weekly at Jane's house.</u>	Name	Comments	<u>Dr. Miller</u>	<u>Shared Testimony</u>	<u>Aunt Sally</u>	<u>Showed Jesus Film</u>	<u>Mrs. Jones</u>	<u>Shared testimony, Repented!</u>
Name	Comments								
<u>Dr. Miller</u>	<u>Shared Testimony</u>								
<u>Aunt Sally</u>	<u>Showed Jesus Film</u>								
<u>Mrs. Jones</u>	<u>Shared testimony, Repented!</u>								
	<b>Reflecting on the day</b>  <u>I am so happy about the prayer triplet. I have never really prayed consistently with others and for unbelievers before. I am excited about how God will use our prayers.</u>								

## CONCLUSION

If your trainer or mentor does not have a journal for you to use, adapt a blank exercise book to suit your purposes. The important thing is that the journal helps you to reflect on what God is teaching you through His Word and prayer and to record progress and lessons learned in your church planting ministry.

## ACTION PLAN

Throughout the church planting training cycle, keep a daily journal for devotions and ministry progress based on figure 5.1. You may want to transcribe the example in 5.1 into a notebook for your own personal use. Be prepared to show this journal to your mentor or trainer.

## SOURCES

*The Church Planter's Daily Journal.* The Bible League, 16801 Van Dam Rd., South Holland, IL 60473 USA.  
E-mail: bibleleague@xc.org



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# PRAYER

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PRAYER

LESSON 1,2

# Concert of Prayer

## PRAYING FOR REVIVAL

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### ☞ Lesson Purpose

The purpose of this lesson is to explain the concept of a concert of prayer, and to demonstrate how to use it in praying for revival.

### ☞ Main Points

- Church planting begins with revival of the believers.
- Prayer is a key element in revival.

### ☞ Desired Outcomes

When the content of this lesson has been mastered, each participant should:

- Understand the form of a concert of prayer.
- Be convicted about the role of personal revival in church planting.

### ☞ Suggestions to Trainers

This is a two-hour lesson. Use it as an outline for the first concert of prayer. The majority of the lesson should be spent in actual prayer, using section II of the lesson as a guide.

## INTRODUCTION

Prayer is a vital ingredient of church planting. Without God's blessing and direction, all our best efforts will fail. For that reason each of the seminars includes a concert of prayer. The word "concert" brings to mind the idea of an organized presentation of music—whether instrumental, vocal or both. A concert always consists of more than one song but is usually arranged according to a particular theme—whether according to composer, musical type, instrument, holiday occasion, or an endless variety of relationships.

A concert of prayer is also organized to focus on a particular theme. It might involve many prayers and many people, but there is a common direction. The audience for a concert of prayer is God Himself. Therefore, it should be based on biblical themes that will be pleasing to Him.

## I. HOW TO PLAN AND LEAD A CONCERT OF PRAYER

Often Christians are stirred to prayer by participating in a dynamic prayer event that takes them beyond their previous experience. By praying with a large group of other Christians from various backgrounds and churches, believers realize that they are not alone and isolated but part of a great movement of God. They see that prayer is not a boring exercise but something exciting, faith building, and power releasing. On all five major continents of the world, prayer concerts have stimulated prayer on a large scale, promoted unity among Christians, and fueled evangelism and church planting efforts.

Concerts of prayer focus on two main biblical concepts:

- Prayer directed *inward*—asking God to reveal to His church the "fullness" of Christ as Lord in her midst. This is the idea of revival, renewal and awakening of the church.
- Prayer directed *outward*—asking God to "fulfill" His purpose through His church among all the nations. This is the fulfillment of the Great Commission—world evangelization, local church evangelism, and saturation church planting.



Concerts of prayer can be organized for a local church or on an area basis involving many local churches with an emphasis on unity and working together. The following is a suggested model for a Concert of Prayer that can be adapted to your local situation. The important thing is to pray regularly and corporately.

The following are suggested elements that should be included in a concert of prayer. Plan on 2-3 hours for the prayer concert, such as an evening or afternoon. The length of each element depends on the particular goals for each concert of prayer. However, it is important to have all of the elements as part of the concert of prayer. This ensures that the concert stays focused, balanced and flows well.

#### **A. Theme**

It is helpful to develop your concert of prayer around a particular theme. This will help the concert of prayer to stay focused and allow prayers to be specific. For example, in the capital city of Kazakhstan, a concert of prayer was held around the theme of reconciliation. The celebration focused on God as the reconciler of people to, and on Christians as agents of reconciliation. During the prayer times, both Russians and Kazaks asked forgiveness for past wrongs done to each other. This prayer concert helped to create a spirit of unity and common purpose among the Russian and Kazak churches in the city.

#### **B. Agenda**

Welcome everyone and use Scripture to present the topic of the concert of prayer. What does the Word of God say about that theme? Introduce the basic components of the concert of prayer format. Explain the flow of the concert, why each component is important and how each fits. Give suggestions about being sensitive to each other—how long their prayers should be, how loud, etc.

#### **C. Celebration**

Praise God for His faithfulness, His Kingdom, His Son Jesus Christ, etc. Be sure that praise focuses on God's character. Use this time to highlight important issues in spiritual awakening and world evangelization. Provide a good mixture of hymns and choruses, making sure to tie each song into the major theme of the concert of prayer. This can be done by just a few brief comments to introduce each new item, being careful not to preach but to lead others into worship and praise.

#### **D. Confession and Preparation**

Have participants reaffirm their readiness to hear God's voice and their desire to serve the Church and the world through this ministry of intercession. Lead them in prayer for confession of any known sin, that they might be clean and ready to pray. This does not mean that the confession has to be out loud. Ask for the filling of the Holy Spirit and His leading in all that is prayed. Spend time quietly waiting on God to hear what He is saying in Scripture or through the Holy Spirit.

#### **E. Small Group Prayer**

Have participants form small groups of 2-6 people and pray about the topic as it relates to local, regional, national and international level. After the designated time for small group praying, lead in prayer for a growing prayer movement. Pray that God will daily keep all participants consistent and persistent in prayer. Pray for the emerging prayer movement in your city or town or locality. Pray for God to raise up concerted prayer in the church nationwide.

#### **F. Presentation**

Information and materials may be used throughout the prayer time to help focus and motivate those praying. Maps showing areas of need can be great visual aids. Local maps can be made showing where churches exist in the area and where there are none at all. Also maps showing where there is high unemployment, single parent families, etc. can help inspire breakthrough prayer.

## G. Praise and Worship

Conclude with a time of praise and worship of God for His wonderful ways. Offer yourselves to be answers to your prayers and live accordingly.

## II. A CONCERT OF PRAYER

The theme for this concert of prayer is revival. Revival is a renewal of the spiritual life of a believer. Revival involves a supernatural awareness, abhorrence, and confession of sin. It results in turning to God with a deeper love for Him and greater obedience to His commands.

During times of spiritual revival of the church, there is an accompanying spiritual awakening among those who have not been born again. Individuals and groups of individuals come to vital faith in Christ, new churches are born and the society is changed. This means that revival of believers is necessary for church planting.

Use the remaining lesson time to pray through the following material on revival. Allow enough time for participation on each point before moving on.

### A. The Conditions for Revival

Revival takes place as the Spirit of God moves in the lives of His children, convicting them of sin and calling them to repentance. Read the following verses to help each trainee remember that: "Revival starts in a heart: MY HEART."

#### 1. *Loving God with All One's Heart and Total Obedience to His Commands*

- Read Deuteronomy 30:1-10.
- Sing songs of worship and praise that declare your love for the Lord.
- Have silent time for individuals to ask the Lord to show them areas of their life that are not in total obedience to His commands.

#### 2. *Humbly Seeking the Lord*

*"If My people who are called by My name, shall humble themselves and pray and seek My face, then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and will heal their land" (2Ch 7:14).*

- Together as His people, humbly seek His face.

#### 3. *Acknowledging One's Sin and Guilt*

*"Return...declares the Lord, I will frown on you no longer, for I am merciful. I will not be angry forever. ONLY ACKNOWLEDGE YOUR GUILT you have rebelled against the Lord your God...and have not obeyed me" (Jer 3:12-13).*

*"Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting" (Ps 139:23,24).*

- Have time for individuals to quietly confess to the Lord any known personal sin and to ask Him for cleansing (1 Jn 1:7,9).

### B. The Role of Leadership in Revival Movements

God has placed leaders in the Church to guide His people in paths of righteousness. Pastors and church planters should be an example to the people that they lead.

#### 1. *Leaders Set an Example by Personal Repentance.*

*"Put on sackcloth, O priests, and mourn; wail, you who minister before the altar. Come spend the night in sackcloth, you who minister before my God" (Joel 1:13).*

#### 2. *Leaders Call God's People to Repentance.*

*"Declare a holy fast; call a sacred assembly; summon the elders and all who live in the land to the house of the Lord your God, and cry out to the Lord" (Joel 1:14).*

- Divide into small prayer groups to pray for all of the people in that group. Pray that they might be kept from the evil one so that they may minister to the Lord in holiness. In a spirit of love and without criticism, pray for their denominational leaders, pastors, elders and deacons by name. Thank the Lord for them and ask Him to bless their personal lives, their family lives and their ministries.
- Ask God to help leaders know the steps to take in calling their people to repentance.

**C. What you can do to see a Revival / Awakening in your Land**

- Still in small groups, ask God to show you what you could and should do to begin the process of revival in your church, city and nation.
- Ask God that as He works reviving His church, He would also work in the hearts of unbelievers to bring many to repentance and faith.

**D. Praise God for His faithfulness**

- Join together again into one large group and spend the remaining time praising God for His faithfulness to accomplish the Great Commission through His Church and thanking Him for the privilege of serving Him in that task.
- Close the time concert of prayer with a hymn or chorus that reminds you of God's faithfulness.

## **ACTION PLAN**

Do an inductive study of Ezra 9:1-10:17. Include answers to the following questions:

- What was the specific sin of the people? (Ezr 9:1-2)
- What was the response of Ezra and the other leaders to this sin? (Ezr 9:3, 5; 10:1)
- What was the attribute of God on which Ezra based his hope? (Ezr 9:15)
- What was the response of the people who saw Ezra's repentance? (Ezr 10:1-4)
- How did the revival penetrate the society? (Ezr 10:9-17)
- Remember to include the application to your own life, your church and your society.
- Organize a concert of prayer for your church or small group using the pattern you have learned in this lesson.

PRAYER

3

LESSON

# How to Facilitate Prayer

## HOW TO MOBILIZE PRAYER FOR YOUR CHURCH PLANT

### ☛ Lesson Purpose

The purpose of this lesson is to help church planters understand the strategic role of prayer in church planting and to give them practical ideas on how to mobilize prayer for their church planting ministries.

### ☛ Main Points

- Prayer plays a strategic role in the church planting process.
- There are many ways to facilitate prayer support for church planting.

### ☛ Desired Outcomes

When the content of this lesson has been mastered, each participant should:

- Understand how to mobilize prayer for church planting.
- Know the principle of the strategic role of prayer in church planting.
- Participate in praying and mobilizing prayer for his/her specific church planting efforts.

### ☛ Appendix

3A Prayer Triplets

### ☛ Suggestions to Trainers

This is a workshop lesson. Review the key verses identified in section I and then talk with students about ideas for mobilizing prayer for church planting. What strategies have they tried in mobilizing prayer for their own ministries? Share experience from your own personal or ministry life, showing how prayer undergirds church planting.

## I. PRAYER—A VITAL ASPECT OF EVANGELISM AND CHURCH PLANTING

The apostle Paul believed that prayer was a vital aspect of evangelism and church planting. He prayed and encouraged the early Christians to pray for the advance of the Gospel. We see examples throughout the New Testament Scriptures:

- In talking about his desire for the Jews to receive the Gospel, Paul tells the believers in Rome, "Brothers, my heart's desire and prayer to God for the Israelites is that they may be saved" (Ro 10:1).
- When Paul warned the Ephesian Christians of the spiritual battle they were to engage in, he told them to put on the whole armor of God and to stand against the devil's schemes. Standing against the devil's schemes involved understanding God's truth about salvation, using the Word of God as a sword, and continuous prayer. Paul urged the Ephesian believers to "...pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints" (Eph 6:18).
- In regard to the advance of the Gospel, Paul specifically asked believers, "Pray also for me, that whenever I open my mouth, words may be given to me so that I will fearlessly make known the mystery of the Gospel... Pray that I may declare it fearlessly, as I should" (Eph 6:19-20).
- Paul wrote a similar message to the believers in Colossae: "Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful. And pray for us, too, that God may open a door for our message, so that we may proclaim the mystery of Christ, for which I am in chains" (Col 4:2-4).

- Paul also told the church in Thessalonica, "...pray for us that the message of the Lord may spread rapidly and be honored, just as it was with you. And pray that we may be delivered from wicked and evil men, for not everyone has faith. But the Lord is faithful and He will strengthen and protect you from the evil one" (2Th 3:1-3).

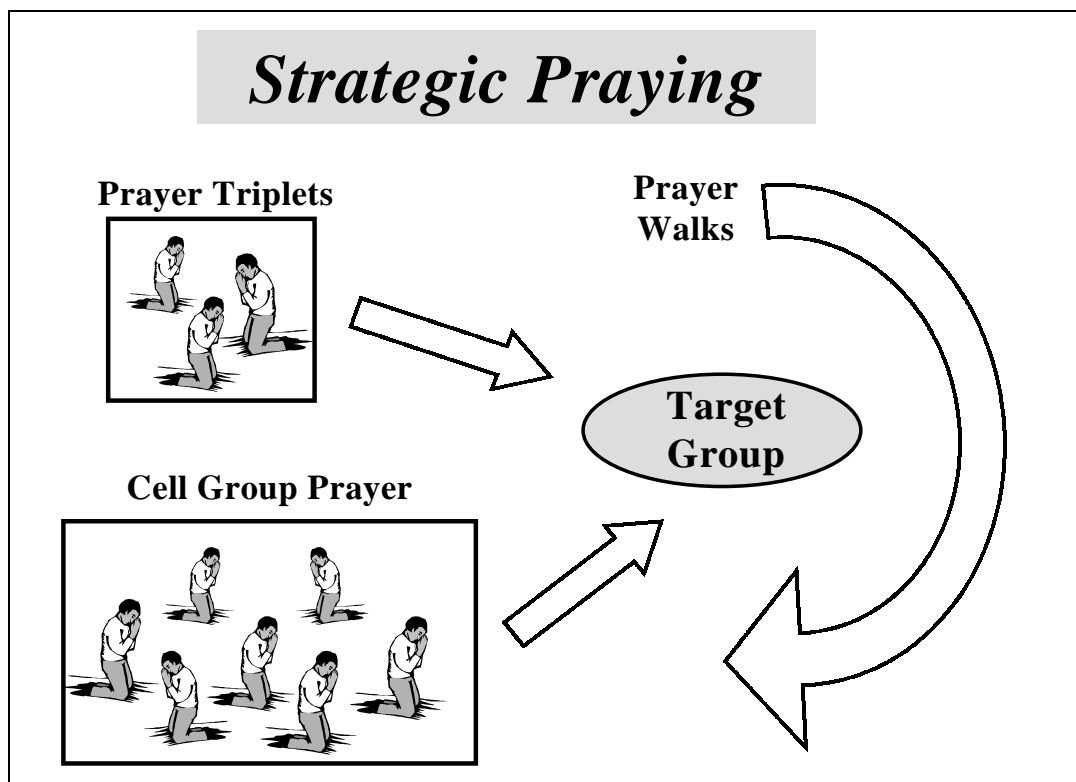
It is clear from these passages that the early Christians prayed strategically for the spread of the Gospel and against the evil influences which hinder the Gospel from advancing.. These same prayer needs still exist today. In developing and implementing a church planting strategy, **take prayer seriously**. Do nothing without prayer. Your saturation church planting ministry must be born out of prayer and then continuously be bathed in prayer from start to finish.

## II. HOW TO INTEGRATE PRAYER WITH EVANGELISM AND CHURCH PLANTING

In the previous section, we saw that the apostle Paul viewed prayer as a vital aspect of evangelism and church planting. What are practical ways in which you can involve believers in praying for your church planting ministry? Several ideas are discussed in this section. The essential points for mobilizing prayer for church planting are:

- Ask God to lead you to people with a burden for your target area.
- Be committed to good information dissemination between your church planting work and your prayer team.
- Encourage regular, specific, concentrated prayer *for* the Gospel to penetrate the hearts of people living in your target area and *against* evil influence which keep people in bondage to Satan and which hinder the advance of the Gospel in your target area.

**Figure 3.1 Forms of Strategic Prayer**



### A. Cell Group Prayer

As will be discussed in the cell group lessons, cell groups are a place where people can encounter Christ in His Word and in the lives of believers in the cell group. Cell groups are intended to grow and multiply and at each cell group meeting, time should be spent praying for non-Christian friends,

relatives and colleagues of cell group members. Cell groups may also want to prayer walk in their community and pray for special evangelistic events. Cell group leaders can keep people informed of special events for which to pray (Refer to Manual 2 Cell Group Lesson 4, "Cell Group Evangelism").

## **B. Prayer Triplets**

A prayer triplet consists of three individuals or three couples committed to meeting regularly together (weekly or every two weeks) to pray for nine non-Christian friends, colleagues or neighbors they would like to see become Christians. Ideally, those prayed for should be people whom the praying individuals frequently see or speak to. Prayer triplets are discussed in more detail in appendix 3A.

Prayer triplets are ideal when the church planter has a nucleus of believers in his target area who are seeking to help him plant a church. They are an excellent way to involve new believers to pray for their unsaved relatives and friends. In addition, prayer triplets are very effective for involving existing churches in evangelism of their own communities.

## **C. Prayer Walking**

Prayer walking is not a new idea. In Europe, many famous walks were created by monks who used to walk and pray on pilgrimages from cathedral city to cathedral city. Prayer walking enables the participants to get out to see and be where the needs are. When we are shut up in a room, we do not have the same understanding as when we are face to face with real life situations and needs. Walking around a neighborhood in prayer gives a totally different perspective on that neighborhood and its needs than just taking a pleasant stroll through the same neighborhood.

In church planting, prayer walking is a tool that can help to break up the fallow ground and prepare the soil of people's hearts to receive the Gospel. Prayer walking should be done by the church planting team or others with a burden for the particular area being targeted for church planting. The prayer walkers will need to walk and pray around, through and in the target area repeatedly. They should do this with sensitivity to the Holy Spirit.

Prayer walking should be followed by strategic evangelism. Evangelism must be preceded and accompanied by prayer. If you and your church planting team are going to distribute literature, show the Jesus film, feed the poor, or utilize any other type of evangelism activity, a key part of that outreach should include prayer before and during the event. Prayer walking has the effect of breaking up the fallow ground and preparing hearts and homes for the sowing of the seed of God's word. Streets that have been prayed over in this way are much more fruitful than those streets that have not been prayed over.

Prayer walking can be done in various ways: individuals, large groups or small groups. The following two case studies are real-life examples of how prayer walking was used as part of a church planting ministry.

### **Case Study 1:**

A neighborhood known to contain a large number of problem families was being targeted for a church plant. Social problems like unemployment, family breakups, drug addiction and crime were very common. In the early part of the church planting effort, a prayer walk was planned for every street in the neighborhood. As they walked and prayed, they recorded the insights the Holy Spirit gave them. Many other prayer walks followed the initial one. Some prayer walks took place around the local school, some in and around the shopping area, and some around the circumference of the neighborhood. One prayer walk took place in the woods overlooking the neighborhood. In these woods, known to be a place where drugs were handed out, witchcraft symbols were found on the trees. The prayer walk team spent time praying against these evil influences. In the three years since the neighborhood was targeted for church planting, social problems have diminished, crime has decreased by 40%, and a church of 70-80 people has been planted. There is now a spiritual influence to challenge the pervading evil, and God is at work in many lives (DAWN Europa Prayer Manual, August 1994, pg. 13).

### **Case Study 2:**

A church planter and his family moved into an apartment block in the city in which they desired to see a church started. Late one evening, the family walked through the apartment block together. They stood in front of each apartment door and each family member prayed for the people in the apartment. The young son prayed that each person in the apartment would ask Jesus into his or her heart. One daughter prayed that the family's financial needs would be met, another daughter prayed for good family relationships. The mother prayed for the health of the family members and the father prayed for the blessing of God to be on that household. After the prayer walk, the church planter and his family saw 14 people in that apartment block come to Christ and a small church formed.

#### *Practical Considerations for Prayer Walking*

- Determine the area to prayer walk. You will need to decide whether to take quite a small area and regularly prayer walk it (e.g. once a week) or to take on a larger area bit by bit. This decision should be made together with the church planter or team so that prayer walks can be tied in with evangelistic activities.
- **Set a specific time for the prayer walk.** Prayer walk in small groups of twos or threes. This is less threatening for people to see two or three strolling along, apparently in conversation with each other rather than a large group or a single individual. Set a time limit for the prayer walk.
- **Decide on a particular focus of prayer,** such as protection of children, prayer for the poor, conversions to Christ, racial harmony, etc. (Paragraph E below contains a list of suggested topics). Decide on a particular passage of Scripture to focus your prayers around. For example, you may want to use the different phrases of the Lord's prayer to guide your prayers. Or, you may choose to pray through the verses of a psalm.
- **Walk at a leisurely, but steady pace, taking in the surroundings as much as possible, without obviously staring.** Pray with your eyes open and in a conversational manner, talking to the Lord about the needs of the people around you, the homes you pass, the schools, shops or factories, etc. Pray silently some of the time, particularly when you pass other people.
- **At the end of the prayer walk, share briefly together.** Write down these thoughts and impressions in your spiritual journal. Set a date for the next prayer walk.

### **D. Prayer Support Team**

Each church planter or church planting team should try and develop a prayer support team. These are people from your own church or other Christian friends or family who have a burden to pray for the you, your team, your families and your church planting ministry. Ask people to pray for you regularly, such as once a week, daily, or monthly. Write your prayer supporters' names on a calendar and the days that they have committed to pray for you. This will help you to remember who is praying for you and when they are praying for you so that you will know whom to contact with urgent prayer requests.

Your prayer support team may choose to meet together to pray corporately for you and your ministry—once a month or even more frequently. One person on the prayer support team should take responsibility for contacting the church planter or church planting team for updated prayer requests and answers to prayer. The prayer support team needs to be kept informed of answers to prayer and new prayer needs so that they can rejoice in what God is doing and also be encouraged to keep on praying.

### **E. Topics for Strategic Prayer**

Cell groups, prayer walkers, and prayer support teams all need specific topics on which to focus their prayer efforts. The following are examples of topics for prayer that can be used during prayer walking or by prayer teams. Through your research, you will have learned about other specific things to pray for as well as those listed here.

- For families, that they might be strengthened and blessed, and acknowledge the Lord.
- For the unemployed, that they may be able to get jobs.
- For churches and individuals, that they might have a hunger for God.
- For schools, that the teachers and students may know peace, harmony and the love of Jesus.
- For shops and banks, that righteousness might prevail in money matters.
- For local government offices, to become places of righteousness where good decisions are made and power used rightly.
- Pray for God to reveal the gatekeepers, those who are influential in their community and if won to Christ will open the way for the advance of the Gospel.

### **III. RESEARCH: GATHERING INFORMATION FOR PRAYER**

One of the first activities you did as a church planter was to research your target area (Manual 1, SCP Vision Lesson 4 "Principles of Research"). Use that research now as a prayer guide.

You began your research by locating the churches and mission groups working in your target area. Pray for each by name; for their spiritual growth; for their outreach in the area; for any problems you might know of that they are having. Has the Church been perceived as making a positive or negative contribution to the area? Is there a history of division or cooperation? Is the Church growing? Where? Pray as Jesus prayed in John 17:23, "May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that You sent me and have loved them even as You have loved me."

As you continue praying, remember the different groups you identified in your harvest field research. Are there areas that have always been known for their poverty, wealth, prostitution, persecution, etc.? Ask God to show you how you might reach people in the different groups. Are there physical needs that you should be helping to meet in the name of Christ? Are there any new age, occultic or satanic groups or centers? Pray for God to deliver His people from the influence of the evil one through these groups (Mt 6:13). Pray by name for government leaders and people of influence in the community. Ask God to give you divine appointments with people who can open doors for the Gospel.

The information you gained in your research should be a part of your daily prayer for your target community. Continue to use it to determine areas that should be targeted for prayer walks and to give you insight into potential evangelistic ministries. Share this information with your prayer team and others with a burden for your target area.

### **CONCLUSION**

There is a saying among Christians that the "army of God advances victoriously on its knees." This word picture captures the strategic role of prayer in the advancement of God's Kingdom on earth. Church planting is a spiritual activity, involving spiritual warfare against the powers of darkness (Eph 6). As church planters, our work must be born in prayer, preceded by prayer and accompanied by prayer. Only then will it bear the fruit that God intended.

### **QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION, REVIEW AND APPLICATION**

- How do you devote yourself to prayer (Col 4:2-4) or pray at all times (Eph 6:18) as Paul exhorted the early Christians to do?
- Have you ever been on a prayer walk? Describe your experience. What did you do? Where did you go? What kinds of things did you pray for? How did it impact your ministry in that area?
- What are some other ideas to help facilitate prayer for your church planting ministry?
- What are ways in which you can keep your prayer support team informed of prayer needs and answers to prayer?
- What types of information do you feel would be appropriate to share with a prayer team and what kinds of information would be inappropriate?



- Give examples of how you have seen prayer linked with evangelism. What were the results?

## **ACTION PLAN**

- If you have not already done so, develop your prayer support team. Ask at least three other believers to pray weekly for your ministry. How will you keep them informed of prayer requests and answers to prayer?
- Do at least one prayer walk in your target area with your church planting team or others with a burden to see that area reached for Christ. Discuss this experience with your mentor or trainer.

## **SOURCES**

- Livingston, Glenn. *Prayer that Strengthens and Expands the Church*. South Holland, IL: 1999. (This *Alliance for Saturation Church Planting* publication is available from The Bible League, 16801 Van Dam Road, South Holland, IL, 60473 USA. tel 1-800-334-7017. Email: BibleLeague@xc.org)
- Mills, Brian. *DAWN Europa Prayer Manual*. Birkshire, England: DAWN Europa, 1994.



# Prayer Triplets

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## I. WHAT IS A PRAYER TRIPLET?

It is a simple convenient way to win people to Christ. You just link up with two other Christians and pray together regularly for the salvation of nine friends or relatives who do not know Jesus personally. Then rejoice as you see Matthew 18:19-20 fulfilled: *"Again, I tell you that if two or three of you on earth agree about anything you ask for, it will be done for you by my Father in heaven. For where two or three come together in my name, there I am with them."*

## II. HOW TO MAKE A PRAYER TRIPLET WORK

- A. Choose two Christian friends or relatives to make your "triplet."
- B. Each of you choose the names of three people who do not know Jesus as personal Savior and Lord.
- C. Agree on a time to meet once a week to pray together for your nine. You can meet in your home, workplace, school or before church.
- D. Pray together for the nine people by name to accept Christ as personal Savior. Include their personal needs and family members.
- E. As much as possible, as God leads, involve yourself with your "three" in a friendly, helpful way. Look for God to give you opportunities to share the Gospel message with these people. Pray for each other as you seek to do this.
- F. When the people you have been praying for become Christians, continue to pray for them as God leads, but in your triplet choose other friends and relatives to pray for who don't know Jesus. The focus of the prayer triplet should be friends and relatives who do not know Jesus personally. *Note: You may want to pray as a family using the "Prayer Triplet" concept!*

## III. PRAYER TRIPLET WORKSHEET

- A. My prayer triplet partners are:

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

- B. We are praying for:

List the names of nine unsaved friends for whom your prayer triplet will pray regularly:

My List:	List 2	List 3



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# BIBLE STUDY METHODS

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BIBLE STUDY  
METHODS

1

LESSON

# Introduction to the Inductive Bible Study Method

## LETTING THE BIBLE TEACH US

### ☞ Lesson Purpose

The purpose of this lesson is to introduce the inductive Bible study method, and explain why it is superior to other methods of Bible study.

### ☞ Desired Outcomes

When the content of this lesson has been mastered, each participant should:

- Understand the difference between deduction and induction.
- Be convinced that the inductive method is a better method than the “common” approach to studying the Word.
- Know the three stages of the inductive method.

### ☞ Main Points

- Deduction and induction move in opposite logical directions.
- The inductive method is the best method for learning something new from the Word.
- The steps of the inductive method are: Observation, Interpretation, Application.
- When the inductive method is not rushed, it provides a solid foundation for understanding the Bible.

### ☞ Appendix

1A How We Got the Bible

## INTRODUCTION

The Bible is the most important book ever written. It claims to be the very words of the almighty, infinite God, given to reveal Himself to finite man. The Bible is also the most important tool for the modern church planter or pastor. The “living and active” Word of God is able to penetrate the hearts and souls of those whom we seek to win for the Lord. It equips us for every good work, which certainly describes our ministry of multiplying churches across the land. It serves as a standard by which we measure and evaluate every doctrine, practice, tradition, and every other book. History, tradition and the human intellect may lead astray, but the Bible stands firm as the truth of God. Its teaching is always correct. Its prophecies always come to pass. Its words help us to win the lost and to resist the devil. The Bible is indispensable to our Christian life and ministry.

Since we believe that the Bible was given to us by God for our instruction, we need to approach it carefully and handle it accurately (2Ti 2:15). The divine nature of the Scriptures demands that we read it with the intent of *learning from it*, rather than *making it say what we want to hear*. How can we be sure we rightly understand the Word? The inductive Bible study method is designed to help every believer—whether layman or pastor—better understand the teaching of the Word of God. This lesson will introduce this simple and effective method, and following lessons will describe each step in more detail.

The inductive Bible study method is designed to help every believer—whether layman or pastor—better understand the Word of God.

## I. INDUCTIVE VS. DEDUCTIVE

Deduction and induction are two kinds of logic or reasoning. Both deal with the general and the specific. They are both methods of arriving at a conclusion. However, they do so in exactly the opposite manner. Deductive reasoning moves from the general to the specific, and inductive goes from the specific to the general. Both methods are used by Christians to study the Bible, but usually they are not aware of how each method affects their study and conclusions.

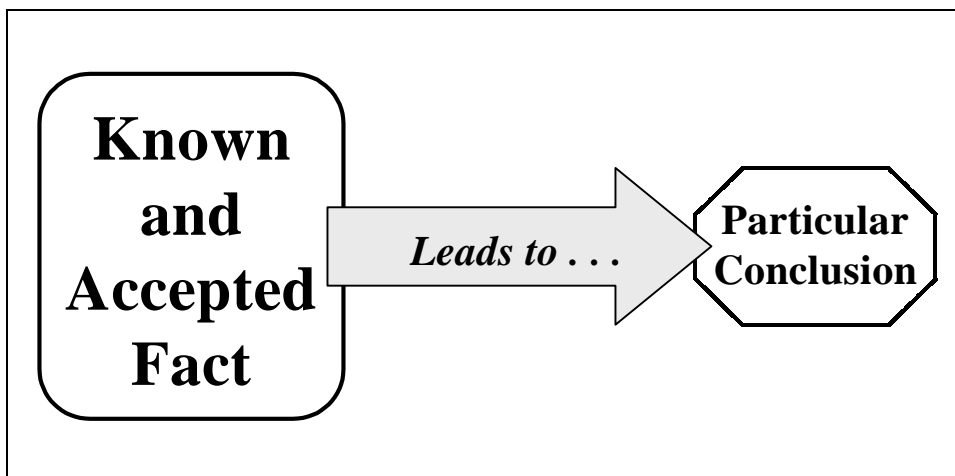
### A. The Deductive Approach

Deductive reasoning is used by people in wide variety of professions. Deduction is a valuable skill, and many books have been written on the subject. The intent of this lesson is not to minimize the validity of deduction, but to suggest that it is an inferior method of Bible study.

#### 1. *Deductive Reasoning*

In general, deductive reasoning moves from the general to the specific. That is, it starts with a known and accepted idea or premise. That pre-existing understanding is then compared to a particular situation, and a conclusion is formed. The basis for this conclusion is the fact that the *general idea* is true, and that the specific situation *resembles it*. In other words, the *general idea* controls, or at least strongly influences the way we look at the particular situation. For example, since snow-covered steps are usually slippery, we will approach any set of snow-covered steps with caution—even if we have never slipped on that particular set of steps. Our general experience with snowy steps leads us to this logical and reasonable conclusion. Figure 1.1 shows the direction of deductive reasoning.

Figure 1.1 Deductive Reasoning



Deduction has a major weakness. If our general understanding is wrong, so will be our conclusion. For example, suppose a Russian hears someone talk about a doctor. In Russia, most doctors are women. Therefore, it would be logical for him to deduce that the doctor is a woman. Often, however, he will be wrong. There are also *male* doctors in Russia, and in some countries *most* doctors are men. In this case, the influence of our prior experience can often lead us in the wrong direction. We *assume* we know the answer, rather than continuing to look for other clues to the correct answer.

#### 2. *Deductive Bible Study*

The deductive method can be used to study the Bible, but its weakness limits its usefulness. When we study the Bible, it is important to understand what *God is saying*, rather than to impose our understanding on the text. There are occasions when we cannot understand a difficult verse, and we rely on our general understanding of the Scriptures to deduce what it "*probably means*." However, this should be a "last resort." Our first step should be to pray, meditate on the verse, and continually reread it in order to try to understand what it wants to

say. If we quickly “give up” and assume it is “just like the other similar verses,” we may seriously distort the Word of God. For instance, ten of the eleven times the New Testament uses the word “yeast,” it refers to sin. It would therefore be reasonable and logical to assume that the eleventh time (Mt 13:33) also refers to sin. It would, however, be wrong. An examination of the context of Matthew 13:33 shows that in that verse, it refers to the Kingdom of God!

### 3. The “Normal” Method

Unfortunately, deduction is probably the most common method of Bible study. As a result, few learn very much from the Bible. Since they come to the Scripture with their *preconceived understanding of what it means*, they are not able to notice and learn from the details of a particular text.

Bible teachers often know what they want to say beforehand, and simply come to the Bible to find a verse that seems to support their understanding. The Word of God is then used to prop up *our message*, rather than being allowed to communicate the ideas that *the Lord intended* for it to say.

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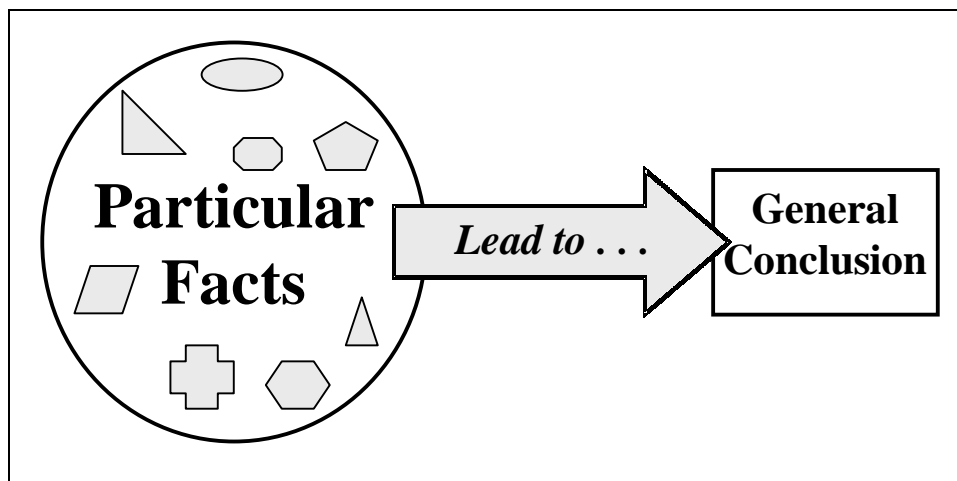
## B. The Inductive Approach

The inductive method is in many ways the opposite of the deductive method. It examines the particulars of a situation, and then attempts to form a general principle from them. It is normally used in those situations where we do not have a general principle that seems to fit, and are therefore unable to use deduction.

### 1. Inductive Reasoning

Deduction is essentially the process of using our pre-existing knowledge. Induction, by contrast, is about *learning*. We assume that we do not yet know the answers, and examine the facts closely in order to try to understand *what they mean*. In this method, the emphasis is on the specific details and facts of the situation. Figure 1.2 shows the progression of the inductive method.

Figure 1.2 The Inductive Method



### 2. Inductive Bible Study

When we use the inductive method to study the Bible, we come to the Scripture as learners. We acknowledge to God and to ourselves that we do not yet know all the answers. Our purpose is to *gain understanding*. We come with a commitment to carefully examine the text, and allow the Lord to speak to us through it. The deductive method usually leads to a quick sermon—the inductive method leads to spiritual growth.



### 3. *A Better Method*

The inductive method is superior to the deductive method because it makes *the Scriptures* the authority, rather than our understanding. It is also better because it matches the process of understanding and applying biblical principles to our lives. As we study the Bible, we look at how God dealt with people in a particular situation, at a particular time, and in a particular culture. Our task is to take these facts and to form from them a biblical principle. We then translate that principle into our equivalent situation so that we can correctly apply it to our lives. The process of the inductive Bible study method is therefore:

- **Observation** of the facts in the Scriptural context.
- **Interpretation** to find the principle that the passage teaches.
- **Application** of the principle to equivalent situations in our lives.

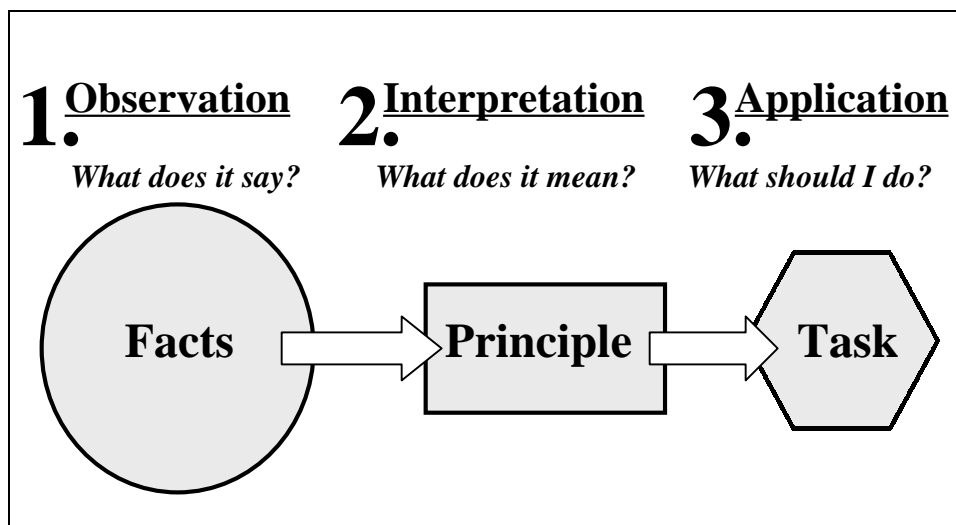
## II. STEPS OF INDUCTIVE BIBLE STUDY

The three steps of the inductive Bible study method are each important. They build progressively on each other to lead us from the Bible text to a correct application to our lives. Essentially, the three steps ask three different questions about the text.

- What does it say? [Observation]
- What does it mean? [Interpretation]
- What should I do? [Application]

The relationship between each of these steps is shown in Figure 1.3. Notice the logical progression through the three steps, beginning with the Bible text and ending with application to our Christian life. If the steps are not completed in the proper order, the result is flawed.

**Figure 1.3 The Three Steps**



### A. Observation – What Does It Say?

The first step of the inductive method is observation. It is also the most important step—in the same way a solid foundation is critical to the construction of a house. At this stage, we observe the text, looking for every detail we can find in it, and recording our observations. The key to this step is to ask an endless series of questions such as “Who?, What?, Why?, Where?, When?, etc.” These questions help us focus on *what the Bible says*, rather than bringing our ideas to it. We also look closely at the context of the verse, paragraph, chapter, and book to discover and understand the situation in which it was written. At this stage, it is very important *not to interpret or apply* the text. We must discover all the information first—in the next step (interpretation) we will look at what it means.

## **B. Interpretation – What Does It Mean?**

The process of interpretation has two parts. The first part is to determine *what the passage was intended to say to the original audience*. The second part is to formulate *the message of the passage as a biblical principle* that can be applied to other similar situations.

This is a difficult stage, requiring serious and prayerful thought, and the leading of the Holy Spirit. At this point, we need to compare all our understanding of the original historical, geographical, political, cultural, and religious situation with the facts that we unearthed in the observation stage. Any facts that we have missed in the observation stage will hinder our work here. Now is also the time to compare this text with other similar passages to see if they can help us understand it—being careful that they do not distort the facts of the text we are studying. If the meaning of the passage is still unclear, it might be necessary to return to the observation stage and keep digging for more information.

## **C. Application – What Should I Do?**

The final stage of the inductive method is application. At this point, we take the result of the interpretation stage and decide how the principle might apply in our situation. Since we have carefully looked at the original context, and know the details of it, we can look for similar contexts in our day.

The difficulty of this stage is to determine what situation today is really analogous to the original situation. We can only say “thus says the Lord” if we can demonstrate that this similarity exists. If our situation is truly the same as a biblical passage, then we can assume that the Lord expects us to apply the message to ourselves. In that case, the important task is to state *specifically* and *clearly* “what we should do.”

# **III. BUILDING A SOLID PYRAMID**

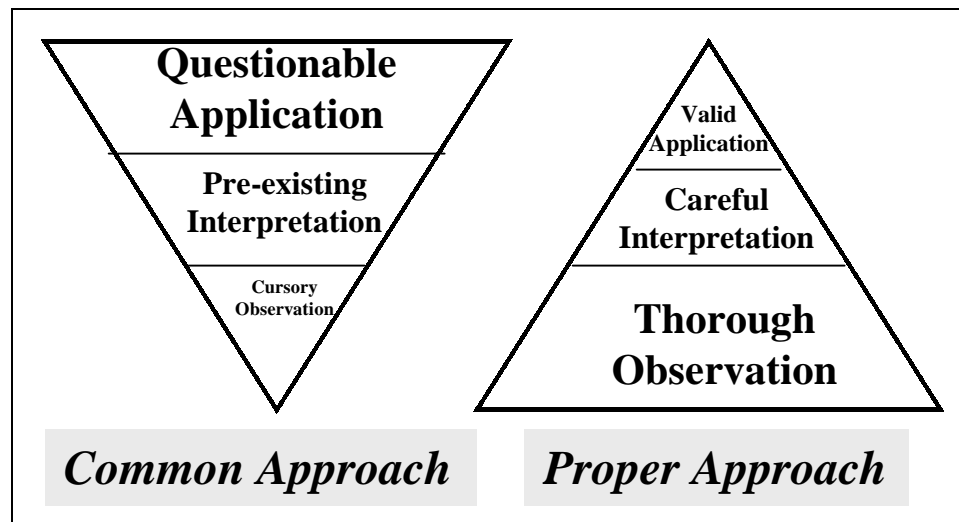
It is important not to skip any of the steps, or to change the order. It is impossible to correctly say what a passage means without first fully observing it, and futile to ask what we should do without knowing what the text means. Therefore, it is critical that we take the necessary time to use the inductive method properly.

## **A. Rushing the Process**

The most common mistake in using the inductive method is to spend too little time on the observation phase. The person studying the Bible takes a quick glance at the passage and assumes that he or she knows what it says. This defeats the learning process. The result is an understanding of the passage that is exactly the same as it was when the process started. The Scripture has not been allowed to speak to us or to teach us. If we approach the Word of God in this way, our biblical understanding will stagnate. The Bible is living and active. We can never fully understand the depths of its teaching. There is always something more for any student of the Word to learn—if we will take the time and effort to understand it.

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**Figure 1.4 Good and Bad Foundations**



Christian workers often rush the process because they are in a hurry to prepare a message for others. Or, they may be lazy. Either way, the result of this poor preparation is weak preaching, without the power of the Lord behind it. Skimping on the process can be compared to the inverted pyramid in the left side of Figure 1.4. A cursory observation is expanded into a quick interpretation, or a pre-existing interpretation is “hung” on a text that may or may not support it. Finally, a sermon or message is build upon this shaky foundation. Sadly, this may be the most common kind of teaching in churches today.

#### **B. A Solid Foundation**

The pyramid in the right side of Figure 1.4 demonstrates the proper use of the inductive method. Notice that observation is the largest section, followed by interpretation, and that application is the smallest. However, the application is solid and valid—being based on a thorough study of the Word.

The inductive method can be compared to mining for gold. First, tons of gold-bearing rocks are crushed into manageable pieces and washed (observation). Next, the crush rock is sifted to find the gold nuggets (interpretation). Finally, the gold nuggets are melted down and shaped into useable jewelry of other objects for the consumer (application). The process produces only a small amount of gold compared to the weight of the original rock. However, the result is of great value. In the same way, the result of studying the Word using the inductive method is worth all the effort required.

### **CONCLUSION**

The inductive Bible study method is a superior method of studying the Word. It leads to a more accurate understanding of the Bible, and promotes true spiritual growth and learning. As such, it is the best method not only for pastors and preachers, but also for every Christian. We are all to be learning from the Scriptures. Every church planter should not only master this method, but should also teach it to every believer in his care.

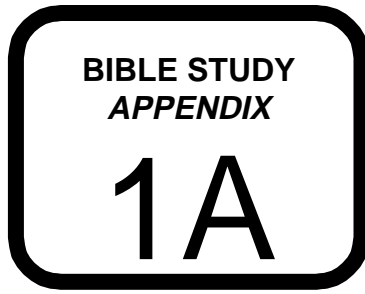
The following lessons will describe in more detail exactly how to use each of the three steps of the inductive method. Time will also be provided to practice and become comfortable with each stage of the process. The effort required will be more than balanced by the resulting new understanding of the Word of the Living God.

## **QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION, REVIEW AND APPLICATION**

- What is the basic difference between deduction and induction?
- Why is the inductive method a superior method of studying the Bible, compared to the deductive method?
- What are the dangers of the “common” approach to Bible study and preaching?

## **ACTION PLAN**

- When you next study the Bible, record how much time you spend on observation, interpretation, and application. On the basis of these times, evaluate whether you are using the inductive method, the deductive, or something in between.
- In preparation for the next lesson on observation, pick a sample short passage of Scripture to study (no more than a paragraph or so). Spend at least two hours prayerfully observing the passage and asking God to open your eyes to things that you have not yet seen. Record your observations. What did you learn?



# How We Got the Bible

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## THE BIBLE IS RELIABLE

The Bible has often been attacked, despite its clear teaching about its divine origin and the miracles and fulfilled prophecies that have proven its authority. It is understandable that Satan would spare no effort to undermine our most powerful tool. He wants the Lord's workers to doubt its value, question its accuracy, ignore it, or neglect it. But understanding the origin and transmission of the Bible from God to us helps us to appreciate this wonderful tool and its centrality to the success of our ministry.

Written by more than 40 different authors, in three languages, in a span of more than 1400 years, the Bible is the greatest literary undertaking in history. Yet its unity, consistency and lack of contradiction prove that God Himself is its main author, guiding every human author to assure that the product is exactly as He planned.

## HOW WE RECEIVED THE BIBLE

The Lord has acted, and still acts to bring a reliable Bible to us. This process began with the original authors, and continues when we open His Word today. There are several stages to this process.

### A. Inspiration

The term inspiration literally means God "breathed" or "breathed out," and affirms that the Bible is the product of the living God (2Ti 3:16). Because the Bible is a divine product, it must be approached as such.

The Bible is not merely the product of human thought, but God's Word, spoken through man's lips and written with man's pen. The prophets and apostles all claimed to speak and write the words of another: God Himself. Even Jesus, the Son of God professed that he spoke only those words given him by his Father. According to 2 Peter 1:20-21, "men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit." It is important to note that it is the Bible itself that is inspired, not the human writers of the Bible. Furthermore, inspiration refers not to the literary quality of that which is written but to its divine origin and character.

### B. Preservation

From the beginning, the unique nature of the Bible was understood. Faithful men have always exercised great care in accurately copying the biblical text. They made very few errors, and the massive number of manuscripts discovered has enabled us to find and fix mistakes that were made. The sections in the Bible where we lack enough evidence to positively know the original text are very few, and none of these sections involve any significant issues or doctrines.

Considering the multitudes of copyists, the thousands of years of copying, the numerous languages into which the Bible was copied, the wide geographical area, and the numerous attempts to destroy the Bible, it is amazing that we have such a reliable, accurate text. God has clearly worked to preserve it for our use.

### C. Canonization

The term 'canon' is borrowed from a Greek word that means rule or standard. The Canon has been used by Christians since the 4th century to identify an authoritative list of books belonging to the Old or New Testament by which all other books were measured.

Many early church fathers and church councils contributed to the task of canonization, with God's help. They examined the witness of the books themselves, the credentials of the author, the agreement of the book with other accepted books, and the books' acceptance by the church. The formation of the Old and New Testament canons was a process rather than an event and transpired under the supervision of the Holy Spirit.

By the time of Jesus, the Old Testament consisted of the law, prophets and writings. By the beginning of the Christian era, all 39 Old Testament books were generally accepted, with the oldest surviving canonical list dating about AD 170. The formation of the New Testament canon, with the current 27 books, was completed in the 4th century. There has been general agreement within the church that the Bible is composed of the current 66 books. The exception to this harmony concerns the Apocrypha.

The Apocrypha is rejected by the Protestants, but accepted by the Orthodox and Roman Catholic Churches. However, there is a significant difference between the Apocrypha and the other 66 books. The Apocrypha does not claim to be Scripture, contains obvious errors, and was denied canonical status by the Jewish community. However, the Apocrypha has a devotional style that appeals to the liturgical worship of the Orthodox and Roman Catholic Churches. The Apocrypha contains several works which the Roman Church found helpful during the Reformation in the struggle against the Protestants, which may have influenced the Council of Trent to include them in the Canon of the Roman Catholic Church in AD 1548.

#### **D. Translation**

Godly men have labored so that each person might hear the Word in his own language. The task is huge, and ongoing. Modern languages and cultures often vary greatly from biblical times, and constantly change. Translators must choose the best words and phrases to carry the meaning of the original languages and still be easy for someone of any age or educational level to understand. No translation is perfect, but modern scholarship, discovery of new manuscripts, and growth in biblical understanding help in this never-ending task. Constant comparison with the original language texts is necessary to ensure that any particular translation accurately carries the meaning of the Word of God. God uses talented, educated, capable men, who depend on His direction and wisdom in this ongoing, vital step.

#### **E. Illumination**

As the Christian reads, studies, and meditates on the Word, the Holy Spirit reveals the meaning to him. The process of illumination is also never-ending, or should be. It is a joint effort. Man cannot learn without the Spirit (1Co 2:11-14; Ps 119:18), and the Spirit does not teach without a man's effort (2Ti 2:15; Ps 119:97-99; Pr 2:1-5).

Teaching God's Word is a special honor (2Ti 4:17) but also a serious responsibility (Jas 3:1). It should never be undertaken without serious, prayerful preparation. And yet, God has made all the necessary provisions for us to have a reliable text in our language, and has enabled us to understand His Word through the Spirit's help. Nothing is lacking other than our decision to handle it correctly, and faithfully use it to develop our own Christian life first of all, and then our ministry to others. What a privilege to be part of this process of bringing the living Word of God to a needy, perishing world!

### **CONCLUSION**

God has supervised the transmission of His Word from the time of the initial writing until we open it to seek instruction for our lives. The copy we have in our hands is reliable for use in both personal growth and ministry. However, it is a living, spiritual book, and can only be understood as we prayerfully and reverently approach it and allow the Holy Spirit to open our eyes to the truths contained in it. Thanks to the Lord for this wonderful book to guide us.



BIBLE STUDY  
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LESSON 2

# Observing God's Word

## WHAT DOES IT SAY?

### ☞ Lesson Purpose

The purpose of this lesson is to model for the church planter how to study the Bible through the inductive Bible study principle of "observation."

### ☞ Main Points

- Successful Bible study should be surrounded by prayer.
- Context is extremely important.
- There are six key questions to ask about any passage.

### ☞ Desired Outcomes

When the content of this lesson has been mastered, each participant should:

- Know how to prepare inductive Bible study observation questions.
- Be committed to study the Word of God diligently.

### ☞ Appendix

2A The Language of the Bible

### ☞ Suggestions to Trainers

This lesson is followed by a one-hour workshop that will focus on applying the principles of observation. This lesson includes sample observation questions for Jeremiah 1. You should emphasize the kinds of questions asked, because the trainees will be required to make up their own questions in the workshop lesson.

## INTRODUCTION

All Christians need to be able to study the Bible for their own spiritual growth as well as for the growth of those under their spiritual care. God has given every believer the Holy Spirit to be his or her principal teacher. Let us never forget the importance of our dependence upon God's Spirit to teach us and to empower us to obey what we learn. With God's help, it is possible for every believer to understand the Bible, even if the only book we have is the Bible. In addition, God has given some people the special role of helping His people discover the truths of Scripture and apply them correctly to their lives. It is especially important that a church planter know how to help others discover God's truth through Bible study.

One of the best ways to systematically discover, understand, and apply God's truth is the inductive Bible study method. The inductive Bible study method leads to this process of discovery through three basic steps that are called "observation", "interpretation", and "application." The Holy Spirit teaches us, but God also expects us to study His Word diligently using all the resources He has put at our disposal. We should never choose between studying hard or depending on the Holy Spirit—both are important!

God expects us to study His Word diligently using all the resources He has put at our disposal.

This lesson focuses on the first step of inductive Bible study—observation. As the previous lesson stated, observation is like the base of a pyramid. If we do a thorough and careful job of observation, the resulting interpretation and application will be much more accurate. Our goal should be to understand *exactly* what God wants us to know and do, and therefore observation is a critical step in the process.

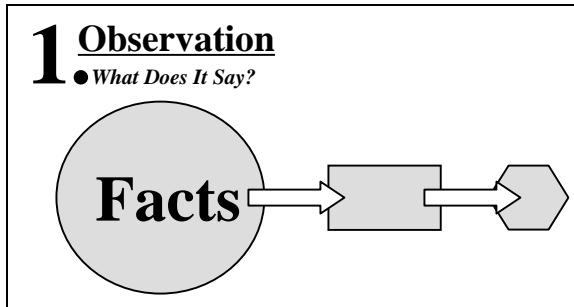


## I. OBSERVATION—WHAT DOES THE TEXT SAY?

Observation concerns the details and facts that are seen in a selected Bible passage. It answers the question "What does the text say?" It clearly shows the people, places, events, circumstances, objects, time, relationships, personal opinions, ideas, etc., which were in the writer's mind and the context when the text was written.

Students of secular classical literature have spent countless hours trying to decipher the meaning of great texts written by men. In many cases, this process has continued for hundreds or even thousands of years since the writing of the texts, with new understanding constantly emerging. Take a minute to think about some of the great classical authors of your country, and the search for the meaning of their writings. If this effort is warranted, how much more we should strive to understand the living, active, bottomless Word of the Almighty God. To quickly read a Bible passage, and assume that we understand it completely is utterly foolish. There is always more to understand.

Figure 2.1



### A. Prepare for Observation

Since the Bible is the inspired Word of God, we cannot approach it like any other book. There are several factors that will affect whether or not we understand it.

#### 1. *Belief*

The Scripture says that a "man without the Spirit" cannot understand the things that come from God (1Co 2:14). Since only those who have repented of their sin and trusted Christ for salvation have the Holy Spirit, an unbeliever cannot fully comprehend the Bible. This does *not* mean that only believers may be involved in a Bible study. It *does* mean that when unbelievers are present, they are limited in what they will be able to understand. The Holy Spirit desires to show them the truths of sin, righteousness, and judgment from the Word, in order to lead them to salvation. Therefore, a Bible study for unbelievers should focus on the basic truths of the Gospel.

#### 2. *Prayer*

Proper Bible study will always be surrounded by prayer. Before starting the study, we should pray and confess any sin or other obstacle that prevents us from learning from the Word. We should also pray for enlightenment (Ps 119:18; Eph 1:18). During our study, it is also helpful to pray for clarity whenever we see something that we do not understand. And finally, when we have finished the study, we should pray about how God would have us apply what we have learned to our own life and to the lives of others.

Proper Bible study  
will always be  
surrounded by prayer.

#### 3. *Readiness to Obey*

James tells us that we must not only listen to the Word, but also obey it (Jas 1:22-25). Jesus also said that putting His words into practice was like building a house on a rock (Mt 7:24). Not obeying them, however, was like building on sand (Mt 7:26). In fact, Jesus seems to say that giving spiritual truth to those who are not willing to obey it is as foolish as giving pearls to pigs (Mt 7:6). God is very serious about how we respond to His Word. The more we know, the more severely we will be judged.

#### 4. *Self-examination*

It is true that a pastor or church planter is responsible to teach the Word to others. We are told to “feed the sheep” (Jn 21:17). But this does not excuse him from first applying it to his own life. Every good cook samples the food as it cooks to determine whether or not it is ready to serve to others. At the very least, we should always look for application to ourselves, even when our goal is to preach to others. However, it is even more profitable if we also partake heartily of the meal, rather than just sample it.

We should always look for application to ourselves, even when our goal is to preach to others.

The student of the Scriptures should never feel that he or she has reached the point of understanding the Word fully—this is not possible. It is much better to be a “learner,” growing daily through study of the Word and prayer, than to masquerade as an “expert.” A teaching ministry will be more rich and rewarding if the teacher is sharing out of the abundance of truth that he or she is learning from the Lord on a daily basis.

#### 5. *Willingness to Learn*

Approach the Scriptures with an open mind. Be willing to let God teach you what His Word really says. Always be willing to expose your personally held belief to the light of God's Word. Don't be afraid of changing your viewpoint if God's shows you the truth about an issue.

### B. **Take Enough Time**

There are some proven principles for understanding the general focus of the passage. If the process is rushed, the result will be a shallow understanding of the text. It is important to exercise the patience and determination to keep working until the text is understood.

The first step is to **read the text over several times** to get an overall understanding of the passage. This takes time, but bears much fruit. There are many passages where it is easy to get bogged down in details unless you can discern the general theme through several readings. A good understanding of the passage's overall focus will help you to keep a proper balance and divide your time appropriately for the different parts under study.

### C. **Look at the Context**

The term ‘context’ refers to the verses that surround the passage being studied. Understanding the context is one of the most valuable tools of Bible study, and yet it is often ignored. When we look at the context, we are seeking to understand what is the theme or subject of the book, chapter, and paragraph of the verses that we are studying. Looking at the context means examining.

- What do the preceding and following verses talk about?
- What is the theme of the paragraph?
- What is the theme of the chapter?
- What is the purpose and theme of the book?
- Is the passage in the Old or New Testament and what does this mean?

A good example of the importance of context is Philippians 4:19, where Paul promises that God will “meet all your needs.” Many understand this to be an unconditional promise to everyone. Many would recognize that since Philippians is written to believers, this promise is only for Christians. However, a more in-depth study of the context reveals that Philippians is a “thank-you letter” to the Philippian church for the gift they sent to Paul through Epaphroditus. The context of chapter four is specifically talking about this generous gift that they had sent to Paul out of their poverty. The context of verse 18 shows that God was pleased with this gift. Therefore, the context indicates that verse 19 is a promise to those who have sacrificed to financially support a missionary church planter (Paul) who was preaching the Gospel to the lost (in Rome, at that time).

Understanding the context is one of the most valuable tools of Bible study.

Some Bibles have notes before each book that explain what the particular book is about. These can be helpful. There are also other commentaries and books available that discuss the setting and background of a particular Bible book or chapter. However, it is better to limit the use of these resources until the interpretation stage. There is no substitute for reading the Scriptures yourself and allowing them to speak to you with the guidance of the Holy Spirit. During the observation stage, focus on what *you* see in the passage and the context. Take the time to listen to God before you move on to the commentary of men, even if they might be gifted teachers or authors.

Observing the context involves reading more than just the passage being studied—it includes the surrounding verses, chapter, or book. We step back and look at the passage from a distance before we move in for a closer look. Insights and notes about the context should be carefully recorded. They will be of major importance in the interpretation stage.

Step back and look at the passage from a distance before moving in for a closer look.

#### **D. Examine the Structure**

Having looked at the passage from a distance, it is now time to look more closely. Read the passage several times, looking for and recording any of the following details of the structure:

- Key words - Note any word or words that are repeated. Often this indicates the theme.
- Comparisons or contrasts - Is something the same as something else, or the opposite?
- Progression of an idea - Does one thing build upon another? Are they linked to other ideas like a chain?
- Verbs – Is there some kind of action? Is there a command we must obey?
- Conjunctions - Is something equal to something? Often the conjunction “but” appears in contrast, and the words “like” or “as” may indicate comparison.
- Illustrations - Visualize in your mind the thing or action that is being described.
- Kind of literature – A passage may be history, prophecy, allegory, didactic truth, logic, parable, or many other possibilities. Appendix 2A lists many more of these. Noting the type of literature in the passage will also affect the interpretation in the next stage, so it should be recorded carefully now.

#### **E. Ask Questions: Who?, What?, Where?, When?, How?, and Why?**

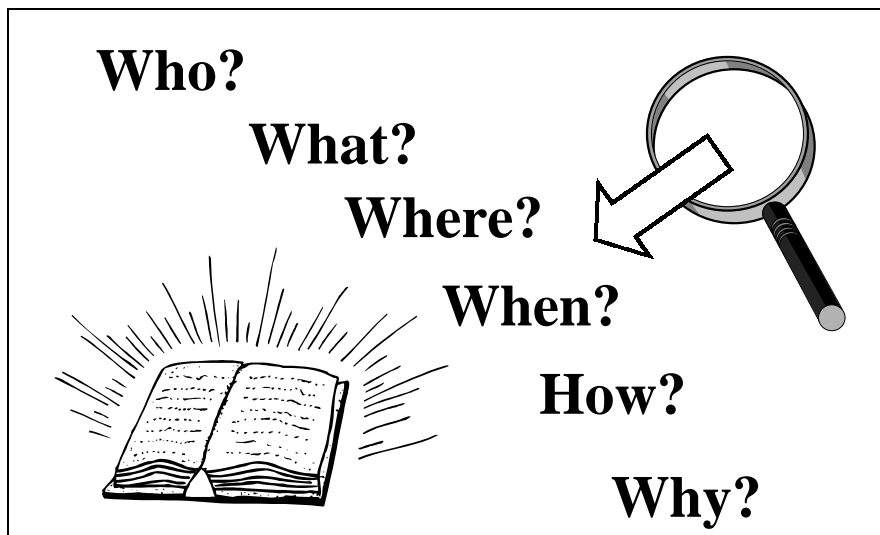
The best method of discovering the content and meaning of a passage of Scripture is to ask key questions about it, and record the answers. Figure 2.2 shows the six key questions that should be asked and answered. There are, of course, other possible questions, but these are the most important ones. Other questions tend to be variations of these six.

Ideally, you should ask every form of these questions that you can think of (the more the better). Sample variations of these questions are shown in the next section. As you ask questions, carefully record the questions and the answers on a sheet of paper. You will need to refer to them in the interpretation stage.

If you ask a question and cannot find the answer, note the question and come back to it at a later time. Do not disregard those questions. They may be important. Instead, pray about them, meditate on them, and ask God to show you the answers. Be prepared for this to take time and effort, but it will be worth it when you arrive at a clearer understanding of the passage. Only then will you be able to apply it with confidence in your own life, and teach “thus says the Lord . . .” to others.

If you cannot find the answer to a question, come back to it at a later time.

Figure 2.2 Key Observation Questions



## II. SAMPLE OBSERVATION

We are going to use the six questions to see what we can discover about God's truth in an Old Testament passage about a young man called to serve God. As we study this passage, it will become very clear that he was being called to take a stand that was radically different from his contemporaries. No doubt some of you will be able to identify with the struggles this young man had to face as he responded to God's call. The passage is found in Jeremiah 1.

Open your Bible to that passage, pray for enlightenment, and then look for the answers to the following questions. Take special note of the *kinds of questions* that are asked. In your own study later, you will need to make up similar questions to ask of other passages as you study them. Write the answers next to each question.

### A. Who?

- To **whom** is this part of Scripture attributed (verse 1)?
- **Who** are the persons mentioned in this passage (verses 1-2)?
- **Who** are the kings noted in verses 2-3?
- **Who** are the people God is summoning to bring disaster on the land (v.15)?
- Verses 18-19 list Jeremiah's main opposition. **Who** will these people be?
- (Other?)

### B. What?

- **What** special event is noted at the beginning of verse 2?
- Is it possible to deduce **what** Jeremiah's role was from verse 2?
- If so, **what** was that role?
- According to verse 2, **what** event took place at the end of the reign of Zedekiah?
- **What** happened to Jeremiah in verse 3?
- **What** was the "word of the Lord" that came to him (verse 5)?
- **What** are the four specific actions attributed by God to Himself in verse 5?
- In verse 5, **what** was to be Jeremiah's role?
- **What** was the extent of Jeremiah's role? Limited to the nation of Israel, or much broader?

- **What** was Jeremiah's response in verse 6?
- **What** was God's response to Jeremiah in verses 7-8?
- **What** are the two imperatives God gives to Jeremiah in verses 7-8?
- **What** options does Jeremiah have according to verse 7?
- **What** is Jeremiah's emotion that God addresses in the first part of verse 8?
- **What** two reasons are given to Jeremiah for not being afraid (verse 8)?
- **What** does the Lord do to Jeremiah in verse 9?
- Verse 10 describes Jeremiah's task. **What** were the elements of that task?
- **What** is the progression noted in verse 10?
- **What** were the two things God showed Jeremiah in verses 11-16?
- **What** does verse 12 describe God doing?
- According to verses 14-16, **what** is about to happen to the people of God?
- **What** are the specific reasons God is bringing judgment on His people (v.16)?
- **What** are the instructions God gives to Jeremiah in verse 17?
- **What** commands have been repeated from earlier?
- **What** is the new promise (verse 17)?
- **What** will the people of verse 18 do to Jeremiah (verse 19)?
- **What** is the promise God gives Jeremiah for the battles ahead (verse 19)?
- (Other?)

**C. Where?**

- **Where** is the setting of this passage according to verse 1?
- **Where** is this located?
- **Where** will the people described in verse 15 come from?
- (Other?)

**D. When?**

- **When** is the time period described for the overall contents of this book?
- In verse 5, **when** did God know (choose) Jeremiah?
- In verse 5, **when** did God set Jeremiah apart for ministry?
- **When** did the action in verse 18 take place?
- (Other?)

**E. Why?**

- **Why** is God "watching" in verse 12?
- **Why** is God pronouncing judgment on His people (v.16)?
- (Other?)

**F. How?**

- **How** is Jeremiah described in verse 1?
- **How** is his father Hilkiah described?
- **How** does Jeremiah address God in verse 6?
- **How** does Jeremiah respond to God's word in verse 6?
- **How** does God describe Jeremiah in verse 18?

Use the space provided below to list any other observations you made concerning Jeremiah 1:

## **QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION, REVIEW AND APPLICATION**

- What does 'context' mean?
- What are the six key questions to ask a passage?
- When, during a Bible study, should we pray?

## **ACTION PLAN**

If you did not have time to complete the observation of Jeremiah 1, do so before the next lesson. See if you can ask other appropriate questions of the same passage. Save these questions and answers for use in Lesson 4.

BIBLE STUDY  
APPENDIX

2A

# The Language of the Bible

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When we study the Word of God, we are looking for its intended, literal meaning. We want to understand the message that the Lord desires to communicate through it. But it is important to realize that, like all great literature, the Bible writers often used figures of speech to communicate truth. In addition, they used many different kinds of literature in their writing. Studying the Bible accurately requires that we recognize these differences, and treat each passage according to the kinds of language and literature used.

## I. KINDS OF FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE IN THE BIBLE

### A. Simile

A simile compares two dissimilar things, using words such as “like,” “as” or “than.” Psalm 1 compares the righteous man to a tree planted by streams of water. Both bear fruit and prosper.

### B. Parable

A parable is a simile in a longer story form. Jesus helped the disciples understand His kingdom by telling a parable about workers who were paid equally though some had worked longer than others had. He begins with the words, “For the kingdom of heaven is *like* a landowner who went out early in the morning to hire men to work in his vineyard...” (Mt 20:1).

### C. Metaphor

A metaphor compares two dissimilar things without using obvious words such as “like” or “as.” In Jeremiah 1:18, the Lord said to Jeremiah, “Today I have made you a fortified city, an iron pillar and a bronze wall...”

### D. Allegory

An allegory is a long metaphor. In Judges 9:7-15, Jotham tells a story about a worthless thorn bush being king over the other productive trees to describe a corrupt political leader.

### E. Hyperbole

A hyperbole expresses something in extreme terms to make a point. When Jesus says that a judgmental person has a log in his eye and doesn’t know it, he is saying something that is physically impossible. His point, however, is that a person who is unaware of his own sins is totally unable to evaluate another person’s sins.

### F. Sarcasm

Sarcasm criticizes by using undeserved or ridiculous praise. Paul criticizes the Corinthians’ pride by writing, “Already you have all you want! Already you have become rich! You have become kings – and that without us!” (1Co 4:8).

Deciding when the biblical writers were using language figuratively or literally is serious work. It would be a grievous error to ignore one of God’s commands by claiming it to be figurative language. On the other hand, to say that every verse in the Bible should be interpreted literally leads to some perplexing problems. When the Lord referred to Jeremiah as “a fortified city, an iron pillar and a bronze wall...” He obviously wasn’t speaking in a literal sense (Jer 1:18). The same is true when the

Lord said he was appointing Jeremiah to “uproot and tear down, to destroy and overthrow...” (Jer 1:10).

How can we know the difference between literal and figurative language? You can ask some simple questions like these:

- Does the passage state that it is figurative? (“Listen to another parable...” Mt 21:33).
- Does the passage become absurd or impossible if it is interpreted literally? (“I see a boiling pot, tilting away from the north... from the north disaster will be poured out on all who live in the land...” Jer 1:13-14).
- Does the passage describe God, who is Spirit, as if He had a physical body and other strictly human qualities? (“Then the Lord reached out His hand and touched my mouth...” Jer 1:9).

If the above questions don’t apply, then the verse can most probably be interpreted literally.

## **II. KINDS OF LITERATURE IN THE BIBLE**

### **A. History**

The Bible is full of historical accounts and biographies. For example, the book of Judges tells the history of Israel between the time of Joshua’s conquest of the land and King Saul’s reign. The book of Nehemiah is Nehemiah’s diary of the rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem. The Gospels are Jesus’ biographies and include His teachings. The book of Acts records the significant happenings in the early history of the Church.

### **B. Instruction**

Throughout the Bible you will find guidelines, commands, principles, proverbs, doctrines and practical advice. The major part of the book of Leviticus contains detailed instructions for the Israelite priests. Proverbs gives advice on finances, relationships, and work. Paul’s letters to specific churches are full of both doctrine and practical guidelines for the Christian life.

### **C. Prophecy**

Most prophetic literature is a written account of sermons originally preached to God’s people. Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel, the larger prophetic books, are collections of sermons spanning the careers of these prophets. These books were not meant to be read from start to finish as a single unit. The secret to understanding these books is finding the beginning and ending of the individual sermons and reading from one sermon to the next. Nearly all the sermons dealt with the historic periods of the writers. Some of the sermons dealt with the future beyond the lifetimes of the prophets.

### **D. Poetry**

In the poetic literature of the Bible every human emotion is expressed. Many biblical books contain poetry. The Psalms and the Song of Songs are entirely poetry and many of the prophetic books are predominately poetic.

### **E. Apocalypse**

Some prophecy is written in a special kind of literature known as apocalyptic. The word apocalyptic means “unveiling” because it reveals events that will take place in the future. The book of Daniel and the book of Revelation are good examples of this literature. Apocalyptic passages are highly symbolic and it is necessary to understand the symbolism in order to interpret the message. The central message in apocalyptic literature is the second coming of Christ and his ultimate victory over Satan. Typically, the whole of creation is involved in the coming events. (Compiled from Inch and Bullock, eds., 1981. *Literature and Meaning of Scripture*. Baker Book House.)





BIBLE STUDY  
METHODS

LESSON 3

# Observation Workshop

## ☛ Lesson Purpose

The purpose of this workshop is to give the trainees opportunity to practice forming and answering inductive Bible study observation questions.

## ☛ Main Points

- There are always more good questions to ask.

## ☛ Desired Outcomes

When the content of this lesson has been mastered each participant should:

- Be able to prepare inductive Bible study observation questions.
- Know the importance of studying a passage as a group.

## ☛ Suggestions to Trainers

It is important to bring the groups back together for the 15-minute time of comparing results. This should show that there are many possibilities of questions that might normally slip past individuals, or even a small group. It also underscores the validity of studying the Scriptures together in a group rather than having only one person “preach” what they see in the text.

Have extra paper and pencils available for the groups to use. Also, you will need a posterboard, chalkboard, or something equivalent to record the questions and answers when the groups come together at the end of the session.

## WORKSHOP FORMAT

The passage we will use for our workshop is Acts 17:1-10a. The format for this workshop is as follows:

- Divide into groups of 3-4 people.
- Take 35 minutes to read the passage, develop **observation** questions, and record the answers.

Use the last 15 minutes of the workshop to regroup and compare the questions and resulting answers. Make a master list of these questions and observations from the lists of each group. Then choose the *best question* for each of the six sections. These are the questions that are most helpful or revealing, and that you would use if you were to lead others through this study.

## STEPS

Use the following steps that were outlined in Lesson 2:

- Pray for enlightenment.
- Read the passage several times.
- Examine the context and record your observations.
- Examine the structure and record what you see.
- Ask every variation of the six key questions that you can think of, and record the answers that you find. Not every question will apply to this passage, but record the ones that relate to it.
- Select the *one best question* for each section for use if you were to teach this passage.

## GROUP WORK

Use the tables below to begin recording your questions and answers. Use extra paper as needed.

<b>CONTEXT</b> <i>The theme of subject of the verses surrounding the passage being studied.</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Preceding verses –</li><li>• Following verses –</li><li>• Paragraph / section -</li><li>• Chapter (17) -</li><li>• Book (Acts) –</li><li>• New Testament –</li></ul>

<b>STRUCTURE</b> <i>The structure of the passage relates to the grammar and kind of language.</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Key words –</li><li>• Comparisons or contrasts –</li><li>• Progression of ideas -</li><li>• Verbs -</li><li>• Conjunctions –</li><li>• Illustrations –</li><li>• Kind of literature -</li></ul>

## KEY QUESTIONS

*Ask and answer all possible variants of the six key questions.*

Your Questions:	Your Answers:
<b>Who?</b> 1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6. 7. 8. 9. 10. <i>[circle the question you found most helpful]</i>	
<b>What?</b> 1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6. 7. 8. 9. 10. <i>[circle the question you found most helpful]</i>	

Your Questions:	Your Answers:
<p><b>Where?</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1.</li> <li>2.</li> <li>3.</li> <li>4.</li> <li>5.</li> <li>6.</li> <li>7.</li> <li>8.</li> <li>9.</li> <li>10.</li> </ol> <p><i>[circle the question you found most helpful]</i></p>	
<p><b>When?</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1.</li> <li>2.</li> <li>3.</li> <li>4.</li> <li>5.</li> <li>6.</li> <li>7.</li> <li>8.</li> <li>9.</li> <li>10.</li> </ol> <p><i>[circle the question you found most helpful]</i></p>	
<p><b>How?</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1.</li> <li>2.</li> <li>3.</li> <li>4.</li> <li>5.</li> <li>6.</li> <li>7.</li> <li>8.</li> <li>9.</li> <li>10.</li> </ol> <p><i>[circle the question you found most helpful]</i></p>	

Your Questions:	Your Answers:
<p><b>Why?</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1.</li><li>2.</li><li>3.</li><li>4.</li><li>5.</li><li>6.</li><li>7.</li><li>8.</li><li>9.</li><li>10.</li></ol> <p><i>[circle the question you found most helpful]</i></p>	



BIBLE STUDY  
METHODS

LESSON 4

# Interpreting God's Word

## WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

### ☞ Lesson Purpose

The purpose of this lesson is to model for the church planter how to study the Bible through the inductive Bible study principle of "interpretation."

### ☞ Main Points

- The importance of careful interpretation.
- Common errors in interpretation.

### ☞ Desired Outcomes

When the content of this lesson has been mastered each participant should:

- Know the basic principles for interpreting the Scriptures
- Be committed to study the Word of God diligently.

### ☞ Appendix

4A Bible Charts

### ☞ Suggestions to Trainers

This lesson is followed by a one-hour workshop to develop skills in interpretation of a passage.

## INTRODUCTION

Apart from the Holy Spirit and prayer, the Bible is the most important resource we have as a church planter. The living and active Word of God is alone able to penetrate the hearts and souls of those whom we seek to win for the Kingdom of God. It equips us for every good work, which certainly describes our ministry of multiplying churches across the land. It serves as the only standard by which we measure and evaluate every doctrine, practice, or tradition of the Church. History, tradition, and the human intellect may lead astray, but the Bible stands firm as the truth of God.

It is important, therefore, for us to know how to "rightly divide the Word of Truth." Our enemy Satan has spared no effort to undermine the Bible and its truth. Over the centuries, many different controversies have been created by a false understanding of what the Bible says. You don't want to be guilty of adding to or supporting those false understandings of God's Word.

## I. INTERPRETATION—THE SECOND STAGE OF THE INDUCTIVE METHOD

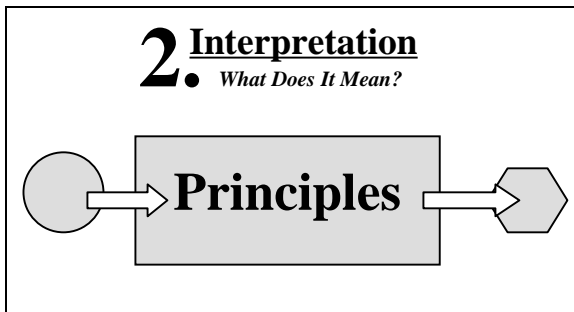
Interpretation answers the question "What does the text *mean*?" This session presents some guidelines for discerning what the Scriptures are really saying. This is not intended to be a full treatment of this subject, only an introduction. We also want to take the same passage we have been dealing with in Jeremiah chapter 1 and apply these principles to gain a clearer understanding of that passage.

The interpretation stage follows the observation stage of inductive Bible study. This seems obvious, but all too often those who study the Bible rush ahead to this stage without doing a thorough job of observation. As a result, their interpretation is often faulty, since they do not have enough facts to accurately interpret the passage.



The stages of observation, interpretation, and application can be compared to the process of building a house. Observation would be the *collecting of the materials*. Interpretation is the stage where the owner actually *constructs the house* from the materials. Application is the stage where the owner moves into the house and *lives in it*. Every stage is equally important, and they are all interdependent. If the materials are lacking (observation), it will not be possible to complete the house. If the house is not constructed carefully (interpretation), living in the house will be dangerous. If no one lives in the house (application), then building it was a waste of time.

Figure 4.1



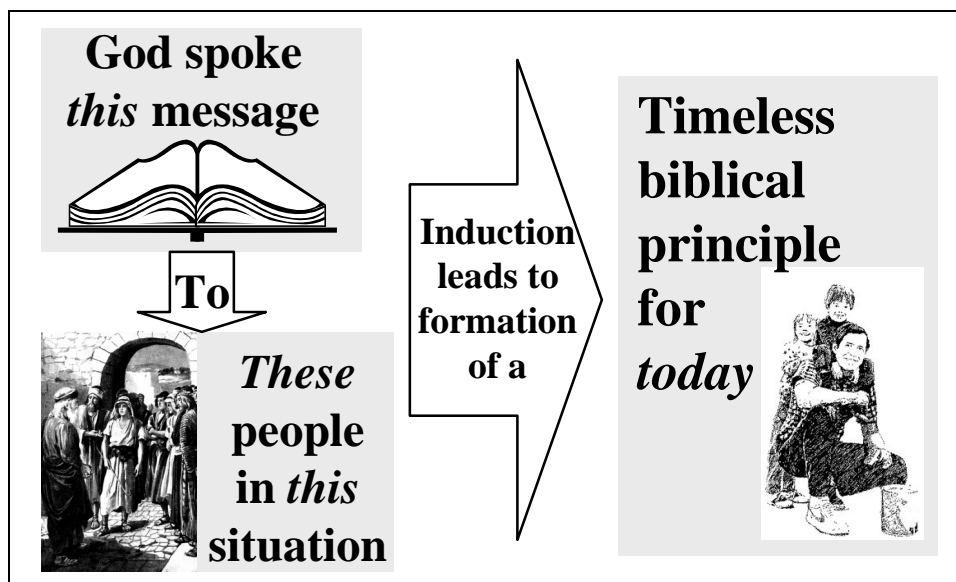
With this analogy in mind, it should be clear that interpretation should be done carefully, prayerfully, and thoughtfully. If at any point you find that you do not have enough facts to decipher the meaning of the passage, you should return to the observation stage and ask more questions. Actually, this is normal. Rarely do we note everything important in a passage, any more than a builder never runs out of material and has to get more.

Interpretation should be done carefully, prayerfully, and thoughtfully.

## II. THE PROCESS OF INTERPRETATION

When we interpret a passage of Scripture, we seek to clearly describe the original biblical situation, and to state the message that God communicated in that situation. We can then carefully and prayerfully assume that God would speak in a similar way to a similar situation—resulting in a general biblical principle.

Figure 4.2 Using Induction to Discover the Biblical Principle



Therefore, interpretation involves:

- Understanding the original, biblical situation and people
- Identifying the message communicated to those people at that time
- Formulating a principle that summarizes these facts, and which would apply to a similar situation in any era—especially today.

The principle that results from interpretation might be a warning, a promise, a challenge, etc. The important thing is to understand the original situation clearly enough that we can say "thus says the Lord" with confidence when we apply it to our own lives and the lives of others.

#### **A. Sift through the Observation Facts to Find the Key Ones**

Interpretation is more of an art than it is a science. That is, it is more than a matter of following certain rules—although rules and guidelines do exist. Practice, prayer, and sensitivity to the Holy Spirit's leading are necessary in order to develop the ability to sift through all the facts from the observation stage, identify the most important ones, and understand the main message of the passage.

#### **B. Determine the Author's Main Point**

When we refer to the author of the passage, we have in mind both the human writer, and also God who directed the writing. With the exception of some prophecies that the human writer did not understand, the writer's point and God's point should be the same.

In some cases, the main point may be clearly stated in the passage. Usually, however, it will be necessary to look for the clues and key observations. The context is normally the most important indicator of the topic or main point. Repeated word or phrases are also valuable clues. Each passage will be different, but you will be looking for the following information:

- What subject is the author writing about?
- What is he saying about that subject?

The ideal situation is to be able to summarize these two things in a concise sentence. This may take quite a few attempts before it is right. Continuing the analogy of building a house, this is like laying the foundation properly. The fuller description of the message of the passage will be built on this statement, as will the application.

The ideal situation is to be able to summarize the point of the passage in a concise sentence.

#### **C. Determine the flow of thought in the passage**

Once the main point of the author has been stated, the next step is to describe how he builds that point in the passage. What style does he use? Why? What method or what logic? Why did he choose this way of presenting it? It should be possible to note both the content of the passage, and also the attitude or emotion being communicated. Texts might be encouraging, sarcastic, angry, confronting, soothing, pleading, challenging, etc.

### **III. THE BASIC RULES OF INTERPRETATION**

Although interpretation is essentially an art to be developed through practice, there are some basic rules that should be followed. The rules described below assume that the Bible is the inspired Word of God, and that God intends for us to read and understand it. Not everyone agrees with those assumptions, and this is the source of many of the religious disagreements in the world, as well as the source of many of the cults.

#### **A. General Principles of Biblical Interpretation**

1. The Bible is the authoritative Word of God.
2. The Bible is its own best interpreter, reflecting the character of God.
3. Saving faith and the Holy Spirit are necessary to understand the Scripture.
4. You should interpret history, actions, attitudes, personal experience, etc., in the light of Scripture and not Scripture in the light of these things.
5. The primary purpose of the Bible is not to increase our knowledge, but to change our lives.

6. Every Christian has the right, the responsibility, and the privilege to investigate and interpret the Word of God with the help of the Holy Spirit.

## **B. Grammatical, Historical, and Theological Principles of Biblical Interpretation**

1. You should interpret words according to their meaning in the historical and cultural context of the author. Always think about how the original hearers would have understood and reacted to the message.
2. It is important to understand the grammar of a passage before trying to understand the theological truth that it teaches.
3. Figurative language normally has one main point. Do not try to read too many things into that kind of passage. (See Appendix 2A "The Language of the Bible" for a description of different kinds of figurative language.)
4. You should be no clearer on a subject than the Scriptures are clear. Don't add your own thinking or church tradition to what the Bible says, for you or others could come to believe those thoughts are actually Scriptural.

## **C. Common Interpretation Errors to Avoid**

Three common errors in interpretation happen because of the failure to remember key attributes of Scripture.

### *1. Springboard*

This kind of error takes its name from the springboard that gymnasts use to help them jump higher. The springboard is not central to their performance—it only helps them get started. This error occurs when the interpreter already knows what he wants to say, and is not particularly interested in discovering the meaning of the text. He briefly looks at a passage and "jumps" from there to some other topic or teaching that he really wants to discuss. This insults the Lord, Who wrote the Word to communicate truth to us.

### *2. Allegory*

This method is also very common, but just as unacceptable. It involves ignoring the clear meaning of Scripture and trying to find some hidden message. There are indeed some passages that are very difficult to understand. However, most passages make sense when we look carefully and the words and grammar. We should never look for "hidden meanings" when one is presented clearly. Even in the case of a difficult passage, it is better to admit that we don't understand it than to try to fabricate some kind of meaning that is hard to support.

We should never look for "hidden meanings" when one is presented clearly.
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### *3. Ignoring Progressive Revelation*

It is impossible to understand a passage if we forget the progressive nature of Scripture. God sometimes changes the way He deals with men. For instance, in the Old Testament, God required a series of literal animal sacrifices. However, these sacrifices were only temporary. When God's perfect Lamb died on Calvary, He fulfilled all the Old Testament requirements (Heb 9:12). No sacrifice of any kind is required in the New Testament. If someone were to sacrifice a lamb for his sin today, it would be an insult to Christ. Therefore, interpretation decisions must be made with care, and with the broader teaching of the Word in mind.

## **D. Use "Helps", But Use Them Carefully**

There are many tools and helps that assist in the process of interpretation. These include commentaries, Bible handbooks, Bible notes, Bible cross-references, dictionaries, atlases, and many other books. As helpful as these are, they should not replace personal effort to understand the passage. They are meant to *help*, not to *do the work for you*. Use them as needed to understand things that are not clear to you. Be especially careful with Bible cross-references.

Often, they only refer to another verse that has the same word or phrase in it. The verse referred to may or may not have *anything* to do with the topic of the passage.

#### **IV. SAMPLE INTERPRETATION**

Refer back to your observation notes on Jeremiah 1, and work through the process of interpretation as time allows. Follow the format shown below.

##### **A. Sift the Observations to Find the Key Facts**

As I look at my observations on Jeremiah 1, it seems to me that the most important observations are (*list*):

##### **B. State the Main Point**

The subject of the chapter is:

The thing that Jeremiah is saying about this subject is:

A concise statement of main point, reflecting the two ideas above, is:

##### **C. Describe the Flow of Thought**

Jeremiah develops the main idea of the passage by:

#### D. Some "Meaning" Questions

As you work through the statements above, it might be helpful to consider the following questions about the *meaning* of the text. Perhaps you will think of other good, or even better, questions. These are offered to start you on the process.

##### *Verse 5*

- What does it mean that the Lord "knew" Jeremiah?
- What does it mean to be "set apart?"
- What are some implications of the statement "...before you were born I set you apart...?"

##### *Verse 6*

- Why might Jeremiah consider himself a "child?"
- Why do you suppose Jeremiah responded the way he did?

##### *Verse 7*

- How would you characterize a call from God by what you see in this verse?
- What does your answer to the preceding question say about God and His character?

##### *Verse 8*

- What do the Lord's words say about the response of the people to Jeremiah's future ministry?
- What motivation is there for Jeremiah to face the opposition?

##### *Verse 9*

- How did the Lord "put" His words into Jeremiah?

##### *Verse 10*

- What do you think the phrases "uproot and tear down, to destroy and overthrow, to build and plant" mean?
- What can you assume about the character of Jeremiah that would enable him to follow through with God's plan?

##### *Verse 12*

- What principle do you find in this verse concerning God's involvement in the ministry of those He has called?

##### *Verse 16*

- What does this verse show about the character of God, even when it comes to judging His own people?
- Was God justified in what He planned to do to the people? Why?

##### *Verse 17*

- What might have been part of Jeremiah's "getting ready"?
- Why do you think the Lord repeated again what he had already said before (verse 8)?

##### *Verse 18*

- What is the meaning and significance of the phrases "fortified city, an iron pillar and a bronze wall?"
- Why would the people of verse 18 be so opposed to Jeremiah and his message?
- How does God fortify and prepare His people today to stand for Him?

##### *Verse 19*

- What does this verse show about God's character and commitment to those He calls?

### **E. The Biblical Principle**

The final step in the process of interpretation is to attempt to state the meaning of the passage as a concise biblical principle. This statement should be very similar to the "Main Point" in section IV.B. above. However, the main point in section IV.B. related to the specific context of Jeremiah 1, more than 2500 years ago. The principle that you want to formulate now should be valid at any time, especially today.

The form of the principle would be something like: "In this kind of situation, we should..." or "When this happens, God will..." The exact wording of the principle for a particular passage will vary, of course. Also, the principle should be as specific as possible. This process is not easy, but it is important. And with God's help, it is possible.

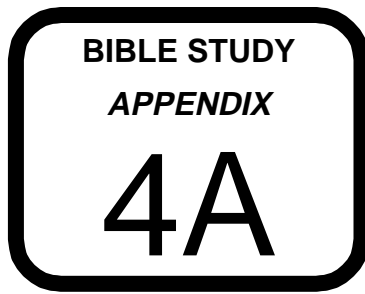
From my study of Jeremiah 1, I find the following timeless biblical principle (record):

### **QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION, REVIEW AND APPLICATION.**

- What are three common errors in interpretation?
- What question does interpretation answer?

### **ACTION PLAN**

- Finish any remaining questions in this lesson that you have not yet completed.
- Begin to work through the interpretation process using Acts 17:1-10.



## Bible Charts

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On the following pages are two charts that may help be of help to you:

- Figure 4A.1 gives the big picture of God's eternal plan through the Old and New Testaments.
- Figure 4A.2 shows the historical periods of the Bible.

**Figure 4A.1: Redemptive History of the World in the Old Testament (OT) and New Testament (NT)**

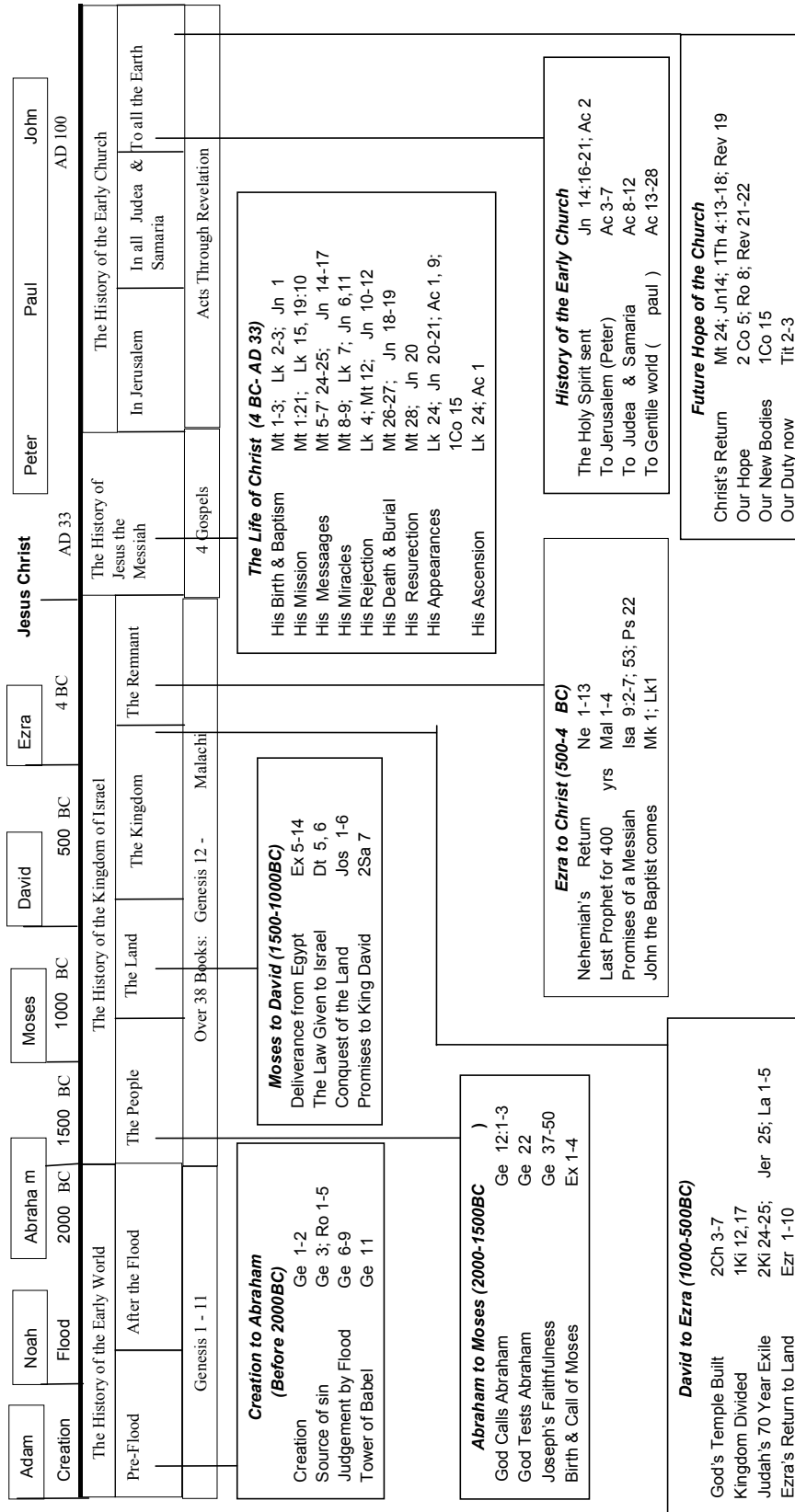
The chart below is intended to give the BIG PICTURE of the Bible by showing that the Old and New Testaments are united in declaring God's eternal purpose. Beginning in Genesis, God created Man (male and female) to have a relationship with Him. When Man sinned, that relationship was broken. The account of how God began rebuilding that relationship begins in Genesis 3:15 and ends in Revelation 22. In fact, the Bible is primarily the history of God's redemptive plan.

OT	Creation: Ge 1, 2	Fall/Sin: Ge 3:1-14	Promise of a Redeemer: Ge 3:15, 21	Promise repeated to Abraham: Ge 12	Sacrificial System initiated under Law of Moses/Blood Atonement: Exodus	A chosen people to be His Witness throughout the World
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Man (Male &amp; female) created in IMAGE of God 1:27</li> <li>- to have relationship with God, 3:8</li> <li>- to have relationship with each other, 2:24</li> <li>- to reproduce, 1:28</li> <li>- to rule over earth, 1:28</li> <li>- to receive God's blessing, 1:28</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Image Marred</li> <li>- Relationship with God broken</li> <li>- Pain and suffering</li> <li>- Try to rule over each other</li> <li>- All under a curse</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The "offspring" of the woman would strike the heel of the serpent.</li> <li>- God made garments of skin for them.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- I will bless you</li> <li>- In you all nations of the earth will be blessed</li> <li>- God chose one nation to be His people &amp; to make Him known throughout the earth.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Isa 53:7</li> <li>- Ex 12:13 A lamb to be sacrificed for sin. (Picture of the Lamb of God that would take away sins of the world).</li> <li>- Leviticus</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Jos 2:8-14; 4:24</li> <li>- 2Sa 7:25-26</li> <li>- 1Ki 8:41-43</li> <li>- Isa 43:10-12; 54:5; 55:4, 5; 59:20; 60:16</li> <li>- Da 7:13-14</li> <li>- Zec 13:1</li> <li>- (plus many, many more)</li> </ul>
NT	Jesus: Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world	Gospels: Jesus the Redeemer Came	Acts: History of story of Redemption taken to ends of earth	A Redeemed people being transformed into image of Christ: "How should we Live?"		Revelation: Ultimate Redemption
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Jn 1:29</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Mt 1:21</li> <li>- Jn 3:16, 17</li> <li>- Lk 4:18, 19</li> <li>- Lk 19:10</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Jerusalem 2 &amp; 6:7</li> <li>- Judea &amp; Samaria 6:8 - 9:31</li> <li>- Palestine &amp; Syria 9:32 - 12:24</li> <li>- Eastern part of Roman World 12:25-19:20</li> <li>- To Rome 19:21-25:31</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Ro 3:24; Ro 4:22-25; Ro 6:11-14;</li> <li>- Ro 8:29</li> <li>- 2Co 3:18</li> <li>- Eph 4:21-33</li> <li>- Col 1:15-22</li> <li>- 1Pe 5:1, 10</li> <li>- 1Th 2:19</li> <li>- Jude 24, 25</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- (Creation of) a New Heaven and New Earth (21:1)</li> <li>- Everything made new (21:5)</li> <li>- His servants will reign with Him (22:5)</li> <li>- Blessed are those who wash their robes (22:14)</li> </ul>



**Figure 4A.2 Chronology of the Bible**

This chart shows how the Bible is broken down into historical periods. Key figures in each of the periods are noted



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**BIBLE STUDY  
METHODS**

**5**  
LESSON

# Interpretation Workshop

## ☛ Lesson Purpose

The purpose of this lesson is to give trainees the opportunity to practice the interpretation stage of inductive Bible study.

## ☛ Main Points

- The goal of interpretation is to understand the author's intended meaning.

## ☛ Desired Outcomes

When the content of this lesson has been mastered each participant should:

- Begin to apply the principles of interpretation.
- Better understand the meaning of Acts 17:1-10a.

## ☛ Suggestions to Trainers

Workshop: Divide the trainees into small groups of 3-4 people. Have all the groups work on the same passage recommended at the end of the first hour. Allow 15 minutes at the end of the workshop for the groups to discuss their understanding of the passage together.

## WORKSHOP FORMAT

The passage we will use for our workshop is Acts 17:1-10a. The format for this workshop is as follows:

- We will divide into groups of 3-4 people.
- We will have 35 minutes to read the passage and work through the steps of interpretation as presented in Lesson 4.
- The last 15 minutes of the workshop we will regroup and share our understanding of the passage, and to choose key 'interpretation' questions.

## GROUP WORK

As a result of Lesson 3, each trainee should already be very familiar with Acts 17:1-10a. You will need to refer back to your observations in that lesson in order to complete this lesson. In fact, it may be necessary to do additional observation of the passage if questions arise that you cannot answer.

Use the same process that you used to interpret Jeremiah 1 in Lesson 4.

### A. Sift the Observations to Find the Key Facts

As I look at my observations on Acts 17:1-10a, it seems to me that the most important observations are (*list*):

*Context of the passage:*

*Original audience:*

*Original situation:*

*Other facts and observations:*

**B. State the Main Point**

The subject of the passage is:

The thing that Luke is saying about this subject is:

A concise statement of main point, reflecting the two ideas above, is:

**C. Describe the Flow of Thought**

Luke develops the main idea of the passage by:

**D. “What Does It Mean” Questions**

As you work through this passage as a group, record below key questions you asked about the meaning of the passage that helped you better understand *what the verses mean*.

*[Circle the two most helpful questions that you would use if you were leading a group study of this passage.]*

**E. State the Biblical Principle**

The timeless principle of this passage is:

**SUMMARY**

Use the space below to take notes when the groups come back together to discuss their understanding of the passage. Note how other groups agreed or differed from your understanding. Try to arrive at a consensus on the meaning of the passage.

Choose the two best ‘interpretation’ questions for a group study from among the ‘favorites’ of all the groups and record them below.

- 1.
- 2.

**SOURCES**

Hendricks, Howard G., and William Hendricks. *Living By the Book*. Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1991.



BIBLE STUDY  
METHODS

6

LESSON

# Applying God's Word

## WHAT SHOULD I DO?

### ☛ Lesson Purpose

The purpose of this lesson is to model for the church planter how to study the Bible through the inductive Bible study principle of 'application.'

### ☛ Main Points

- We need to obey the biblical principles we learn, or else the exercise is futile.
- Our situation must be equivalent to the biblical context for the application to be valid.

### ☛ Desired Outcomes

When the content of this lesson has been mastered, each participant should:

- Know how to apply principles learned from the Scriptures
- Know how to prepare inductive Bible study application questions.
- Begin to apply the application principles presented in this lesson.

### ☛ Suggestions to Trainers

The focus in this lesson should be on practical applications that each person can make to his/her own life and ministry. Trainees should be encouraged to make these personal applications.

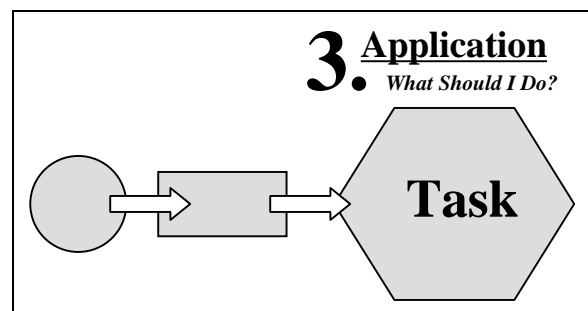
## INTRODUCTION

For some reason, the hardest part of the Christian life is applying the truths of Scripture to everyday life. We might gain much knowledge and our faith might increase from our study of the Bible. However, unless we understand how to put into practice what we have learned, the study will not greatly profit us. In the preceding lessons, we have collected our materials (observation) and constructed them into a biblical principle (interpretation). Now it is time to live in the truth (application). Application specifically asks the question "what should I do?"

When we determine what we *should* do, we still need to **obey** what the Bible teaches. Jesus taught that His disciples should teach others "...to obey everything I have commanded you" (Mt 28:20). The Apostle Paul speaks of applying what has been learned this way, "Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ" (1Co 11:1). The Apostle John writes that "we know that we have come to know him if we obey his commands" (1Jn 2:3). Also, we need to look for practical ways to **apply** the truths we learn as we study the Bible. The Apostle James writes, "...faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead" (Jas 2:17).

In this lesson we want to return to the passage in Jeremiah chapter 1. We will study the text again, looking for biblical principles that we can apply to our lives. While the principles will apply to everyone, the practical applications may well vary from one person to another because our circumstances are all different.

Figure 6.1



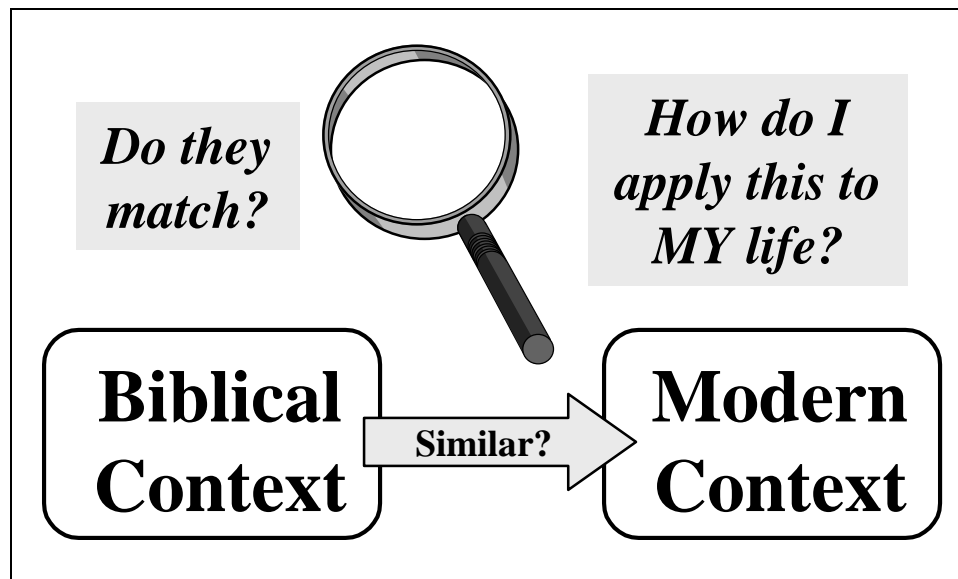
## I. APPLICATION—THE THIRD STAGE OF THE INDUCTIVE METHOD

There are two very important issues that must be addressed in the application stage. The first is the fact that application should always be made to oneself, rather than only to others. It does not matter whether the study is for the purpose of personal growth, or for teaching others. If we do not apply it to ourselves first, we become hypocrites. Whatever we teach to others should always flow out of what we have already learned and applied in our own life. Then we can teach others if the need arises.

The second important point is to make sure that *our context* is the same as the *original context*. We cannot, and must not apply a message given to biblical characters to our own lives unless our situation is equivalent. Therefore, much of the application stage consists of asking "What in my life is similar to the situation described in the passage?"

Application consists of asking "What in my life is similar to the situation described in the passage?"

Figure 6.2 Comparing the Contexts



## II. PROCESS OF APPLICATION

Proper application starts with a logical and systematic consideration of the basic areas of our life and ministry that should be affected by the biblical principle that we have seen in the text. It is helpful to consider each topic, and then to ask ourselves probing, thought-provoking questions about what we should do in response to the message. As always, this process should be surrounded by prayer, and accompanied by a willingness to learn and grow in the Lord.

### A. Application Topics

The ultimate goal of application is personal character development and greater ministry effectiveness. There are a number of areas or topics that we should consider when we try to apply the message of a passage personally. These topics include both our personal life and ministry. Some examples are listed here:

Faith: What can I learn about personal faith?

Attitudes: What attitudes are good or bad? What are their results? How can I change negative ones?

Actions: What should I start doing? What should I stop doing?

Sins: What sin(s) have been pointed out to me? How can I right things with God/others?

- Challenges: What challenges have been made clear to me in my personal life? In relationships with others? In my ministry?
- Promises: What promises can I claim as my own? Are there conditions? What are the implications for my life and ministry?
- Character: What are the godly character qualities that I need to develop in my life and ministry?

## **B. General Questions**

Hendricks lists a number of helpful application questions that can be asked of any passage of Scripture. They are:

- Is there an example for me to follow?
- Is there a sin to avoid?
- Is there a promise to claim?
- Is there a prayer to repeat?
- Is there a command to obey?
- Is there a condition to meet?
- Is there a verse to memorize?
- Is there an error to mark?
- Is there a challenge to face?

## **C. Specific Questions**

Having asked the general application questions of Jeremiah chapter 1, it is also helpful to look at each verse or section and ask more specific questions. As distinct from previous stages, however, these questions directly relate to *what you should do* as a result of the message. There are an endless number of these specific questions, since they are different for every passage. You are limited only by your creativity. The important thing is to open your heart to the Lord, and allow Him to show you what He wants to be different in your life.

Some sample questions are listed below. Feel free to add to them as you work through the passage.

### *Verse 5*

- What does the teaching of this verse say personally to you about your personal relationship with God the Creator?
- What does this verse say to you personally about your call to ministry?
- If you do not have a clear sense of call, what is this verse saying to you?
- What does this verse say personally to you about God's will for your life?
- Do you know what God's will for your life is at this point?
- What impact does this verse have regarding your faith in God's sovereignty?
- Do you agree? Do you accept this concept without reservation?

### *Verse 6*

- Do you identify with Jeremiah's hesitancy to respond to God's challenge?
- What have been your "excuses?"
- Are you still offering excuses? What should you do about them?

### *Verse 7*

- What do you think personally about God's response to Jeremiah?
- How do you feel personally about the apparent lack of "flexibility" on Jeremiah's part to refuse God's call?



- There doesn't seem to be any room for Jeremiah to make his own decision. What do you feel personally about not having any real choice in the matter of a call by God? Should you have a choice?
- Does this verse create a problem for you in the area of man's free will and God's sovereignty?
- If this does create a problem, how will you respond?

*Verse 8*

- What does this verse mean to you personally?
- How will you apply this to your personal and ministry situation?

*Verse 9*

- Can you describe a situation in which God has "met" with you personally?

*Verse 10*

- What does this verse say to you personally about God's ultimate goal of your ministry?
- Can you see any similarity between Jeremiah's task and yours as a church planter?
- There were obstacles that Jeremiah had to face and overcome in order to reach the goal of building and planting anew. What are some of the obstacles you face as you reach toward that same goal of building up the kingdom of God by planting new churches?
- How do you feel about the prospect of being in a position where you might have to go against tradition and leaders who might oppose your church planting ideas?
- How would you deal with the obstacles and those who might oppose you?

*Verse 12*

- How do you see the principle of this verse applying to you personally?
- What does this verse do for your confidence as a church planter?

*Verse 16*

- How do you deal with the issue of "other gods" in your own life?
- What do you need to do to make sure that your allegiance is only to God and not to other "gods", i.e., materialism, nationalism, etc.?

*Verse 17*

- How do you rate your readiness at this point to be able to stand up for God against all opposition?
- What do you need to do personally to prepare yourself for your future ministry?
- What areas of your life need reinforcing spiritually?

*Verse 18*

- God fortified Jeremiah. How has God fortified you to stand for Him?
- What has God given to you to be with you in all circumstances?
- How does this make you feel about God and His provision for you and your ministry?

### III. SUMMARY

The application I see for my life and ministry in Jeremiah 1 is:

### QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION, REVIEW, AND APPLICATION

- Do you agree that it is always necessary to apply teaching to ourselves first of all? Why is that important?

- How does the 'context' influence the application of a passage?

## **ACTION PLAN**

- If you have not had time to complete this lesson as a group, do so before the next workshop so that you will be familiar with the principles.

## **SOURCES**

Hendricks, Howard G., and William Hendricks. *Living By the Book*. Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1991.



**BIBLE STUDY  
METHODS**

**7**

**LESSON**

# Application Workshop

## ☛ Lesson Purpose

The purpose of this lesson is to give the trainees opportunity to practice the application stage of inductive Bible study.

## ☛ Main Points

- We must apply the message of a passage to ourselves first of all.

## ☛ Desired Outcomes

When the content of this lesson has been mastered, each participant should:

- Know how to apply the message of Acts 17:1-10a to his or her own life and ministry.

## ☛ Appendix

7A Ephesus—An Inductive Bible Study

## ☛ Suggestions to Trainers

This workshop is a similar format to the two preceding ones. Divide the trainees into groups of 3-4 persons. Allow 15 minutes at the end of the hour to come together and compare results.

## WORKSHOP FORMAT

We will continue to study Acts 17:1-10a. We will be using the previous observations and interpretation. This time, however, we will be looking for application to our own lives and ministry.

- Divide into groups of 3-4 persons.
- Take 35 minutes to work through the application steps, and decide how best to apply the passage to each of your lives and ministries.
- Use the last 15 minutes to regroup and discuss your applications, and to choose appropriate 'application' questions for possible use in leading an inductive study on this passage.

## GROUP WORK

Use the following process to help you arrive at a valid and helpful application for your own life.

### A. Remember the Biblical Principle

Recopy here the biblical principle that you derived for Acts 17:1-10a from Lesson 5:

### B. Compare the Contexts

In order for your application to be valid, your context should be equivalent to the original biblical context.

1. *Briefly describe the original biblical context of Acts 17:1-10a:*
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. *Briefly describe your current context (who you are, what you are doing, etc).:*
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
3. *Write a brief statement of at least one way in which your context is similar to the one in Acts 17 (Note: This will vary somewhat for every person in the group, but there will also be enough similarity that you should be able to help each other).*

### **C. Think about the Application Topics**

Read through the passage and see if any of the following topics seem to be appropriate for your situation. If so, note how it relates. Perhaps there is another more appropriate topic. If so, note it below.

- Faith
- Attitude
- Action
- Sin(s)
- Challenge
- Promise
- Character
- (other)
- (other)

### **D. General Questions**

Ask the general application questions listed below. Record your answers to any that are appropriate.

- Is there an example for me to follow?
- Is there a sin to avoid?
- Is there a promise to claim?
- Is there a prayer to repeat?
- Is there a command to obey?
- Is there a condition to meet?
- Is there a verse to memorize?
- Is there an error to mark?
- Is there a challenge to face?

### **E. Ask Specific Questions**

Now as you work through the passage together, think of specific questions for each verse that focus on "What should I do?" Record those questions, and the answers in the space following:

*[Circle the best two questions that you would use in leading a group inductive study of this text.]*

### **SUMMARY**

As you come back together, discuss and compare the applications that you see in the passage. Finally, compare the 'application' questions that each group selected, and select the two that would be most helpful if you were leading an inductive study of the passage. Record them below:

1.

2.

### **QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION, REVIEW, AND APPLICATION**

- What is the most important thing you should do as a result of reading this passage?
- What did you see as a result of this method that is new for you?

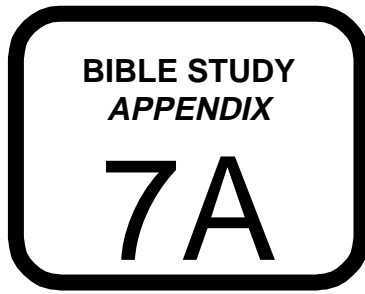
### **ACTION PLAN**

- You have now progressed through the stages of observation, interpretation, and application. Before the next seminar, you will need to develop a brief inductive Bible study using the principles you have learned. You will have 20 minutes present this Bible study during a workshop in that seminar. The next seminar will discuss the principles of *leading* an inductive study.

- At this point, your assignment is to study a passage using the inductive method, and to prepare as many observation, interpretation, and application questions as possible. You should determine the *meaning* of the passage, and the *application* during this preparation time. Then, from all your questions, choose a maximum of 5-6 observation questions, 2-3 interpretation questions, and 1-2 application questions that would best lead the other trainees discover and apply the teaching of the passage.
- You may choose one of the passages listed below for your study. Please compare your choice with the other trainees so that everyone does not do the same passage. As an example for you, Appendix 7A is a sample inductive Bible study on the founding of the church at Ephesus in Acts 19:1-10. Your study should have similar format, but will of course have different questions, main point, and application.
- Sample passages from which to choose:
  - Acts 13:4-12 (Paphos)*
  - Acts 13:13-52 (Antioch)*
  - Acts 14:1-7 (Iconium)*
  - Acts 14:8-20 (Lystra and Derbe)*
  - Acts 16:11-40 (Philippi)*
  - Acts 17:10-15 (Berea)*
  - Acts 17:16-34 (Athens)*
  - Acts 18:1-17 (Corinth)*

## SOURCES

Hendricks, Howard G., and William Hendricks. *Living By the Book*. Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1991.



# Ephesus—An Inductive Bible Study

## HOW PAUL FOUNDED THE CHURCH

### INTRODUCTION

Jesus commanded us to make disciples of all nations. Can we really do this? How much can you accomplish? How many people could you win for Christ in say...two years? How large a geographical area could you saturate with the Gospel in that time? In Acts 19, the Apostle Paul was able to proclaim the Gospel to everyone in a huge area in such a short time. If we want to be effective church planters, we need to study how Paul accomplished this, and try to use the same methods that he used. Let's look at the methods that Paul used in this successful church plant.

#### I. PRAYER

Take a moment to pray that God would open our eyes and hearts to understand how He wants to speak to us through this passage.

#### II. READ ACTS 19:1-10

Read the passage carefully and thoughtfully—either silently or aloud.

#### III. OBSERVATION

The first step is to discover what the Bible *says*. Look closely at the passage and answer the questions below.

*From the context (Acts 18:18-28):*

- When Paul arrived in Ephesus in Acts 19:1, he found some disciples. **How** do you think these people became disciples?
- **Who** was involved in making these disciples, and **how**?

*From the passage (Acts 19:1-10):*

- **What** weakness did Paul discover in these disciples, and **what** did he do about it?
- **Where** did Paul begin his work in Ephesus?
- **What** change did Paul make in his strategy and **why**?
- **What** was the result of Paul's ministry in Ephesus?

#### IV. INTERPRETATION

The second step is to decide what the Bible *means*. Think about the message of these verses by discussing the following questions:

- **Why** does Luke focus on Paul's response to the doctrine of the Holy Spirit in the first eight verses of this passage?
- In verse 8, Paul argued persuasively. But in verses 9 and 10, he chose instead to focus on the training of the disciples. From the text, **what** was the response to each of these methods, and **which** method do you think the passage is intended to encourage?



Summarize in a sentence or two the *main point* of these verses. State it in terms of a *biblical principle* if possible. Write it in the space below:

*The principle of this passage:*

## V. APPLICATION

The third step is to decide how this truth applies to our lives and ministry as church planters. Think about the following questions as you look again at the text:

1. In order for me to minister as the Apostle Paul ministered, the two most important activities that I have to do are:
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. From this passage, how should I be ministering in order to most effectively minimize persecution and maximize the spread of the Gospel?

## SUMMARY

Knowing the truth is not enough. We have to apply it. The final step is to *obey it*. Take another moment to pray for God's help to respond in obedience to the things you have seen in this passage.

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# EVANGELISM

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EVANGELISM

1

LESSON

# Introduction to Evangelism

## GOD SO LOVES THE WORLD

### ☛ Lesson Purpose

The purpose of this lesson is to introduce the nature, need, motive and place of evangelism in the SCP strategy.

### ☛ Main Points

- Evangelism is a process, and not just an event.
- Skills and experience in evangelism can be developed.
- The process of evangelism is not complete until a more mature believer has begun to disciple the new Christian and help him or her to grow in the faith.

### ☛ Desired Outcomes

When the content of this lesson has been mastered, each participant should :

- Recognize the urgent need of the lost and be increasingly motivated out of unconditional love to evangelize them.

### ☛ Appendix

1A The Bridge

### ☛ Suggestions to Trainers

Have participants read selected verses aloud in Section II. Take same time to review prayer triplets. Encourage participants to organize their own prayer triplet before the next training seminar.

## INTRODUCTION

Evangelism is important work for all believers. For those involved in church planting, evangelism is no less important. In fact, planting a church without evangelism is impossible. We can find hope for the process in Matthew 4:19, where Jesus challenged the disciples to follow Him with the words, "Come, follow me . . . and I will make you fishers of men." Jesus wanted these experienced fishermen to use their lives to build His Church. As we follow Christ, observe His law and obey Him, He also desires to make us fishers of men, able to attract and win people to Himself. Only the Lord is able to make us effective fishermen for souls.

There are many ways to catch fish. We use large boats, complicated machines and huge nets to catch them by the thousands. We cast smaller nets to catch several. And we use barbed hooks with bait or attractive lures to catch them one at a time. We do not catch fish with every toss or cast, but we can be learning with each experience. We have to go where the fish are and choose an appropriate method in order to catch them.

In the same way, there are a multitude of methods to bring men, women, youth and children to Christ. There is, of course, only one true Gospel. As we preach this Gospel, God's Holy Spirit convicts the world of guilt regarding sin, and righteousness and judgment (Jn 16:8) and brings people to life-changing faith. Our task is to combine effective methods and strategies to win people to Christ and incorporate them into the church. We will be considering some of these methods and strategies in this lesson.

## I. THE NATURE OF EVANGELISM

Evangelism means “telling the good news.” The “good news” that Jesus Christ has made salvation possible and available as a free gift is the best news ever to strike the human ear and heart. Evangelism involves assisting those outside of faith in Christ to move toward faith in Him. However, evangelism is not the end of the process. True evangelism is like the first leg of a relay race. Once people are won to Christ they must be “handed over” to a discipler who will help them nurture their new lives in Christ. The race is not complete until believing fellowships are planted and the body of Christ multiplies through further evangelism and discipleship. Dropping the baton after the evangelism stage is not acceptable.

### A. The Process

This process of evangelism is one important way that the Lord involves Christians, in cooperation with the work of the Holy Spirit, to build the kingdom of God—the Church of Jesus Christ. While the work of the Holy Spirit in the hearts of men is invisible, the Christian’s efforts in evangelism are both public and private.

Evangelism begins in private, with prayer. This includes both individual prayer and also “Prayer Triplets” (see Prayer Appendix 3A “Prayer Triplets”). A prayer triplet consists of three Christian believers meeting regularly to pray for three unsaved friends or relatives. The group meets to pray for these people until they become believers or until circumstances prohibits the group from continuing to pray together. Encourage others to pray as you are engaged in the work of evangelism, following Paul’s example in Ephesians 6:19-20 and Colossians 4:2-6. When we pray, we ask God to:

- Prepare the hearts of those to whom He wants us to speak
- Lead us to those who are prepared
- Help us present the Gospel in a clear and meaningful way
- Preserve the planted message

Publicly, we capitalize on divine encounters to share our faith as we go about the ordinary activities of our lives. We initiate genuine relationships with people in our communities. We spend time with people so they can observe our lives and we can see theirs. We build bridges of trust to individuals and families, expanding the testimony and influence of Christ. Evangelism often includes specific activities designed to win a hearing for the Gospel. It could be through simple acts of kindness or sharing a tract, or it could be as complex as organizing a regional outreach effort using the *Jesus* film or a gifted evangelist.

### B. The Message

In a letter to the newly established church at Rome, the apostle Paul wrote these words:

*“I am not ashamed of the Gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile” (Ro 1:16)*

What is the Gospel message—the “good news”—that we share? Paul makes a clear and simple presentation of the Gospel in 1 Corinthians 15:3-7. In this passage, he breaks the content of the Gospel into two parallel parts—repentance and trust. Theologians are able to write countless volumes on the content of the Gospel. However the essence of the “good news” is summed up in this text.

The parts of the Gospel are clearly seen if we print the verses as shown below:

**Christ died for our sins** [*according to the scriptures*]

- that he was buried

**that He was raised on the third day** [*according to the scriptures*]

- that he appeared to Peter, and then to the Twelve . . .

In this form it is easy to see the two main points—the death and resurrection of Christ. Both were accomplished “according to the scriptures” and each has a supporting proof. The proof of His death was His burial, and the proof of His resurrection was His appearances to the believers. Look closely at each of the main points.

1. *Repent – (because He died)*

There is a lot packed into this statement. First of all, we must acknowledge that we are sinners before a Holy God. If there was anything we could do to save ourselves there would have been no reason for Christ to die. But there is absolutely nothing we can do to gain favor with God. There is no such thing as a righteous person (Ro 3:10, 20). We must cast ourselves on His mercy. We need grace, and not justice (Eph 2:8,9).

The death of Christ also means that His death was sufficient to save us. This would not be possible if He were not the Son of God—the God-Man—God in the flesh. God could not die until Jesus took human flesh on Himself. But a mere man cannot die for everyone. He can only die for his own sins. Therefore only Jesus, as God Incarnate, could satisfy the wrath of God against sin and offer salvation to us by grace.

The first part of the Gospel includes an admission of our utter unworthiness and of the deity and sufficiency of Christ. No one is genuinely saved until they acknowledge the supremacy of Christ and repent.

2. *Trust Christ – (because He rose)*

The second part of the Gospel involves trust. It is necessary to repent, but that alone is not enough to save us. Many “Christians” believe Christ died for sin, but they think they need to do some kind of work to merit His salvation. This was the heresy that Paul confronted in Galatians. Some taught that we must both believe and also keep the law in order to be saved. Paul condemned that idea in the strongest possible terms (Gal 1:8-9; 2:15-16; 3:3,11). Christ’s sacrifice was sufficient to save us. We need not and cannot add anything through our own effort.

The fact that Christ arose from the dead means His promise is true. He has gone to prepare a place for us and will come again to take us home with Him (Jn 14:2-3). Our salvation is settled when we trust Him. We can indeed serve Him with our good works as a way of thanking Him and worshipping Him. But these actions are part of our *sanctification* and not of our *salvation*.

**C. The Medium**

The most powerful presentation of the Gospel message is the one we authenticate with our lives. The way we live brings life to the words being spoken. Our integrity, compassion and transparency are essential tools used by the Lord to make us “salt and light” right where we live. A simple poem challenges us:

*You are writing a Gospel, a chapter a day,  
by the deeds that you do and the words that you say.  
Men read what you write, distorted or true.  
What is the Gospel according to you?*

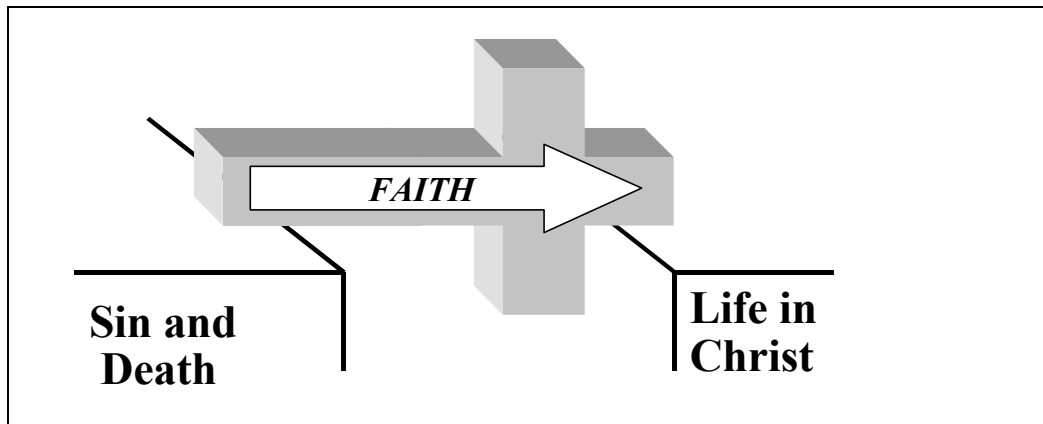
**II. THE NEED FOR EVANGELISM**

**A. People Are Spiritually Lost and Forever Separated from God without Jesus Christ**

Not only is every person separated from God spiritually, but also each person is absolutely unable to redeem himself. Because of sin the Holy God is inaccessible to him. Whether an individual is aware of his condition or not he is desperate and doomed apart from receiving the solution offered by Jesus Christ, and no one else. Please see appendix 1A “The Bridge” for a simple way to explain how Christ bridges the gap between God and us.

- ◆ Romans 1:18ff
- ◆ John 14:6
- ◆ Romans 6:23
- ◆ Romans 3:9-20,23
- ◆ Ezekiel 3:16-21
- ◆ Ephesians 2:1-3

**Figure 1.1 The Process of Evangelism**



**B. We Are God's Method of Reaching the World**

Since the time of Christ, followers have been charged with the responsibility to represent the Lord and His kingdom in the world. The apostles were the first to receive the charge. They understood that they were to be witnesses—that they were to be spokesmen and ambassadors of Christ. These roles imply a faithful presentation of the truth as we understand it and a faithful representation of the God who has won us and sent us out.

Paul understood this responsibility as a debt or obligation that he owed to the Lord and to the lost. While it is true that a person may be saved through the Word of God and the Holy Spirit only, this is highly unusual. In fact, even when Christ Himself spoke to Paul on the Damascus road, He sent Ananias to complete the evangelism process in Paul's life. God desires to use men and women who know Him as the means to reach the lost.

- ◆ 2 Corinthians 5:16-21
- ◆ Acts 1:8
- ◆ Mark 16:15
- ◆ Matthew 28:18-20
- ◆ Romans 1:14-17
- ◆ 2 Timothy 4:5b

**C. Many are Eager to Hear and Understand the Solution to Their Dilemma**

French Philosopher Blaise Pascal noted that there is within man a God-shaped vacuum, which only God can adequately fill. Through the ages, people have sought resolution for their spiritual dilemma. The list below is just a sample of the many in the New Testament who would openly discuss their condition in the hope of resolving their problems. There are others like them who will listen to the Gospel if we will go to them and make it plain.

- ◆ Nicodemus—John 3
- ◆ The man born blind—John 9
- ◆ The woman at the well—John 4
- ◆ Jerusalem crowd—Acts 2
- ◆ Zacchaeus—Luke 19
- ◆ Ethiopian eunuch—Acts 8

**D. The Gospel Has The Power to Change**

*1. The Gospel changes spiritual realities.*

The Gospel moves people from the kingdom of Satan into the kingdom of God, from darkness to light, from death to life. No longer enemies of Christ and slaves to sin, we (and those who come to faith through our testimony) have become a part of the household of God (Col 1:10-14).

2. *The Gospel changes the whole world.*

The Gospel is changing lives—in huge cosmopolitan areas, in obscure mountain villages, in steaming tropical jungles, among troubled youth, within struggling families, among hard-working businessmen and concerned political leaders. Throughout every continent, the Gospel is having an impact. Families, communities and nations around the world are being changed by the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

3. *The Gospel changes society.*

As people come to Christ and yield themselves to the indwelling Holy Spirit, the community of those who love Christ can exert a moral influence for good felt across the face of your nation.

4. *The Gospel changes individuals.*

All who have placed their faith in Christ upon hearing the Gospel message have a testimony of how God's grace has profoundly changed them personally, making each one a new creation in Christ. Individuals and families are profoundly affected.

5. *The Gospel changes life now.*

Christ's life-giving Gospel has delivered us. We have been saved from the penalty of sin! Moreover, we will be saved from the presence of sin. However, right now we are being saved from the power of sin. The Gospel makes a difference today (1Co 15:55-56; Ro 5:8-10).

6. *The Gospel changes our future.*

Through those who come to faith because of the work of the Gospel in us, we can affect not only our generation but succeeding ones as well. We can become the foundation of spiritual generations in and outside our own families.

7. *The Gospel changes our eternity.*

The change brought by the Gospel affects not only our temporal life, but our eternal destiny as well. We, as Christ's bride, the Church, are an eternal testimony to the spiritual realm of God's mercy and grace (Eph 3:10, 11).

### III. THE MOTIVE OF EVANGELISM

#### A. It Is Possible to Evangelize Out of a Sense of Duty or Obligation to God or Others

Paul wrote in Romans 1:14 that he was a debtor to those who had not heard the Gospel message. He sensed an obligation to share that which he possessed, the Gospel, with others. Men of God have often referred to themselves as His servants, implying that their activity was at least partially motivated in response to the authority of God, their master.

In Colossians 1:28, the apostle Paul speaks of the goal of his Gospel ministry, “. . . so that we may present everyone perfect in Christ.” Often that which motivates God's servants to evangelism is the long-range goal of seeing God's purposes in the world accomplished. That hope and satisfaction itself can powerfully stir us as we serve the Gospel.

#### B. It Is Possible to Evangelize Out of Fear of God and His Judgment

Perhaps from time to time the feelings of love for God and man are not there, and a sense of duty does not motivate us. Sometimes the fact that we are accountable to God and will one day answer to Him for our service stirs feelings of fear in us. Even that fear can motivate us to service. God warned Ezekiel in strong language to take His message to the people or bear the consequences (Eze 3:16-21). Jonah evangelized only after being terrorized by a whale (Jnh 2).

#### C. It Is Even Possible to Evangelize for Totally Inappropriate Reasons

In one of Paul's letters to a young church, he noted that some had proclaimed the Gospel “out of envy and rivalry” (Php 1:15). He went on to say that it did not matter! That the Gospel of Christ



was being proclaimed is what was important to Paul. He rejoiced that the right thing was happening in spite of wrong motives! (Php 1:15-18)

#### **D. We Should Evangelize Out of Love for Christ and The Lost**

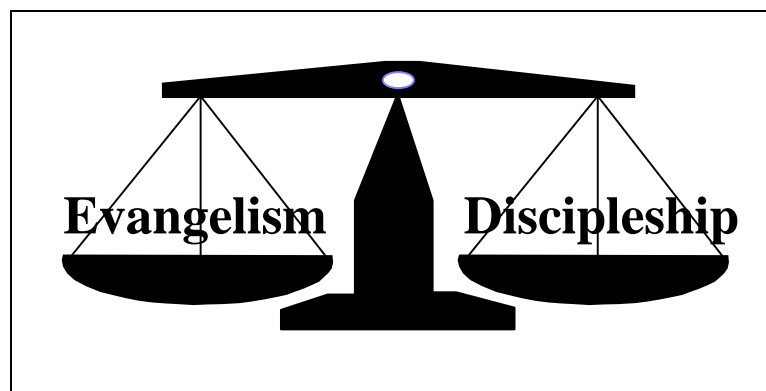
The maturing believer increasingly finds himself growing in his love for Christ and, in turn, for those whom Christ loves—the Church and the lost. Paul spoke of Christ's love “compelling” him to persuade men (2Co 5:14).

It seems from reading 1 John that what motivated and stirred the apostle John to proclaim the Gospel was a desire to include increasing numbers of people in the fellowship of the Church.

### **IV. THE PLACE OF EVANGELISM IN AN SCP STRATEGY**

The strategy of saturation church planting is largely dependent upon focused evangelistic effort. Saturation evangelism goes hand-in-hand with saturation church planting. The initial and foundational work of evangelism—winning people to faith in Christ—must be succeeded by the ongoing work of nurturing and equipping new converts and disciples. But in that subsequent work, we dare not neglect the critical place of intentional, continuing evangelistic work, building bridges to the lost and moving them toward faith. There is a balance that must be maintained between telling the Good News and assisting those who have come to faith. To neglect either jeopardizes the work of God in which we are involved.

**Figure 1.2 Keeping the Balance**



We certainly need to help those whom God has given us to disciple, but we must never be satisfied with the number of those who have come to faith. We must not forget the task of evangelism. We must be committed to and diligent in our responsibility to reach the lost with the Gospel. Without people continually being won to faith (thinking of the church planting cycle), there is no further establishing, no further developing of leaders, and no hope for on-going multiplication of churches. Evangelism must take the first place in saturation church planting. Equipping and mobilizing all believers to do the work of evangelism will be a primary ingredient in any SCP strategy.

### **QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION, REVIEW AND APPLICATION**

- Do you believe that God could use you to reach others for Him?
- What is the most important thing that has ever happened to you personally?
- If that is true, what, then, is the most important thing you can do in life to make a positive impact on the many people you know?
- What is “the work of an evangelist”? (2Ti 4:2)
- What most motivates you to share the Gospel?
- Can you think of ten people in your web of relationships who need a personal relationship with Christ?
- What plans do you have for increasing your evangelistic efforts?

## **ACTION PLAN**

With two other believers, form a prayer triplet to meet and pray regularly for the salvation of those whom God has placed on your heart (See Prayer Appendix 3A: Prayer Triplets).

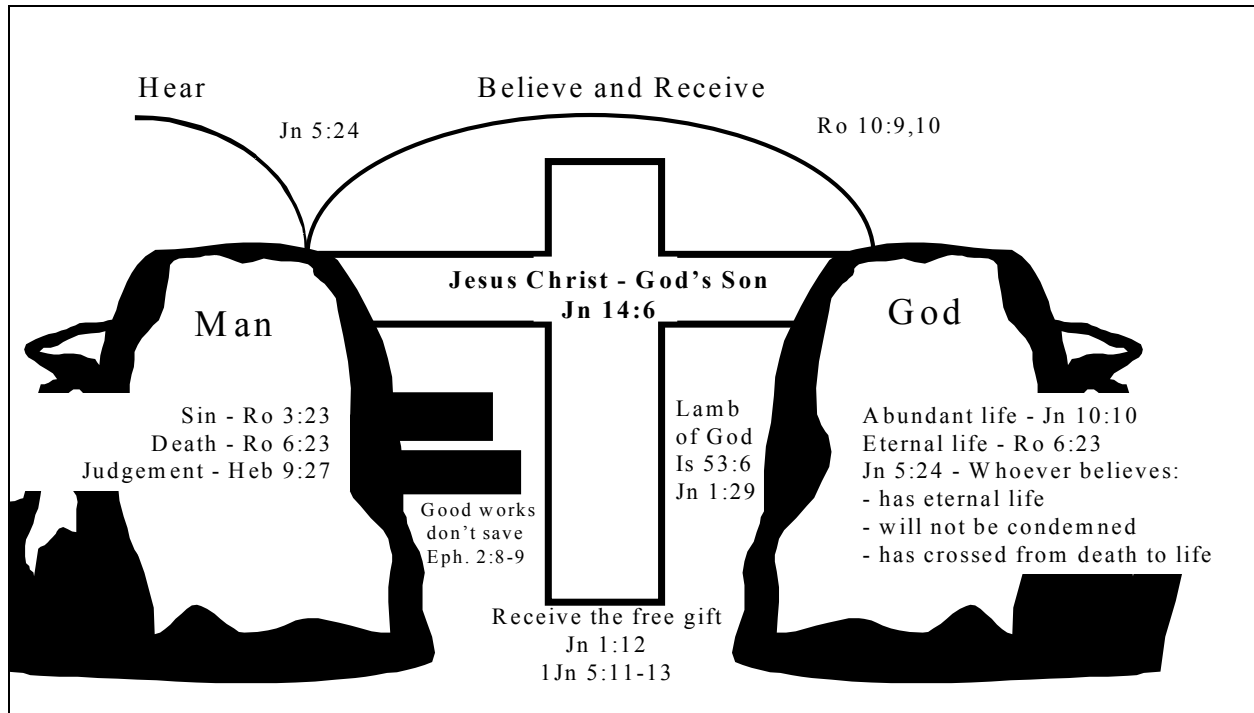
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EVANGELISM  
APPENDIX

1A

# The Bridge



The Bridge diagram can be an effective evangelism method. You might find it helpful to gradually make a rough sketch of this on a blank sheet of paper while you share the Good News (with related Bible verses) with unsaved friends. A verbal and written presentation is often more powerful than using either medium alone.

EVANGELISM

LESSON **2,3**

# Developing Your Personal Testimony

## THIS IS WHAT GOD DID FOR ME!

### ☛ Lesson Purpose

The purpose of this lesson is to explain the value and preparation of a personal testimony.

### ☛ Main Points

- A personal testimony is an effective and non-threatening way to witness to the lost.
- A personal testimony will be more effective if it is carefully prepared to include the most important information.
- A personal testimony tells what God has done in your life—it is not a sermon!

### ☛ Desired Outcomes

When the content of this lesson has been mastered, each participant should:

- Understand the potential spiritual impact of a personal testimony.
- Develop a three - five minute personal testimony to share with others.

### ☛ Suggestions to Trainers

This is a two-hour lesson. The first hour should introduce the participants to what a personal testimony is and help them write their personal testimony. The second hour should be used to practice sharing their personal testimony (point V. in the outline). Although the lesson is written all together, you may want to leave a few days between the two hours to give the participants a chance to learn their testimony well before sharing it in class.

Be sure that the testimonies are not longer than five minutes. Consider using a stopwatch to ensure that this is not violated. It takes great discipline to keep a testimony short, but there will be situations where you will only have time to share a short testimony. It might be more effective to divide the group into two or three groups for sharing of testimonies.

## I. THE NATURE OF A TESTIMONY

### A. We are Called to be Witness

In Acts 1:8, Jesus promises His disciples that they will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon them and that they will be His witnesses. But what is a witness? In a legal courtroom, a witness is one who is called upon to tell others what he has observed. He tells the truth about a critical event, as he has perceived it. A witness is not expected to know every detail or have various perspectives on truth. He is expected to tell what he remembers accurately and honestly. The content that a witness communicates is his testimony.

### B. We are Called to Give Testimony

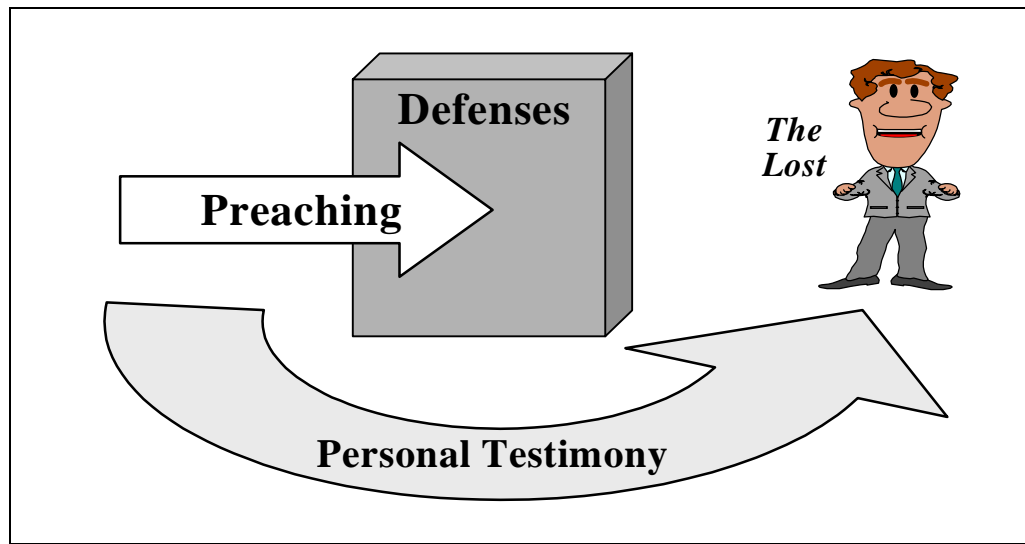
Each of us who has placed our faith in Christ also has a testimony to share. What has been your experience with Christ? Our testimonies are as individual as fingerprints and snowflakes. Our testimonies provide valuable insight to others about the way God works among men. This is vital information unbelievers need to make an informed decision about Christ. Our testimonies also provide encouragement to those who love God. As we tell of Christ's work in our lives, others are stimulated to greater faith and obedience.

## II. THE VALUE OF A TESTIMONY

### A. Overcoming resistance to the Gospel

People listen selectively. The people you want to win to faith may resist a theological discussion about salvation. But they will easily and readily hear your personal story of how you came to faith in Christ. People like to listen to interesting stories. Whether they admit it or not, they want you to give them a good reason to believe. Your testimony, shared honestly, briefly and creatively, can be used by the Spirit to open up their eyes and minds to see spiritual truth in a fresh way.

**Figure 2.1 Overcoming Defenses With Personal Testimony**



### B. Overcoming Satan in spiritual warfare

When we are sharing our faith with others, we are engaged alongside God in spiritual warfare, assaulting the kingdom of the devil. In Revelation 12:10-12, we read the following:

*"... Now have come the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God, and the authority of His Christ. For the accuser of our brothers, who accuses them before our God day and night, has been hurled down. They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony; they did not love their lives so much as to shrink from death. Therefore rejoice, you heavens and you who dwell in them!"*

Note the means by which the accuser of our brethren, Satan, was overcome ... "the blood of the Lamb" and "the word of their testimony." The finished work of Christ and our relationship to Christ are two things God uses to defeat the evil one. Your testimony of faith in Christ and faithfulness to Christ is an important tool God uses to build his church. Even if we have to experience hardship, suffering or ultimately death for our faith, we win and Satan loses! So tell people what God has done in your life!

## III. EXAMPLES OF TESTIMONIES

Scripture is filled with accounts of people giving their personal testimony. Read the following as examples of personal testimonies and see what you can learn from them. Use the methods you are learning in the lessons on inductive Bible Studies.

### A. The woman at the well (Jn 4:28-29)

- What did she say?
- To whom did she witness?

- Why did she choose this particular form of testimony?

**B. The man born blind (Jn 9:13-34)**

- To whom did he witness?
- What did he say?
- What was the occasion for the testimony?
- How was the testimony received?
- How did he deal with opposition?

**C. Paul's conversion (Ac 9, 22, and 26)**

In these passages, note how Paul emphasizes different aspects of the same experience to impact different audiences.

- Chapter 9 is Luke's account of Saul's conversion.
- Chapter 22 is Luke's record of Paul's interrupted testimony before the Jerusalem Jews.
- Chapter 26:2-23 is Luke's record of Paul's testimony before King Agrippa.

**D. Paul's testimony about events in Jerusalem (Ac 24:10-21)**

**IV. THE PREPARATION OF A TESTIMONY**

Please take the remainder of this session to prepare a 3-5 minute version of your personal testimony. Ask God to help you recall your conversion clearly. Make some notes about key ideas or verses you want to be sure to include. It is best if you can isolate one particular thing that moved you to faith in Christ—something that others, non-Christians, could relate to. In your testimony, share in these three broad categories:

**Figure 2.2 My Testimony**

***My Testimony***

*My life before . . .*

*How I trusted Christ . . .*

*My life now . . .*

**A. What was your life like before you met Christ?**

This will point to areas of need that you believed Christ would meet in your life. It provides a sense of common ground between you and the person you want to win to faith. Why did you need Christ? Try to isolate the prominent issue that led to your repentance.

**B. How did you come to Christ?**

What actually happened? Where were you? When did you trust Christ? What did you do? What Scripture did the Holy Spirit use in your life? Did someone help you in this process? Make this as basic as possible; assume that the hearer is a God-seeker and your experience will be used as a plausible scenario that he could relate to.

**C. How has knowing Christ changed your life?**

What impact has your faith had on your life? In what practical ways was your life changed? Were there changes that surprised you? Were your expectations met? Do not only talk in the past tense—tell what the Gospel is doing in your life today. Do not necessarily avoid talking about difficulties—non-Christians need to know that Christians have problems because they, the non-Christians certainly have problems. Listeners need to know that Christ is a solid anchor in the storms and that the Christian life provides power for life.

**V. THE SHARING OF A PERSONAL TESTIMONY**

Now that you have prepared your personal testimony, take some time to share it with the other trainees. Each participant needs a chance to share his or her testimony. Take five minutes to hear each testimony and no more than five minutes to give feedback. As testimonies are shared, use the following points to consider the effectiveness of each.

**A. Complete**

Does the testimony tell the whole story? Does it include the three parts?

- Life before Christ: What can the non-Christian relate to?
- Circumstances at the point of conversion: How is it like the non-Christian's situation?
- Life since finding Christ: How is your life different than the non-Christian?

**B. Clear**

Will the testimony be easy for a non-believer to understand, or is it filled with religious language that might confuse non-believers? Does it sound like a sermon or is it a helpful recommendation to a friend?

**C. Gospel**

Are all necessary points of the Gospel message touched upon in the testimony? While it is impossible to go into detail concerning all of this in a short testimony, all or some of the following points should be properly treated.

1. *The Bad News*

- We are sinners, and the penalty is death
- God is holy, and we cannot please Him
- Jesus—the Son of God—died in our place

2. *The Good News*

- We are saved by faith—not by our works
- We are born again into God's family as His children
- We have the assurance of eternal life

**D. Concise**

These testimonies should be not longer than five minutes. Is there any unnecessary detail in the testimony? We do not need to tell the whole story now—evangelism is a process.

## **QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION, REVIEW AND APPLICATION**

- Where are some places and what are some of the times in your day or week during which you could share your testimony?
- What topics of general conversation might readily provide “openers” for the casual introduction of your testimony? Do you travel on public transportation?
- Do you take breaks or eat a meal at work? Ask the Lord to arrange “divine appointments” for you to be able to share your testimony.

## **ACTION PLAN**

- Share your testimony with at least three other Christians who will see if you are clear in your presentation.
- Be prepared to share your testimony again during the next training session or during this seminar.
- Prayerfully make a plan that will result in sharing your testimony with two non-Christian friends or existing contacts within the next two weeks. Ask God to prepare “divine appointments” for you to share your testimony (perhaps without advance warning) within the next four weeks.



# *Omega Course:*

Practical Church Planter Training

## **Manual Two**

By

*The Alliance for Saturation Church Planting*

In cooperation with

Peter Deyneka Russian Ministries

**Omega Course:  
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# MANUAL TWO

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# PREFACE

## THE PURPOSE OF THIS MATERIAL

Church planters are often recruited and sent out with little or no training for the task that is before them. Church leaders who are overwhelmed with ministry difficulties often lack a clear vision of what God desires to accomplish through them. Both church planters and church leaders need training and vision, but Bible schools and seminaries are not realistic options for many.

This material is designed to provide not only vision for the church planter and church leader, but also the biblical foundation and practical ministry skills in order to see that vision become reality. It is not an educational "program." Rather, it provides necessary biblical and educational foundations, as well as practical ministry skills, which are required for church planting. Although the *Omega Course* was designed for Central/Eastern Europe and the Former Soviet Union, we've been encouraged by reports that it is already being found useful when adapted for use in other contexts.

This curriculum has been designed to accomplish two goals:

1. To provide the necessary training for churches to be planted.
2. To encourage mobilization in the whole Body of Christ toward a church planting movement.

Today we see church planting movements taking place in many countries throughout the world, including Brazil, Romania, the Philippines, Nigeria, and others. We believe that the local church is God's primary instrument for world evangelization, and that church planting based upon multiplication principles is the most effective means of working towards the completion of the Great Commission. New churches must be planted with a vision for multiplication and the ability to plant other new churches. When this happens, there is potential for a movement of churches which is able to sweep across a nation and transform the lives of people throughout the land.

A church planting movement needs people involved in all levels of the church planting task, from young believers who are excited about their new faith, to leaders of denominations. Church planters by themselves can never be the catalysts for a church planting movement. This material is applicable and has much benefit for all levels of church workers and church leaders who can directly and indirectly support the efforts of church planters as they strive to fulfill the ministry to which God has called them.

## CURRICULUM OVERVIEW

This manual is one of five manuals, each of which contains approximately 26 one-hour lessons. In order to accomplish the goals stated above, the curriculum covers a wide range of subjects that are necessary for the church planting task. These include SCP vision, cell group ministry, discipleship, Church, evangelism, inductive Bible study, leadership, prayer, spiritual character and more.

The curriculum was divided into five manuals in order to provide an ever-expanding approach to the learning process. As each participant completes a manual, he or she spends time before the next manual putting into practice the principles that have been learned. Therefore many of the later sessions build upon principles and skills which have been learned and practiced in earlier lessons.

In other words, the curriculum has been designed to be learned and used in parallel with the actual planting of churches. As the participant actively works towards starting a new church, he or she will need certain skills and knowledge, and will encounter various problems along the way. The skills and knowledge needed at the beginning of the church plant are provided in the first manuals, while the activities and principles needed at a later stage in a church plant are presented in the later manuals. Each manual has been designed to provide skills, answer questions, and discuss potential problems that relate to the corresponding phase of church planting in which the participant is actively working. After this Preface you will find a list of key development activities or "thresholds" that trainees are prepared for and expected to apply between training seminars.

The lessons are grouped by subject, and each of the five manuals includes lessons from some subjects. Some of the themes, such as "vision" and "church" are included in all five of the manuals. Others, such as "discipleship" occur later in the curriculum, when the participant is at the point in his or her ministry when these themes are necessary. A curriculum overview containing a list of the lesson titles for each of the five manuals is included later in this section.

## **USING THE MATERIAL**

### **Advice for the Participant**

Much time, prayer and effort has been put into the preparation of all five of the manuals in this curriculum. Each manual is designed to address specific ministry skills and knowledge that are required during the process of starting a new church. Therefore it is highly recommended that you begin with the first manual, and not with one of the later manuals. In the same respect, each lesson has been carefully chosen and crafted to be useful, applicable and indispensable for the church planting task. It is to your benefit not to skip lessons.

Be aware that real learning takes place when you apply the concepts presented in these lessons to your personal life and ministry. Most lessons include an action plan at the end. These action plans are designed to help you apply the ideas in the lesson and should be completed before you begin working with the next manual. It can be extremely helpful to have a mentor to encourage and advise you as you apply yourself to church planting. A mentor can also serve your need for accountability as you apply the concepts being learned to your life and ministry. Having someone to come alongside you is not only effective pedagogy, but many church planters testify to the help this provides in their life and ministry. Therefore, we strongly encourage you to prayerfully seek some form of mentoring to enhance and strengthen your church planting ministry.

### **Advice for the Trainer**

This material can be used in a variety of settings such as a Bible school, seminary or a church-based seminar. However this is not primarily educational material. It is training material. Education focuses on knowledge and information. The intent of the material is not merely to impart knowledge, but to motivate toward action employing biblically sound ministry skills. This manual is for 'doers.'

Although the method you choose to teach the lessons for each manual will depend on your particular context, each manual can be taught in a weeklong seminar. From this ideal, many training locations have successfully used other arrangements that fit better with the flow of life and existing ministries. They have sometimes opted for two intensive weekends or regular weekly sessions. It is recommended that the action plans at the end of each lesson be emphasized so that they are completed before the next seminar. Four to six months is a reasonable time to expect between seminars. The advantage of this type of training method is that it combines principles learned in the seminar with hands-on practice between seminars.

During seminars it is not necessary to teach every point of every lesson since participants can read the material on their own. Sometimes having trainees read the lesson and interact on how it relates to their own experience is a good method. At other times, a lecture from someone who is an expert in the subject being covered may be the best way to impart the concepts. But **DO NOT DWELL ON THE LECTURE APPROACH**. Be creative as you try various methods to convey the principles and skills contained in the lessons. Other trainers have found variations such as discussion groups, workshops and role playing to be helpful and interesting.

You have a sacred trust. The Lord of the Church wishes to disciple the nations, and leaders are needed. You have the awesome potential of helping to equip many who could foster church planting movements and to facilitate others in ministries of church multiplication.

### **Further help**

Do not hesitate to contact us if we can be of further assistance to you in spreading the vision of saturation church planting or practically equipping church planters.

Jay Weaver, General Editor  
Budapest, Hungary, January 2000  
JayWeaver@compuserve.com

## ABOUT THE ALLIANCE

This curriculum has been prepared by *The Alliance for Saturation Church Planting* in cooperation with Project 250 of Peter Deyneka Russian Ministries. *The Alliance* is a partnership of churches and mission agencies committed to mobilizing believers to saturate each country in Central/Eastern Europe and the Former Soviet Union with evangelical churches. Saturation Church Planting is a strategy that seeks to establish local churches in every town, village and neighborhood so that those who accept Christ will have a local fellowship in which to grow in Christ and be equipped for ministry. *The Alliance* is built on the premise that joining forces will increase effectiveness, reduce duplication, and demonstrate unity within the body of Christ.

### WHAT WE BELIEVE:

- The local church is God's primary tool for evangelism and discipleship.
- Partnership with churches and mission organizations is crucial for the multiplication of local churches and the development of saturation church planting movements.
- Training leaders is essential to church planting and church growth.
- The Lausanne Covenant is the statement of faith for *The Alliance*.

### WHAT WE DO:

#### Church Planter Training and Mentoring

*The Alliance* provides skill-based training in seminar fashion with practical ministry assignments geared towards starting reproducing churches.

#### Information Gathering

Accurate information leads to good decisions in the church planting task. *The Alliance* can help with training and consultation for your information gathering needs in the areas of church planting and church growth.

#### Prayer Movement Consulting

A church planting movement starts with vision, which is discovered and refined through seeking God's heart in prayer. *The Alliance* can help you better understand the role of prayer movements in the church planting task, and how you can facilitate a prayer movement in your region.

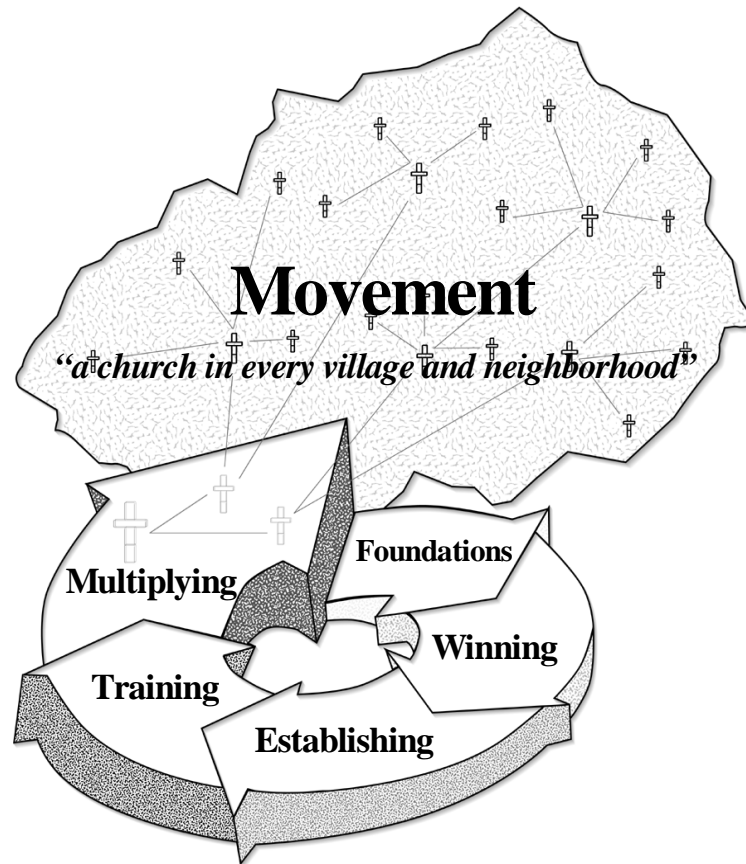
#### Vision Casting

What does God want for your country? He wants churches everywhere! *The Alliance* can help foster a vision for new churches with conceptual seminars on the principles of saturation church planting.

### FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:

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## THE CHURCH PLANTING CYCLE



Church planting is not a randomly connected series of events and activities; it is a goal-driven process. This process requires the coordination of activity, the combination of skills, a commonality of philosophy, and competence in leadership. Development in these critical areas is the goal of church planter training. The "Church Planting Cycle" is a diagram of the church planting process that visualizes, from a particular point of view, the interrelationship of the key principles and practices at work within that process. This represents a kind of 'roadmap' for the church planter, allowing one to always determine from where they've come and where they are headed.

# THRESHOLDS

## For the *Omega Course* Church Planting Curriculum

**Thresholds** are concrete ministry activities which have been incorporated into this curriculum. Each threshold can be thought of as an individual stepping stone within the larger process of starting new congregations. The thresholds provide concrete action points which help the trainee to practically apply the concepts contained in the *Omega Course*. They are both milestones that indicate progress, as well as signposts which help give further direction. Following is a list of thresholds and emphases in the *Omega Course*.

### **MANUAL ONE: Emphasis On SCP Vision, Purpose Of The Church, Inductive Bible Study, and Research**

#### **Specific action items:**

- Examining the purpose of the Church in light of the Great Commission
- Developing an overall ministry strategy based on "Z-thinking" vision
- Investigating "form and function" in the early Church and in today's Church
- Learning and practicing inductive Bible study
- Writing and sharing a personal testimony
- Initiating prayer support groups for evangelism and church planting
- Completing a comprehensive research project for the target area

### **MANUAL TWO: Emphasis On Evangelism and Cell Groups**

#### **Specific action items:**

- Sharing of findings from the research project with others in the target area
- Writing a church purpose statement
- Developing a philosophy of church planting ministry
- Developing a personal evangelism strategy, including one-on-one evangelism
- Beginning cell groups with an emphasis on evangelism
- Using inductive Bible study personally and in the cell groups

### **MANUAL THREE: Emphasis On Discipleship, Spiritual Warfare, Teams and Teamwork**

#### **Specific action items:**

- Identifying and training potential leaders for cell groups
- Spending time in prayer and fasting
- Evaluating the worldview of the church planter as compared to the biblical worldview
- Using scriptural truths to withstand spiritual attack in the life and ministry of the church planter
- Creating individual disciple making plans for the people involved in the church planting ministry
- Performing team development and evaluation activities
- Analyzing the spiritual gifts of the church planter and the church planting team

### **MANUAL FOUR: Emphasis On Leadership and Stewardship**

#### **Specific action items:**

- Evaluating the strengths and weaknesses of the church planter's leadership style, with an emphasis on methods of personal interaction with others
- Incorporating principles of servant leadership into the life and ministry of the church planter
- Tracking the use of time in the life and ministry of the church planter, setting priorities, making schedules
- Evaluating the financial giving of the church planter, as well as that of the church plant itself
- Reviewing the biblical roles of a husband and wife and the responsibilities that church planters have to their families
- Leading existing cell groups through the process of multiplication
- Preparing a strategic plan for working towards saturation in the church planting ministry

### **MANUAL FIVE: Emphasis On Multiplication, Mobilizing Others, and Promoting SCP Movements**

#### **Specific action items:**

- Initiating ministry cooperation with other evangelical groups in the target area
- Planning and implementing a supervisory structure for cell groups that will promote ongoing growth and multiplication
- Teaching people to pray for saturation church planting; mobilizing prayer at a city, regional, and national levels
- Developing and implementing a plan for the church planter to train and mentor new church planters
- Empowering and releasing new leaders for church planting ministry
- Promoting a vision in new churches for missionary involvement not only in their target area, but also to "the ends of the earth"

## CURRICULUM OVERVIEW

### MANUAL ONE Overview

Addresses primarily the **FOUNDATIONS** phase of the Church Planting Cycle

SCP Vision (VI)	The Church (CH)	Spiritual Character (SC)	Prayer (PY)	Bible Study Methods (BS)	Evangelism (EV)
<b>Lesson 1:</b> "Z" Thinking  <b>Lesson 2:</b> The Great Commission and Church Planting  <b>Lesson 3 (3A):</b> Church Planting Cycle 3A: Church Planting Models  <b>Lesson 4 (4A,4B):</b> Principles of Research 4A: Understanding Your Target Area 4B: Sample Questionnaires	<b>Lesson 1:</b> Biblical Foundations for the Church  <b>Lesson 2 (2A):</b> The Purpose Of The Church 2A: Great Commission Worksheet  <b>Lesson 3 (3A):</b> Form And Function 3A: Form & Function Applied  <b>Lesson 4:</b> Defining The Local Church	<b>Lesson 1 (1A):</b> Justification by Faith  <b>Lesson 2:</b> Living by the Gospel  <b>Lesson 3:</b> Christian Growth  <b>Lesson 4:</b> The Transforming Power of the Gospel  <b>Lesson 5:</b> Keeping a Spiritual Journal	<b>Lesson 1, 2:</b> Concert of Prayer: Praying for Revival  <b>Lesson 3 (3A):</b> How To Facilitate Prayer 3A: Prayer Triplets	<b>Lesson 1 (1A):</b> Intro to the Inductive Bible Study Method 1A: How We Got The Bible  <b>Lesson 2 (2A):</b> Observing God's Word 2A: The Language of the Bible  <b>Lesson 3:</b> Observation Workshop  <b>Lesson 4 (4A):</b> Interpreting God's Word 4A: Bible Charts  <b>Lesson 5:</b> Interpretation Workshop  <b>Lesson 6:</b> Applying God's Word  <b>Lesson 7 (7A):</b> Application Workshop 7A Ephesus - an I.B.S.	<b>Lesson 1:</b> Introduction to Evangelism  <b>Lesson 2, 3:</b> Developing Your Personal Testimony
4	4	5	3	7	3

Numbers in brackets ( ) refer to appendices

Addresses primarily the **WINNING** phase of the Church Planting Cycle

## MANUAL TWO Overview

SCP Vision (VI)	The Church (CH)	Spiritual Character (SC)	Prayer (PY)	Leadership (LD)	Cell Groups (CG)	Bible Study Methods (BS)	Evangelism (EV)
<b>Lesson 5:</b> Biblical Foundations of Saturation Church Planting  <b>Lesson 6:</b> Research Workshop  <b>Lesson 7:</b> Mobilizing Resources through Research	<b>Lesson 5:</b> The Nature of the Church  <b>Lesson 6 (6A):</b> Corporate Functions of the Church 6A: <i>Baptism in the New Testament</i>  <b>Lesson 7:</b> Developing A Church Purpose Statement  <b>Lesson 8 (8A):</b> Philosophy of Church Planting Ministry 8A: <i>Developing a Philosophy of Church Planting Ministry</i>	<b>Lesson 6:</b> Living Like Sons Instead of Orphans  <b>Lesson 7 (7A):</b> Learning to be Sons 7A: <i>Orphans vs. Sons</i>	<b>Lesson 4:</b> Concert of Prayer: Worship and Meditation	<b>Lesson 1 (1A):</b> Biblical Principles of Leadership 1A: <i>Leadership Case Studies</i>  <b>Lesson 2 (2A):</b> Profile of a Leader 2A: <i>The Leader</i>	<b>Lesson 1:</b> Functions and Benefits of Cell Groups  <b>Lesson 2 (2A, 2B):</b> Principles of Cell Group Leadership 2A: <i>Cell Grp Ice Breakers</i> 2B: <i>Sample Activities</i>  <b>Lesson 3 (3A):</b> Starting a Cell Group 3A: <i>Planning Worksheet</i>  <b>Lesson 4 (4A):</b> Cell Group Evangelism 4A: <i>About "Oikos"</i>  <b>Lesson 5:</b> Cell Group Demonstration  <b>Lesson 6:</b> Philosophy of Cell Group Ministry	<b>Lesson 8 (8A):</b> Various Ways to Use Inductive Bible Studies 8A: <i>Biographical Study - Barnabas</i>  <b>Lesson 9 (9A, 9B):</b> Leading Inductive Bible Studies 9A: <i>Study of Mt 20:17-28</i> 9B: <i>Study of Lk 15: 1-7</i>  <b>Lesson 10,11 (10A):</b> Workshop Leading Inductive Bible Studies 10A: <i>Passages for IBS</i>	<b>Lesson 4 (4A):</b> Evangelism and Church Planting 4A: <i>Evaluating Evang Strategies</i>  <b>Lesson 5 (5A, 5B):</b> Barriers to effective Evangelism 5A: <i>"A Church in Every People"</i> 5B: <i>Answering Common Objections</i>  <b>Lesson 6, 7 (6A, 6B, 6C):</b> The Process of Conversion 6A: <i>Profile of persons to Evang</i> 6B: <i>Three Principles</i> 6C: <i>Examining Jesus' Approach</i>
3	4	2	1	2	6	4	4

Numbers in brackets ( ) refer to appendices



## MANUAL THREE Overview

Addresses primarily the **ESTABLISHING** phase of the Church Planting Cycle

SCP Vision (VI)	The Church (CH)	Spiritual Character (SC)	Prayer (PY)	Leadership (LD)	Cell Groups (CG)	Evangelism (EV)	Disciple Making (DI)	Spiritual Warfare (SW)
<b>Lesson 8:</b> The First Advance  <b>Lesson 9:</b> Elements of Church Planting Movements	<b>Lesson 9, 10:</b> The Church and Spiritual Gifts  <b>Lesson 11:</b> Social Dynamics of the Church	<b>Lesson 8,9:</b> The Law and The Gospel  <b>Lesson 10 (10A):</b> Repentance as a Way of Life 10A: The Sinner's Place	<b>Lesson 5:</b> Prayer and Fasting  <b>Lesson 6, 7:</b> Concert of Prayer: Praying to Spread the Gospel	<b>Lesson 3:</b> Spheres of Leadership  <b>Lesson 4:</b> Introduction to Team Work  <b>Lesson 5:</b> Team Development	<b>Lesson 7 (7A):</b> Cell Group Discussion Dynamics 7A: Discussion Questions  <b>Lesson 8:</b> Caring for People in a Cell Group  <b>Lesson 9:</b> Training New Cell Group Leaders	<b>Lesson 8:</b> Relational Evangelism	<b>Lesson 1:</b> Introduction to Disciple Making  <b>Lesson 2(2A):</b> Your Role in Making Disciples 2A: Character-istics of Christian Love  <b>Lesson 3(3A):</b> Know Your Goal, Know Your People 3A: Faith, Hope & Love  <b>Lesson 4(4A):</b> Helping Disciples Grow Spiritually 4A: Spir Grth Need Evaltn  <b>Lesson 5(5A):</b> Forms for Disciple Making 5A: Disciple Making Plan	<b>Lesson 1:</b> Understanding Worldview  <b>Lesson 2 (2A):</b> Dynamics of Spiritual Warfare 2A: Study of Eph. 4:17-5:21  <b>Lesson 3 (3A, 3B):</b> Spiritual Battles 3A: Bible Study 3B: Case Studies from Around the World
2	3	3	3	3	3	1	5	3

Numbers in brackets ( ) refer to appendices

Addresses primarily the **TRAINING** phase of the Church Planting Cycle

## MANUAL FOUR Overview

SCP Vision (VI)	The Church (CH)	Spiritual Character (SC)	Prayer (PY)	Leadership (LD)	Cell Groups (CG)	Disciple Making (DI)	Stewardship (ST)	The Family (FA)
<b>Lesson 10 (10A,10B):</b> Strategy Components for a Church Planting Movement <i>10A: Faith and Obedience Vs Fear and Unbelief</i> <i>10B: Things that Promote Natural Growth</i> <b>Lesson 11:</b> Signs of a Movement <b>Lesson 12:</b> Shepherding within a Movement	<b>Lesson 12:</b> Dynamics of the Emerging Church <b>Lesson 13:</b> Characteristics of Growing Churches <b>Lesson 14:</b> Church Government And Church Offices	<b>Lesson 11:</b> Love as the Foundation for Ministry <b>Lesson 12:</b> Understanding the Father's Heart <b>Lesson 13:</b> Grace is for the Humble	<b>Lesson 8,9:</b> Concert of Prayer: Praying Biblically	<b>Lesson 6 (6A):</b> Servant Leadership <i>6A: The Leaders Checklist</i> <b>Lesson 7:</b> Leadership Dynamics <b>Lesson 8:</b> Styles of Interaction <b>Lesson 9:</b> Leadership Needs <b>Lesson 10 (10A):</b> Training New Leaders <i>10A: Qualities to Encourage in a New Leader</i>	<b>Lesson 10:</b> Discussion of Cell Group Questions and Problems <b>Lesson 11:</b> Cell Group Multiplication	<b>Lesson 6:</b> Disciple Making Workshop	<b>Lesson 1:</b> Introduction to Stewardship <b>Lesson 2:</b> Financial Stewardship <b>Lesson 3:</b> Time Management <b>Lesson 4:</b> Strategic Planning Process <b>Lesson 5:</b> Strategic Planning Process Workshop	<b>Lesson 1:</b> Biblical Roles in the Family <b>Lesson 2:</b> Parenting
3	3	3	2	5	2	1	5	2

Numbers in brackets ( ) refer to appendices

Addresses primarily the **MULTIPLICATION & MOVEMENT** phases of the Church Planting Cycle

## MANUAL FIVE Overview

SCP Vision (VI)	The Church (CH)	Spiritual Character (SC)	Prayer (PY)	Leadership (LD)	Cell Groups (CG)	Preaching (PR)	The Family (FA)
<b>Lesson 13:</b> Vision and Telescoping <b>Lesson 14:</b> Mobilization <b>Lesson 15:</b> Next Steps <b>Lesson 16:</b> Training As Part Of A Church Planting Movement <b>Lesson 17:</b> Mobilizing Leaders Through National Initiatives	<b>Lesson 15:</b> Church Discipline <b>Lesson 16:</b> Corporate Worship In The Local Church <b>Lesson 17:</b> How To Lead Corporate Worship <b>Lesson 18:</b> The Local Church and the Bigger Body of Christ <b>Lesson 19:</b> The Historical Impact of the Church in _____ (History of the Church in country context)	<b>Lesson 14:</b> Reconciliation Ministry <b>Lesson 15:</b> Moral Integrity of Church Planters	<b>Lesson 10:</b> Facilitating Prayer for a Church Planting Movement <b>Lesson 11, 12:</b> Concert of Prayer: Thanking God for His Faithfulness	<b>Lesson 11:</b> Releasing Leaders <b>Lesson 12:</b> Movement Leadership 12A: <i>Movement Leaders</i>	<b>Lesson 12:</b> Cells That Saturate Through Local Churches <b>Lesson 13 (13A):</b> Supervising Cells 13A: <i>Final Step</i>	<b>Lesson 1:</b> Biblical Preaching I: Understanding the Message <b>Lesson 2:</b> Biblical Preaching II: Understanding the Audience <b>Lesson 3:</b> Biblical Preaching III: Understanding Yourself	<b>Lesson 3:</b> Ministry to the Family
5	5	2	3	2	2	3	1

Numbers in brackets ( ) refer to appendices

**TOTAL CURRICULUM HOURS: 127**



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# SCP VISION

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SCP VISION

LESSON 5

# Biblical Foundations of Saturation Church Planting

## FILLING THE EARTH WITH THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD'S GLORY

### ☞ Lesson Purpose

The purpose of this lesson is to show that saturation church planting is a biblical concept and is a means that God uses to fulfill His purpose.

### ☞ Main Points

- Saturation Church Planting is a biblical approach to fulfilling the Great Commission.
- Saturation Church Planting is a historical method.

### ☞ Desired Outcomes

When the content of this lesson has been mastered, each participant should:

- Understand a clear definition of "saturation."
- Know that saturation is a biblical principle that applies to God's work in history.
- Participate in saturation church planting as a foundational principle in the church planter's philosophy of ministry and church planting strategy.

## SATURATION DEFINED

What is saturation church planting? To answer that we must first define the term "saturation."

The word saturation is the adjective form of the verb "to saturate," which is a scientific term meaning "to treat or charge with something to the point where no more can be absorbed, dissolved or retained" (Merriam Webster Dictionary. Note to translators: Use the definition in your language.) The picture is that of a sponge that is so full of water that it cannot hold one more drop.

God uses the principle of "saturation" or "filling" throughout Scripture, beginning with the filling of the earth with people and the making disciples of all nations. The goal is that the knowledge of the glory of the Lord will cover the earth as waters cover the sea (Hab 2:14, Isa. 11:9).

In applying the word "saturation" to church planting, we communicate the concept of filling the land with churches so that every man, woman and child has a chance to hear and understand the Gospel, and accept or reject Jesus Christ as personal Savior for the glory of God.

## I. SATURATION IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

### A. From the Beginning—Filling the Earth (Saturation) was an Old Testament theme

God's command was to fill the earth with people (Ge 1:28, 9:1, and 9:7). After the flood, the nations spread out over the earth (Ge. 10:32). But then the people "settled down" (Ge 11:1-2). They began to build a city "...so that we may make a name for ourselves and not be scattered over the face of the earth" (Ge 11:4). So God confused their language and "scattered them from there over all the earth" (Ge 11:7,8).

*For Discussion: Why do you think that God wanted people to fill the earth?*

## **B. God's ultimate purpose is for the whole earth to be saturated with the knowledge of Him**

From the beginning of Scripture to the end, it is clear that God desires His glory to fill or cover all of the earth—each nation and every part of each nation. For example, God chose Abraham and blessed him **so that he would be a blessing**. God's promise to Abraham was so that "all people on earth would be blessed through you" (Ge 12:3). This is what it means to be a "chosen people."

God's desire that the whole earth know Him is stated in the following verses:

- All the earth shall be filled with the glory of God (Nu 14:21).
- And blessed be His glorious name forever! And let the whole earth be filled with His glory (Ps 72:19).
- For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the sea (Isa 11:9).
- I will gather all nations and tongues; and they shall come and see my glory... all flesh shall come to worship Me (Isa 66:18).

## **II. THE MINISTRY OF JESUS**

### **A. Jesus Used Saturation As A Strategy For His Ministry In Galilee**

Jesus targeted Galilee for saturation (Mt 4:23). He went to all the towns and villages (Mt 9:35). Jesus sent his 72 in teams of two to "every town and place where He was about to go" (Lk 10:1). With these teams, the Gospel was presented in no less than 36 towns and villages of Galilee!

It is interesting that, in targeting Galilee, the impact of his ministry there was not contained. "News about him spread all over Syria," and "large crowds" from Decapolis, Judea and the trans-Jordan region came to hear Him in Galilee (Mt 4:23-25). Apparently Galilee was a very strategic region to minister in since it resulted in a very broad impact.

### **B. Jesus' Parables Of The Kingdom Show Saturation Principles**

In Matthew 13, Jesus teaches his disciples about the kingdom of God through a series of parables. In the first one, He tells how the kingdom will be received by various kinds of hearers. In the next one, the Parable of the Weeds, he tells of the work of the enemy who sows weeds among the good seed. The last parable has the same application: it is the Lord's job to separate the true from the false. Parables five and six (Hidden treasure and Pearl) emphasize the joy of those who find this "treasure." In the middle are two parables that speak of the extension of this kingdom.

#### **1. The Parable Of The Mustard Seed (Matthew 13:31-32)**

In this parable there is great growth. From a small beginning ("the smallest of all your seeds") it grew to become the largest of garden plants. The message is clear: from a small beginning the kingdom of God would grow into a "large plant."

#### **2. The Parable Of Yeast (Matthew 13:33)**

In this parable, a small lump of yeast penetrated the large lump of dough. The message seems to be the same as that of the mustard seed, but with the added emphasis on the transformation that occurs as the yeast permeates the dough. From a small beginning the kingdom of God will continue penetrating until it covers all of the earth (Compare Rev 11:15).

At the end of these teachings, Jesus asked his disciples, "Have you understood all these things?" (Mt 13:51). The obvious answer is no, since after His resurrection He spent 40 days speaking to them about the kingdom of God (Ac 1:3).

## **III. THE BIBLICAL BASIS FOR SATURATION CHURCH PLANTING**

As we have seen, God's ultimate purpose is for the whole world to be saturated with knowledge of Him. Saturation church planting is saturating a region with churches in such away that every man, woman and



child has a chance to accept or reject the Gospel through the witness of a local church. Is saturating an area with churches just the latest fad in ministry or is it based on biblical precedent? As the following biblical principles will show us, saturation church planting is biblical.

#### **A. The Instrument: The Church**

When Jesus said, *"I will build My church and the gates of hell will not overcome it"* (Mt 16:18), He made his intention known to establish a people for Himself. From this statement two things are clear. First, the church and the work of building it belong to Christ and therefore He is intimately involved in its development. Second, the church will be triumphant. Because of who Jesus is, we can be sure that He will successfully do what He promised. Persecution, poverty or even the gates of hell itself cannot stop the Church. The building of the church is God's will and building the church is Jesus' major mission on earth today.

In his beautiful epistle to the Ephesians about the church, Paul says *'His (God's) intent was that now, through the church, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known...'* (Eph 3:10). Again the church is described as the instrument by which the Gospel is spread.

#### **B. The Command: The Gospel Must be Proclaimed Everywhere**

Before His ascension, Jesus told His disciples that they would receive the Holy Spirit and then be witnesses to the end of the earth, beginning at Jerusalem (Acts 1:8). It is interesting that Jesus opens and closes His ministry with saturation as a theme. In the parables of the sower and the dragnet (Mt 13), Jesus implied that the work of the Kingdom covers all the ground and goes after all kinds of fish. In His closing ministry, Jesus instructs His apostles to saturate the world with the Good News.

The Gospel must be proclaimed everywhere. This is clear from the Great Commission passages (Mt 28:18-20, Lk 24:46-49, Acts 1:8). Just as Abraham was blessed so that he would be a blessing to others (Ge 12:1-3), so God's people who have received God's blessing are to pass it on to others.

The Great Commission is to "make disciples of all nations" through baptizing and teaching obedience to Christ. Both of these objectives are best fulfilled by God's people, the church. The command was not a temporary command only for the original hearers. The reoccurrence of the word "All": All authority, all nations, all things (that I have commanded you) and all the days, indicates its far-reaching application. Completing the Great Commission results in saturation as converts are made in 'all nations.'

#### **C. The Advance: To The Ends of the Earth**

How did the apostles, those who first heard the Great Commission, go about completing it? The answer is simple. As recounted in the book of Acts, the Apostles were preaching first in Jerusalem. As people responded to the Gospel, they were gathered into groups for teaching, fellowship, breaking of bread and prayer (Acts 2:42). These groups became established with leadership and were known as the church. When persecution broke out, the believers were scattered from Jerusalem and everywhere they went they preached the Gospel and presumably new house churches were started (Acts 8:1-4).

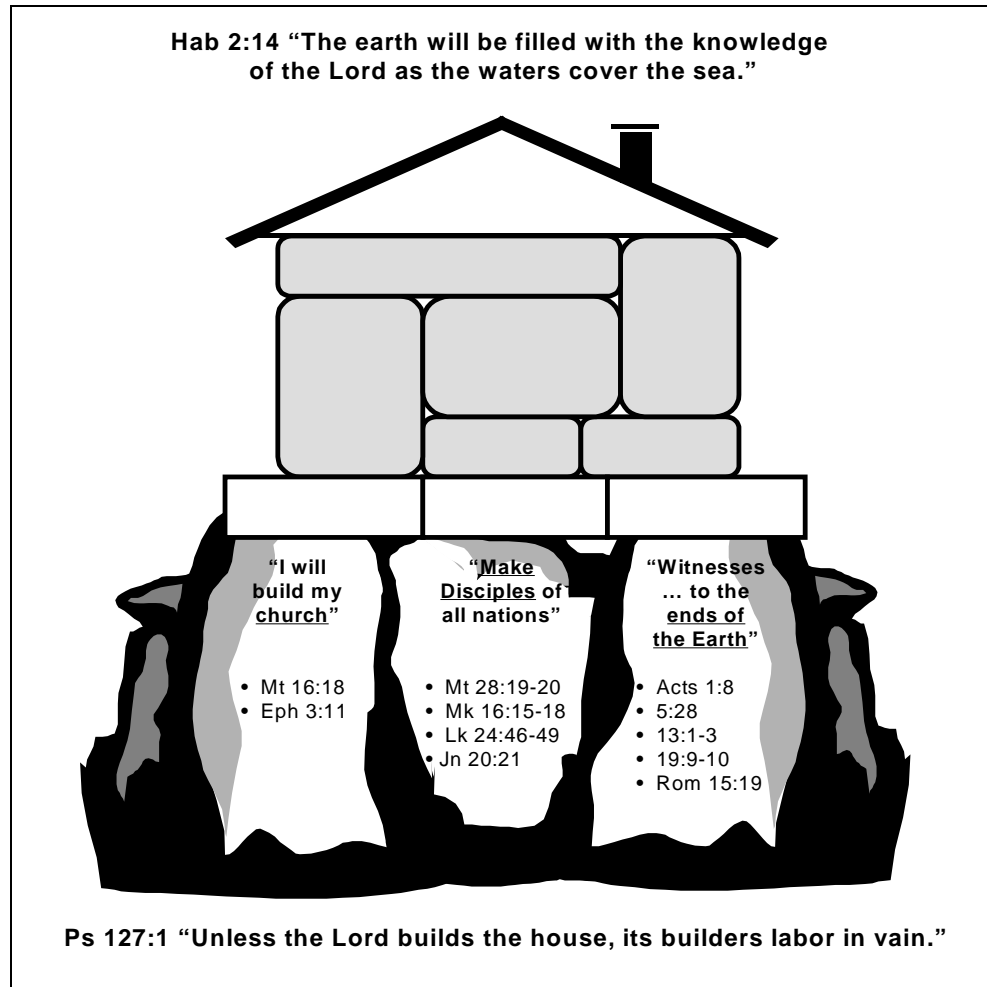
The church in Antioch sent out Paul and Barnabas as missionaries to continue the work. Everywhere they went, they established churches. Throughout the book of Acts, the spread of the Gospel and the expansion of the Church were always together. Wherever the Gospel went, a church was established.

In Acts 19:9-10, Paul's target area was the province of Asia Minor. He chose Ephesus, the most important city in the west of that province, as his headquarters. There he met with his disciples, who went out into the province *"so that all the Jews and Gentiles who lived in the province of Asia heard the word of the Lord."* Paul apparently had saturated Asia Minor with the message of the Gospel. How did he do so? From the other parts of the New Testament, we know that churches were started in at least seven of the major cities in the area (Rev 2, 3, Colossians 1:2). Who

planted these churches? Most likely these churches were planted by those who Paul trained in Ephesus.

The three biblical principles described above, when considered together, lead to the conclusion that the Great Commission is to be fulfilled through saturation church planting (see figure 5.1).

**Figure 5.1 - The Biblical Foundation for Saturation Church Planting**



#### IV. HOW MANY CHURCHES IS SATURATION?

If our task is to saturate our regions with churches, how many churches constitutes saturation? Another way to ask the question is: What does a disciplined nation look like? A disciplined nation is one in which every person has had an opportunity to hear and understand the Gospel of Jesus Christ, SO THAT they may either receive or reject Jesus as Savior. If this is the goal, how many churches are needed to reach it?

In answering this question, some emphasize geography, claiming a church for every neighborhood within normal travel distance of every person would be a good goal. Another point of view takes cultural and ethnic realities into consideration, proposing that churches must be established for every ethnic group in every region. A gypsy church for a gypsy population; an ethnic rural Hungarian church for rural Hungarians. Still others set goals of 1 local church fellowship for every 1,000 inhabitants. This is based on the theory that an average size church with viable, witnessing Christian believers can have an impact on 1,000 people.

A disciplined nation is one in which every person has had an opportunity to hear and understand the Gospel of Jesus Christ, SO THAT they may either receive or reject Jesus as Savior.

*How many churches are in your neighborhood, city, province or country? How close are you to the saturation church planting goal?*

## **V. SATURATION CHURCH PLANTING IN HISTORY**

### **A. Ireland, in the 5<sup>th</sup> century**

Patrick led a movement that filled Ireland with churches in every village. He penetrated and transformed the corrupt Druid religion by leading Druid priests to Christ as well as the general population. He used the existing Druid system of a priest in every village, and transformed the Druid temples and worship services into biblical Christianity. From Ireland, the legendary missionary teams went out and planted churches among the wild tribes of Northern Europe.

### **B. Hungary in the 16<sup>th</sup> century**

The Reformation came to Hungary in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. The Reformed Church established a center in Debrecen that was called the second Geneva. From there, the Reformed Church made a systematic geographical saturation church planting outreach into Transylvania, filling its villages with Bible preaching Reformed churches.

### **C. Scotland in the 16<sup>th</sup> century**

The movement led by John Knox in Scotland also saturated that region with Reformed churches. This movement was known for its commitment to intercessory prayer. Queen Mary said she feared John Knox's prayers more than all the armies of England.

### **D. England in the 18<sup>th</sup> century**

The revival led by John Wesley and George Whitfield in England resulted not only in saturation church planting, but social change that may have averted a revolution like the one in France. Wesley was a powerful preacher and a strategic organizer. You could say he was a "Z" thinker who lived by the rule "In every act reflect on the end." Wesley proclaimed the Gospel among commoners in open rallies all over England. During his 40 years of ministry, he traveled 550,000 km on horseback. He preached 42,000 sermons and wrote 200 books. Wesley, considering the end, wisely gathered his converts into 'classes' which we would today call 'cell groups.' Some 100,000 people gathered in 10,000 of these groups that multiplied whenever 12 or more joined (Joel Comiskey, Home Cell Group Explosion. 1998).

George Whitfield, also a leader during this revival, was considered a better preacher than Wesley. However, Whitfield's impact was not as significant as Wesley's because of Wesley's ability to gather converts into groups. About this Whitfield said, "My brother Wesley acted wisely. The souls that were awakened under his ministry he joined into societies, and thus preserved the fruit of his labor. This I neglected, and my people are a rope of sand" (Miller p97).

The Wesleyan revival spilled over into America and, led by Jonathan Edwards and Francis Asbury, resulted in saturation church planting of Congregational and Methodist churches.

### **E. The Philippines and Elsewhere in the 20<sup>th</sup> century**

In 1973, a Filipino pastor named Jun Balayo caught the vision for saturating his nation with churches. He led an interdenominational effort that is still strong. They planted 10,000 new churches in less than fifteen years. The believers set long term goals of 50,000 new churches in the Philippines by 2003. Today, they are on target! This is the result of great prayer gatherings, regular events to keep spreading the church planting vision and hard work planting churches.

Similar movements are happening all over the earth today. Great movements are underway in Latin America; especially Brazil, in China, Korea, and Central Africa (once known as "The Dark Continent" it has been said that central Africa has become, "The Christian Continent") with a very

strong movement in Ghana. Saturation church planting movements are beginning to gain momentum in Ukraine and Romania as well.

## CONCLUSION

The saturation of the world with God's glory has been His desire from the beginning of time. Church planting was the principle and foundational means for spreading the Gospel in the New Testament, and continues to be so to this day. For the nations to see and understand the Gospel of Grace, it requires a sufficient incarnational witness that is personally, geographically and culturally close to every inhabitant in the land. This means saturating every part of every nation with new, vital, reproducing churches.

The mandate has not changed. In every nation, the people of God are called to be a force to engage the lost world. This engagement may begin locally, then progress outward in concentric circles spanning cultural, relationships, skin color and language—the Church is to move to the limits of the earth. *"God will bless us and the ends of the earth will fear him!"* (Ps 67:7).

## QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION, REVIEW AND APPLICATION

- Is it possible to fulfill the Great Commission in a particular region without planting churches?
- Is your church driven by the purpose of multiplying and saturating?
- Do you have a plan to plant churches among other nationalities within your country?
- How many churches does your region need to be 'saturated'?
- Do you believe God wants to add your nation to a chapter in church history?

## SOURCES

- Comiskey, Joel. *Home Cell Group Explosion*. Houston, TX: Touch Ministries, 1998.
- Miller, Basil, *John Wesley*. Minneapolis: Dimension Books, 1943.

SCP VISION

6

LESSON

# Research Workshop

## PRESENTING RESULTS OF TARGET AREA RESEARCH

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### Lesson Purpose

The purpose of this lesson is to allow trainees to share what they had learned through their research.

### Main Points

- Presenting research data in an organized fashion makes it more understandable.
- Answering certain key questions can make research more valuable.

### Desired Outcomes

When the content of this lesson has been mastered, each participant should:

- Understand how the gathering of information is strategic to developing effective evangelism and church planting strategies.
- Know how to present a concise research report.
- Participate in evaluating the relevance of various information-gathering methods to developing evangelism and church planting strategies.

### Suggestions to Trainers

This lesson is a workshop. Allow all of the trainees to present the findings of their research assignment from Manual One (SCP Vision Appendix 4A, "Understanding Your Target Area"). If they have charts, maps, posters, etc., display these so that they can be seen during breaks and free time.

If there are more than four reports to be given during this hour, you may want to consider working in small groups. Otherwise, you may want to select a few very good reports for everyone to hear and interact with.

## INTRODUCTION

In the SCP Vision lesson "Principles of Research" in Manual One, participants were given an assignment to gather information about the area in which they will be planting a church (SCP Vision Appendix 4A, "Understanding Your Target Area"). Now that as much information as possible about the harvest force (Christian resources) and the harvest field (where work is to be done) has been gathered, this information needs to be analyzed and pulled together in a report describing the data and its impact on evangelism and church planting strategies in the target region. This workshop will give you an opportunity to do that.

Each trainee or team of trainees should take 10-15 minutes to present their findings using the following guidelines:

### PART ONE—BASIC DATA GATHERED (5-7 MINUTES):

- Describe your target area. Summarize what you learned in steps 2 and 3 of SCP Vision Appendix 4A "Understanding Your Target Area."
- How did you gather your information (surveys, informal interviews, observation, mapping, library research, etc.)?
- Discuss any significant problems or difficulties encountered and how they were overcome. What would you do differently next time?

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**PART TWO—ANALYSIS OF RESEARCH DATA (5-8 MINUTES):**

The remainder of the presentation should be focused on results of findings. Answering the key questions listed below can help.

- What was the most interesting information you learned about your target area and the people living there?
- Was there any information that surprised you?
- What specific things did you learn that will help you determine your strategy for church planting in your target area?
- What one important fact for church planting did you confirm that you already knew about the harvest field?
- What new discovery that is important for church planting did you make about the harvest field that you previously did not know?
- What opportunities did you find as open doors for the Gospel?
- What obstacles did you find and how could they be overcome?
- What further research needs to be done in order to develop a comprehensive evangelism and church planting strategy for your target area?

SCP VISION

7

LESSON

# Mobilizing Resources Through Research

## ☛ Lesson Purpose

The purpose of this lesson is to learn how to use research to mobilize others to join the church planting task.

## ☛ Main Points

- Formulating a "Call To Action" inspires others to join in the project.
- Sharing information is vital to the task of mobilizing others.

## ☛ Desired Outcomes

When the content of this lesson has been mastered, each participant should:

- Understand the importance of prayerfully analyzing research data as part of developing a church planting strategy.
- Know how to share research data in appropriate ways for mobilizing others for church planting.
- Develop a mobilization strategy for his church planting ministry and attempt to mobilize others to pray, give or join him in his church planting ministry.

## ☛ Suggestions to Trainers

In teaching this lesson, try to give specific examples of where the sharing of research resulted in the mobilization of people, prayer or resources for church planting efforts. Also, try to give an example of how information shared inappropriately resulted in negative consequences. Help trainees see how this could have been prevented and what they need to learn from this mistake.

## INTRODUCTION

In the lesson "Principles of Research" (SCP Vision 4) in Manual One, participants were given an assignment to gather information about the area in which they will be planting a church (SCP Vision Appendix 4A, "Understanding Your Target Area"). That research assignment equipped you to gather and analyze data concerning the harvest force (resources which could help in the church planting ministry) and the harvest field (the people and area you are trying to reach with the Gospel). In this lesson, we will discuss how to share your research results with others in order to make known the needs of the people in your target area... and to encourage others to get involved in Kingdom work in that target area.

## I. CALL TO ACTION

The "call to action" is a summary report of what you or your team believes God wants to do in reaching your target area with the Gospel. It is a result of praying and reflecting over the information you gathered and analyzed in your research assignment. The "call to action" highlights the needs and spiritual condition of the people in the target area and what God's people must do in response to these needs and condition. It provides the background or framework for your church planting ministry. It helps you to answer the questions, "*What does God want for my target area?*" and "*How can every man, woman and child in this area see and hear the Gospel in a way that is relevant to them?*"

The "call to action" answers the question "what does God want for my target region?"

Your call to action should contain your and your team's thoughts and understanding of:

**A. The Situation Of The People**

In Matthew 9:35-38, when the Lord went among the people, He said that they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. He saw that there were many diseases among them, and He healed them. They were in a state of pain. As He went among them he saw the pain.

From your research assignment, how would you describe the situation of the people living in your target area? Use basic demographics, felt needs, etc. (Refer to SCP Vision Appendix 4A, "Understanding Your Target Area.")

**B. Their Spiritual Condition**

Jesus saw that the people had no guidance for their spiritual lives. They were without any direction (Mt 9:36).

Summarize the spiritual condition of the people of your target area. Are there any churches among these people? What percent of the people attend church or identify themselves as followers of Christ? Are they open to the Gospel? What other religious groups are working among them? How many churches need to be planted in your target area so that every person has an opportunity to hear and see the Gospel in a way that is relevant to them and their situation? (Refer to SCP Vision Appendix 4A, "Understanding Your Target Area.")

**C. What God's People Must Do**

The Lord then issued a command to pray (Mt 9:38). After commanding prayer, He found workers, trained them and sent them out and even spoke to them about raising financial support! (See Matthew Chapter 10).

What specifically is God calling you and your team to do to reach the people in your target area? How will you devote yourselves to prayer for the people in your target area? What resources (people, churches and ministries) can be mobilized to help reach the people of your target area? What role will you and your team play in recruiting others to pray and work with you in reaching the people of this target area with the Gospel?

**II. GUIDELINES FOR SHARING INFORMATION**

The right information, in the right hands, at the right time, is a powerful tool for changing people's perceptions and for motivating them to action. However, information inappropriately shared can cause shame or embarrassment, resulting in anger, defensiveness and a closed posture to change.

Your research report can be a powerful tool which God can use to give others a burden for the needs of your target area and a desire to see people living in that target area become followers of Jesus Christ.

The right information, in the right hands, at the right time, is a powerful tool for changing people's perceptions and for motivating them to action.

**A. To Whom Should You Present Your Research Results?**

Begin by sharing with one or two trusted colleagues what you have discovered about the harvest force and the harvest field. Sharing your research data with a few can indicate how others will respond and help anticipate how to encourage positive responses in faith and to gently deal with negative objections. Ask for advice and their perspective as to how to mobilize believers for church planting from what your research shows.

Sharing with authorities privately and getting their blessing to present the research to others can be one of the best ways to proceed. Show leaders how church planting will extend their ministry. Show them that under their authority, you will do the will of the Lord.



Lastly and most importantly, share with others who are interested in the church planting task. Note how people respond to the challenge to plant new churches. This knowledge can help you to build a team of prayer supporters, financial givers and team members.

## **B. What Are The Goals Of Sharing Your Research Results With Others?**

### *1. Compassion For The Lost*

Present information that shows the spiritual desperation of the people. Tell a true story of something that will cause people to feel the pain that those without Christ are suffering where you did research.

### *2. Prayer*

Church plants that have prayer support prove to be more successful than those that do not. When presenting your research report, present specific needs that only God can respond to. Ask others to pray for these needs.

### *3. Mobilizing People To Help Plant The Church*

Present information that helps people see what they can do to help. Be practical and show specific things they can do like work with children, help with construction, give finances, help with music, evangelism, or even practical help.

### *4. Giving*

Be specific as to what you need financially. Be very open and honest and do not hesitate to present the need.

## **C. How Should You Present Your Research Results?**

- Pray for wisdom. You will need to be discreet and not present the data in a critical manner if it shows up areas where the Christians have not been doing enough to reach unbelievers.
- Use discretion. Don't share everything, but share the important data that will help people see how they can participate in church planting.
- Determine how to best present your research results to others. Use maps, stories about interesting people, and present the vision from God's perspective.
- Do not listen to negative responses that say it cannot be done. Remember Jesus is with you.

## **III. DETERMINE HOW TO MOBILIZE THE HARVEST FORCE**

One aspect of your research assignment (SCP Vision Appendix 4A, "Understanding Your Target Area") was to determine what resources (harvest force) were already available to help you in reaching the people of your target area with the Gospel. By sharing your research results with others, you may be able to mobilize some of these resources to help in your church plant.

### **A. Identify The Resources Available To Help Reach The Target Zone**

#### *1. People*

Who wants to get involved? Ask people and give them a chance to volunteer to help in the church plant. How much time can interested people give toward this ministry?

Are people in your existing church interested in your church planting ministry? Who will help? Usually your existing church is a good resource for people, money and prayer. The members of that church know you and are likely to be more committed to your ministry than others.

#### *2. Money*

What finances are available? Challenge people to give sacrificially to the expansion of the kingdom.

### 3. *Materials*

What is available, such as literature, films, musical instruments, etc.?

## **B. Develop A Mobilization Strategy For Your Church Plant**

What strategy will you develop for mobilizing the harvest force? Based on the information provided in this lesson, write out your strategy for sharing your research with others to get them involved.

## **IV. CASE STUDY ON HOW RESEARCH CAN BE USED TO MOBILIZE RESOURCES**

### ***The Power of Information*** by Stan and Donna Downes

In 1996, a missionary in Romania with OC International modeled a nation-wide research project by choosing Brasov county as his example. He produced a series of maps that showed the various types of churches as well as those areas without churches. He left copies of his work with local church leaders, hoping his effort would bear fruit.

Several months later, Valerica Tudor, a leader in the Brethren churches in Brasov, observed the significance of these maps and saw clearly the needs for church planting in his county. He used the maps as a rallying point for church planting efforts in Brasov county.

Since 1997, Valerica and other church leaders have helped research Brasov county more thoroughly and have produced a new map each year—to keep track of church planting progress. Twelve new churches have been planted, and about 20 cell groups have been started in villages. In another dozen villages, church leaders have identified Christians who are willing to start cell groups.

Several church leaders meet every month for prayer, Bible study, quarterly planning, and reporting. They have developed a list of the 89 villages without an evangelical church, using it to motivate local churches to plant additional churches and to direct church planting efforts.

The response from the churches has been enthusiastic. One church asked why the men had not brought them this information earlier! Another asked for periodic updates on the progress of the project. Several churches have contributed financially to the work. Though the first map is now hopelessly out of date, it keeps a place of honor in Valerica's home, a reminder of how God uses information to motivate His people in a powerful way.

## **QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION, REVIEW AND APPLICATION**

- How is research used to develop a church planting strategy?
- In the case study, how did the research information when shared with the church and others, enable them to mobilize resources to help them in their church planting effort?
- How can sharing your research results benefit your church planting efforts?
- How can sharing research affect your relationship with Christian leaders?

## **ACTION PLAN**

- With your church planting team, review your research data and write out what God is showing you for your church plant. Share this call to action with your trainer or mentor or other appropriate people.
- Write out a mobilization strategy to encourage others to assist you in your church planting effort. Include those to whom you will share your research results, what you will share with them, how you hope they will get involved in your work (prayer, giving, joining your team, etc.). Share this strategy with your trainer or mentor.
- Implement your mobilization strategy and share the results with your trainer or mentor or at the next training session.

## **SOURCES**

Downes, Stan and Donna. *The Alliance Impact*. Budapest, Hungary: The Alliance for Saturation Church Planting, Spring, 1999.

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# THE CHURCH

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THE CHURCH

LESSON 5

# The Nature of the Church

## THE CHURCH IS A LIVING ORGANISM

### Lesson Purpose

The purpose of this lesson is to clarify the biblical teaching that the Church is an Organism, and to investigate the implications for a church-planting ministry.

### Main Points

- The Church is not a building or a place.
- The Church is the living body of Christ, comprised of all who have believed in Him.

### Desired Outcomes

When the content of this lesson has been mastered, each participant should:

- Know the basic biblical teaching of the Church as an organism.
- Identify how inadequate concepts of the Church have arisen in his or her culture or context, and how these concepts hinder the development of a living Church.

### Suggestions to Trainers

This lesson contains many good discussion questions interspersed throughout the lesson. The trainer should feel free to use any or all of them to help trainees clarify and reflect on their understanding of the material being taught.

## INTRODUCTION

The concept of the Church, which is so clear in the Scriptures, has often become cluttered with erroneous or unnecessary ideas. These vary from one culture to another, but each hinders the local church from becoming all that Christ intended it to be. Understanding the nature of the Church from a biblical point of view will assist the church planter in starting churches that focus on the important things and as a result are healthy, vibrant, culturally relevant, and biblical in nature.

## I. THE MEANING AND USE OF THE WORD "CHURCH"

### A. Historical Meaning of the Word "Church"

The English word "church" is derived from the German word *kirche*, which comes from the Greek word *kuriakon*<sup>1</sup>, meaning "belonging to the Lord" (See 1Co 11:20; Rev 1:10). *(Note to translator: Rewrite this sentence to discuss the origin of the target language's word or words for church).*

The Greek Word that is translated "church"- *ekklesia*<sup>2</sup>, means "a called out assembly."

- In non-biblical (secular) usage- "an assembly of free citizens called together by a herald."
- In the Greek version of the Old Testament (the Septuagint), *ekklesia* translated the Hebrew word *qahal*<sup>3</sup>, meaning "an assembly." This word was often used of Israelites called together for a particular purpose (Ge 49:6; Ps 26:5).

<sup>1</sup> κυριακον

<sup>2</sup> εκκλησια

- The New Testament reveals a development of the term, from the simple non-technical meaning, to the designation for the people of God. The word is used 114 times in the New Testament. Ninety-two times the word refers to a specific local congregation of believers. The word ekklesia is almost always translated as "church, congregation, assembly or gathering."

## **B. Use of the Word Ekklesia (Church) in the New Testament**

It is used geographically, to speak of Christians gathered together

- In a local house (Col 4:15).
- In a grouping in a city (1Co 4:17; Gal 1:22; 1Th 1:1).
- In larger, regional groupings (Ac 9:31).
- Of Christians scattered throughout a geographic location (Ac 8:1-3, or "the church in Algeria").

It is used of all believers of every age and every geographic location, who are spiritually united to Christ, the Head of the Church (Eph 1:22-23; Col 1:18). This is known as the Universal Church. Christians, including those who have already died, are part of His "Body," the Church. The term encompasses the whole body of believers in Jesus Christ (1Co 12:28; Eph 1:22-23; Heb 12:23). These people have been set apart by God, called out from the world for His pleasure, good purposes and eternal will (1Co 1:2; Ro 1:7; 8:28).

Typically, the word "church" is capitalized if it refers to the Universal Church (also called the Invisible Church). When it refers to local church, it is normally spelled with a small letter. As a result, it looks like this:

- The Church of Jesus Christ
- The church in Odessa

## **C. General Use of the Word "Church" Today**

The word "church" is used in a variety of ways in society and culture. It is used to describe a building for religious activity (the "church" down the street), or a denomination or sectarian group having some kind of associational relationship (the Church of Christ). It can refer to a local congregation (1st Presbyterian Church of Odessa) or a community of professing Christians (the church that meets in Mary's home). The word is used to describe Christians in a given country (the Russian Church), in a certain theological stream of thought (the Reformed Church) or tradition (the Pentecostal Holiness Church).

# **II. FALSE CONCEPTIONS OF THE CHURCH**

Before any construction project can begin, one of the first steps is to clear the site of debris or other obstacles. The same is true with building a concept of the Church. It is necessary to clear away the inadequate or false ideas before we can build a true understanding on the bedrock of the Word.

## **A. Old Testament Shadows vs. New Testament Realities**

The most common errors in understanding the Church arise from a failure to distinguish Old Testament and New Testament ideas. In the Old Testament, models, types, or images were often used to partially demonstrate spiritual truths that were not fully revealed until the New Testament. One good example is the Passover Lamb. It portrayed a substitution for sin *only until* Christ was revealed as the Lamb of God Who takes away the sin of the world (Jn 1:29). The Passover Lamb was a temporary image. It pointed to Christ and is no longer necessary. There are many other such images, but the temple is perhaps the most misunderstood.

## B. The Church Is Not the Temple

Many churches consider the Old Testament Jewish temple to be the pattern for the corporate gathering of the believers. The Orthodox and Catholic churches carry this to the greatest extreme. In this model, the leaders of the service are called "priests" and the building may be called a "temple." Also, proponents of this model believe that a sacrifice to God is offered every time the Lord's Supper is celebrated. While rejecting the Mosaic Law, there is usually a rigid liturgy and order of service.

This model, in effect, attempts to create a "Christian" version of the Jewish temple. Access to God is obtained through the service of the priests in the temple. Because of the sacrificial ministry of the Old Testament temple, the altar stands between the people and the priests, and only the priests are allowed behind the altar. Churches modeled on this pattern always have the congregation in front of the altar (or communion table), and the priests or other "special" persons only are allowed behind the altar.

There are a number of biblical passages that contradict the concept of the church as a modern-day temple similar to the Jewish temple of the Old Testament. For example, Paul taught that the believers themselves—and not the building in which they meet—are the temple of God (1Co 6:19). God no longer resides in a building, but in His people (Ac 17:24). They are a spiritual house, made of living stones (1Pe 2:5).

Paul taught that believers themselves are the temple of God—not the building in which they meet.

Furthermore, Christ offered one sacrifice for all time (Heb. 9:26; 10:12). He has finished His work as High Priest, and no one can add to it (Heb 7:27). At Christ's death, the veil of the temple was torn open from top to bottom—there is no longer any division between God and man (Mk 15:38). There is no longer a separate class of priests (1Pe 2:9). All believers are now priests and ministers of God and can offer themselves and their worship as sacrifices without a mediator nor earthly temple (Ro 12:1).

The New Testament believers lived in a culture where it was expected that each religious group build a "temple" to their god. Some of these beautiful pagan temples were so impressive that their remains continue to be major tourist attractions even today! Certainly, the local culture in which the early Christians lived expected and valued attractive temples. But the church understood that the only temple is their bodies, and they refused to propagate a false view of the Gospel by conforming to that cultural form.

## C. The Church is Not the Synagogue

Some people think that the Jewish synagogue was the pattern for the church rather than the temple. There was only one temple—located in Jerusalem. However, there were synagogues in every city in which there were a number of Jewish families. The synagogue was a place of prayer and reading of the Scriptures. There were no sacrifices and no priests. Rather, men from the group were elected as "rulers" of the synagogue. Worship was much more informal than in the temple. The congregation normally sat in a circle, with the speaker standing in the center or sitting among them.

The early Christians made no attempt to recreate the Jewish temple. In fact, the first church buildings were not built until the fourth century!

The synagogue is a better model for the church than the temple is. As the Christians scattered throughout Asia Minor, they made no attempt to recreate the temple. In fact, the first church buildings were not built until the fourth century! Rather, believers formed house churches that resembled the informal teaching and prayer of the Jewish synagogue. Churches today should think long and hard about whether their buildings and forms of worship match this pattern of informal, comfortable worship.

While the synagogue model more closely resembles the New Testament Church than the temple does, it still lacks something important. Although local and informal, the synagogue was *never* anything more than a building in which the Jews met for instruction. The synagogue was comprised of stone and mortar—not of believers. As such, it is not an adequate model for the living Church.

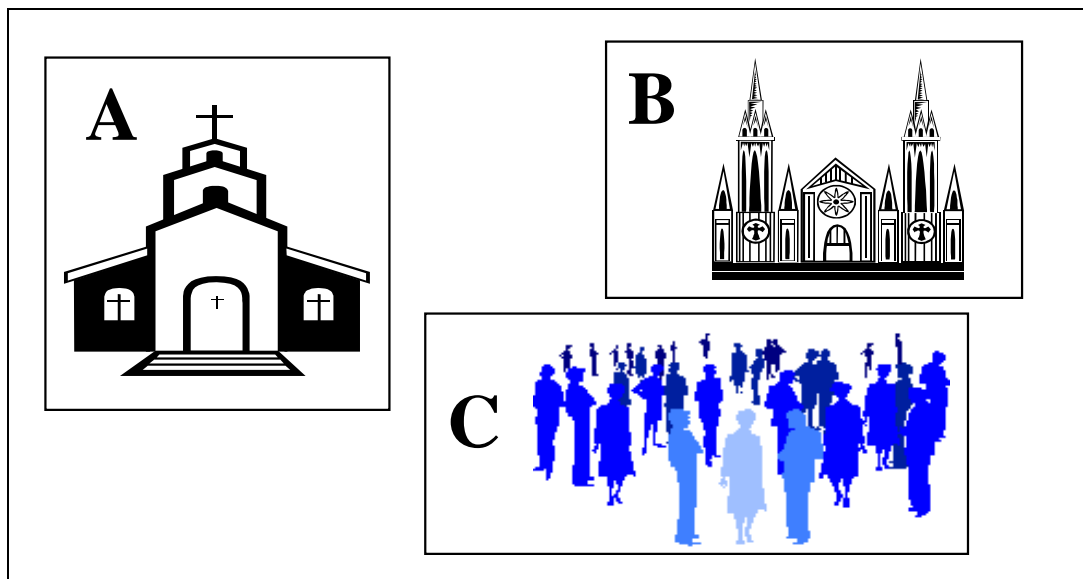
### III. METAPHORS DESCRIBING THE CHURCH AS A LIVING ORGANISM

If the Church is not a building, what is it? The church was an entirely new 'thing' that Christ introduced that bears little resemblance to the buildings or temples of the other religions of that day. Rather than being a *building*, it is a *living body* comprised of believers in Christ.

There are many metaphors for the Church in the New Testament. It is striking how they picture the Church as a living organism from so many angles. A few of these are listed here.

- It is a family (1Ti 3:14-16; Eph 3:15). In this family, God is "Father," Jesus is His Unique Son, and we are His adopted sons and daughters (Jn 1:12-13, Eph 1:5); brothers and sisters in Christ (2Th 3:15, 1Pe 2:17).
- It is a body (1Co 12:12ff). This metaphor clearly shows the organic relationship of individual Christians ("the parts") to both the Church ("the body") and to Christ ("the Head"). The believers are its "members" joined to one another, even as the parts of a body are joined together to the head.
- It is a flock (Ac 20:28-29). Jesus is the One true Shepherd (Heb 13:20-21) who possesses it, and provides for it. Believers are His "sheep" who submit to the Good Shepherd's leading.
- It is a people (1Pe 2:9-10). The relationship of members of Christ's Church is not along ethnic or racial lines, but based on their new heritage as a holy "nation."
- It is a bride (Eph 5:25-33; Rev 21:2; Jn 3:29). As such, She is loved by Christ, but subject to Him. He is the bridegroom, Who gave up His life for her.
- It is a building (living temple) (Eph 2:20; 4:11). Christ is the living "cornerstone." The Church is likened to a living temple that is holy (1Co 3:16-17), growing (Eph 2:21-22), and spiritual (1Pe 2:5). Believers are living stones in this temple.
- It is a priesthood (Rev 1:5-6). The source of this priesthood is Jesus. All believers are part of this priesthood (1Pe 2:5-9), and can come confidently bringing acceptable sacrifices (Ro 12:1-2; Heb 13:15) into the King's presence (Heb 4:16).
- It is a branch (Jn 15:1-16). The believers are the living branches that bear fruit that remains.

**Figure 5.1 Which is the Church?**



Based on the metaphors listed above, which of the three images in Figure 5.1 best represents the Church? Why? How does this relate to your concept of a local church?



#### **IV. PLANTING A LIVING CHURCH**

How does the fact that the Church is a living organism influence our approach to planting a local church? There are a number of factors that are important to consider when the new church is planned.

##### **A. The Local Church Members Should Be Believers**

The local church should be a miniature of the universal Church. To be a member or part of the universal Church (the organism), one must be divinely related to Christ. The most basic requirement of the local church is the same—union with Christ. Therefore, the sole requirement for local church membership should be new birth. It also follows that all believers in a local area should be members of a local church. There is no biblical basis for a church to refuse membership to a believer other than blatant sin (1Co 5:2).

##### **B. Buildings Should Not Be a Primary Consideration**

As shown earlier, buildings are not the Church, nor did they even become a factor until centuries after the Church began. All too often, church planters focus too much attention or too many resources on providing a building. This emphasis can distract from evangelism and discipleship—the truly important parts of establishing the "church."

##### **C. Relationships Are Key**

If buildings are not the key, what is? The answer is that relationships are the building blocks of a vibrant local church. This includes the relationship of the believers to Christ and to one another. But it also includes relationships with unbelievers who God may have chosen for salvation. A wise church planter will focus his time and energy on developing these relationships. He will be actively spending time building bridges of trust with unbelievers, and discipling the believers in the church.

##### **D. The Local Church Must Adapt to the Culture**

As an organism, the Church is not static or unchanging. It is alive, dynamic, ever changing to meet the needs of the present situation. There is no one form or shape that it must take. The forms of the church should be developed for each local church as the church planter, guided by the Holy Spirit, seeks to express the biblical functions in a way that is appropriate for his specific target audience and cultural situation.

##### **E. There Must Be Some Form of Order**

The human body, though an organism, has organization. Its individual parts work together for the common good. The local church should also have some organization, but the organization should *always* be focused on meeting the needs, both spiritual and physical, of the body (the believers).

Examples of organization in the New Testament church included

- It had stated times of meeting (Ac 20:7)
- Leaders were chosen (Ac 14:23)
- Corporate discipline was practiced (1Co 5)
- Money was raised to help in practical needs (2Co 8-9)
- A list of widows who were eligible to be supported was kept (1Ti 5:9)

Despite the fact that this organization existed, the emphasis of the New Testament churches was always on the spiritual growth, doctrine, and moral purity of the believers. Any organization was based solely on its ability to help the body grow and care for its members.

##### **F. The Local Church Must Grow and Reproduce**

If the Church were a building or a machine, it would simply need to be maintained. However, the fact that the Church is an organism means that it must grow and reproduce—as is normal for all living things. The Church grows as individual people believe the message of the Gospel and are

born into the family of God. This growth is even more dramatic when new *local churches* are planted—each composed of *many* new believers. Since our task is to fulfill the Great Commission by reaching all nations, we should always seek the maximum growth. That occurs when local churches reproduce by planting other new local churches.

#### **G. Cell Groups Should Play a Vital Role**

Local church programs and activities should reflect the fact that it is a living organism. The most appropriate model for the living local church is the living cells that make up the body. Many church leaders believe that the cell group model taught in this material is the *only* model that adequately expresses the added dimension of *life* that must be present in the church. Cell groups focus maximum attention on the growth and health of each member, and on reproduction. Minimum resources are allotted to the issues of buildings or programs. This model seems to most closely approximate the personal fellowship and relationships that existed in the early church (Ac 2:42-46).

### **QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION, REVIEW AND APPLICATION**

- What would you say to a Christian and believer and therefore member of the Universal Church who is not involved in a local church?
- What must a person do to become part of the Church of Jesus Christ (the Body of Christ)? Base your answer on Scripture.
- What must a person do to become part of a local church?
- Why is the Old Testament Temple model not an adequate model for understanding the New Testament church?
- In what ways does your church experience reflect the New Testament teaching about the nature of the church?

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THE CHURCH

6

LESSON

# Corporate Functions of the Church

## WHAT HAPPENS WHEN YOU COME TOGETHER

### Lesson Purpose

The purpose of this lesson is to discuss the biblical functions that the church must fulfill when it meets together and to discuss the relationship between individual, small group, and local church functions.

### Main Points

- Church functions include worship, the ordinances, preaching and teaching, giving, edification, and discipline.
- Small groups should begin to fulfill many, if not all, of the biblical church functions.

### Desired Outcomes

When the content of this lesson has been mastered, each participant should:

- Know the biblical functions of the gathered church.
- Develop a plan for the corporate gatherings of the small groups that will build a good foundation for when they become a local church.

### Appendix

6A Baptism In The New Testament

### Suggestions to Trainers

This lesson recommends that small groups or cell groups should begin to fulfill many of the functions of an organized church. This is a controversial, but important, topic. You should allow time for ample discussion of Table 6.1 after the content of the material has been presented.

## INTRODUCTION

This lesson will focus on the functions that the church is to fulfill when it meets together. These functions include worship, the ordinances, preaching/teaching the Word, edification, evangelism, maintaining discipline, and giving. This list is not intended to be complete—rather, it identifies the *main* church functions as a starting point for further study. The distinction between church forms and church functions was explained in Church Lesson 3.

- Church Function = **What** the church must do.
- Church Form = **How** the church chooses to do the functions.

The *functions* of the church are commanded in the New Testament and must be implemented by the church. However, it cannot be stressed enough that the *forms* of the church may and should change and be adapted to best fit the particular target people. With that reminder, this lesson will focus on the corporate functions of the church and assume that the church planter will be careful to choose relevant forms for the emerging church.

## I. CORPORATE VS. PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE CHURCH

The New Testament lists many responsibilities of the church. Some of these can be carried out personally by each believer. Other activities require a group—the assembled church. Still others may be practiced both individually and corporately. For example, godly living is an individual responsibility.

Church discipline, however, assumes that there is a group. And evangelism is commanded for both individual believers and for the church as a whole. This lesson deals with those functions that are to be carried out by the assembled, or corporate, body. With this distinction in mind, we need to ask at what point a group of believers is responsible to fulfill the corporate church functions.

### A. When are we "Corporate?"

Church Lesson 4 helped define the local church. In that lesson we saw that a typical definition might include

- An organized group of believers
- Qualified leadership
- Observance of the ordinances
- Regular meetings

Many people might add to this list in different ways. There is no question that an organized local church meets the above qualifications and fulfills the functions described in this lesson. However, these "corporate functions" are not necessarily limited to an organized local church. They also apply to small groups of believers.

### B. Meeting as a Group

The goal of this material is to facilitate the planting of local churches. However, it is important to note that the corporate functions of the church *do not need to wait for the church to be organized*. They are too important to ignore until that time.

How many believers does it take to practice a corporate church function? A good example is found in Matthew 18:19. In this passage, Jesus states that He will be present in a special way whenever "two or three are gathered together." It is important to note that the context is specifically talking about church discipline—most definitely a corporate church function. In fact, the word "church" and the activities of two or three believers are intertwined in the text. The point is not to claim that two or three believers constitute a local church, in contrast to the definition in the previous section. Rather, it seems to indicate that the functions of the *local church* also should be applied in a *small group of believers*.

The corporate functions of the local church should also be applied in a small group of believers.

Hebrews 10:25 also commands us to not forsake assembling together. While attendance at a local church would certainly fulfill this command, there are many cases in which a local church does not exist. What do we do then? Again, the verse stresses *assembling together* but does not require an organized church. Even if there are only a handful of believers, it is important to begin meeting corporately in order to carry out the corporate functions that cannot be fulfilled individually.

## II. CORPORATE FUNCTIONS OF THE CHURCH

### A. Corporate Worship

One of the most important reasons for the church to gather together is to worship the Lord. The corporate worship of the church will be discussed in more detail in Manual Five, Church lesson 16, "Worship in the Local Church," and Church lesson 17, "How to Lead Worship." However, as soon as a small group of believers have been saved, they should begin to worship the Lord *together*.

Corporate worship allows Christians to identify with a larger and more diverse body of believers than just their particular cell group. It also provides a public testimony to the community of God's life and power, as well as encouragement to believers that they are not alone and that God's spirit is working through many different people's lives. In addition, corporate worship allows for the greater exercise of spiritual gifts for the edification of God's people as a body.

## B. The Ordinances

The two universally accepted ordinances of the church are baptism and the Lord's Supper. While all churches accept these two ordinances, there is a wide range of opinion as to how they should be practiced. Denominational traditions normally dictate this. As you begin your new church, it is important for you and the members of this church to understand how these ordinances will be practiced.

### 1. Baptism

Evangelical Christians hold differing positions on the meaning of baptism. The three major positions on the meaning of baptism are discussed below. It should be noted, however, that baptism in the New Testament was performed *immediately after salvation*, by *whatever believer led the convert to faith* (Ac 8:36). Even in new areas, they did not wait for a church to be established to baptize converts (Ac 16:33). Furthermore, the highest-ranking person did not necessarily do the baptism even when present (1Co 1:14-17).

#### a. Baptism as a Sign of Personal Belief in Christ

Some believe that baptism is an outward symbol of an inner change in a believer. It serves as a public testimony of one's personal faith in Jesus Christ (Ac 2:41; 10:48). There is some variation of mode of baptism, but often it is by immersion that pictures the believer's identification with Christ in His death, burial and resurrection.

#### b. Baptism as a Sign of the Covenant between God and Man

Others believe that baptism is the act of faith by which we are brought into the New Covenant with God through Christ (Mt 26:28; Lk 22:20) and hence enjoy its benefits. According to this view, adult believers and their families, including infants and children, are baptized. Just as circumcision was a sign of the Old Covenant (Ge 15, 17), so baptism is the sign of the New Covenant. The fact, rather than the mode of baptism, is the significant issue.

#### c. Baptism as a Sign of Church Membership

There is also another group of people who might be understood to hold a third position—that baptism represents local church membership. While they might state that they hold one of the other two beliefs, in actual practice they deny baptism to new believers until they grow to the point of being accepted as members. While few would attempt to justify this position from Scripture, many practice it.

### 2. The Lord's Supper

The Lord Himself commanded us to partake of the bread and the cup in remembrance of Him. He first gave this ordinance to the disciples in the upper room the night before His death (Mt 26:26-28; Mk 14:22-26; Lk 22:19-20). Paul reminded the Corinthians of the importance of the Lord's Supper in a local church context (1Co 11:23-34). It is less clear whether the Lord's Supper can *only* be celebrated in an organized church, who is to minister it, how often it is to be partaken of. Although this is certainly the *ideal*, it seems unwarranted to limit it to a church context. It is commanded for all believers as a way of remembering the Lord's sacrifice for us.

Jesus personally explained the meaning of each of the elements. They represent His broken body and His shed blood. The key phrase is "do this in remembrance of Me" (1Co. 11:25-26). The Lord's Supper helps us remember the cost of our salvation. It causes us to focus on Christ's death on the cross of Calvary. Each time we partake of the elements, we proclaim the reality of His sacrifice. The Apostle Paul in giving instructions regarding how this should be done said that in so partaking we remember the Lord's death until He comes again. This keeps believers focused on both the price of our salvation and the fact that Christ will return again.

### C. Ministry of the Word

The reading of the Word, preaching, and teaching must be a part of the corporate gathering of believers. Jesus told the disciples to teach new converts to "obey all that I have commanded you" (Mt 28:20). Paul instructed Timothy to "devote yourself to the public reading of Scripture, to preaching and to teaching" (1Ti 4:13).

It should be noted that there is a great difference between proclaiming the Word of God and simply talking *about* the Word. All too often preachers, Bible teachers and Bible discussion leaders give their thoughts and impressions of the Scriptures—or simply rehash messages that they have heard in the past—rather than actually reading the Word and allowing God to speak through it. Simply reading a few verses before a sermon or during a Bible study is not sufficient. It is a disservice to God's people when leaders present their own ideas rather than opening the Word and showing God's message clearly in the Bible.

It should be noted that there is a great difference between proclaiming the Word of God and simply talking *about* the Word.

A student of the Scriptures should study, prepare, meditate, pray, think, examine, search and listen as he comes to the Word. The Bible is living and active, and is a source of wisdom and insight. The Inductive Bible Study lessons in this program are designed to facilitate Bible study and preaching that actually *focuses on the Bible!* The goal in using the inductive method is not simply to gain Bible knowledge but to apply God's truth so that lives are changed according to God's will.

### D. Building up One Another

Throughout the New Testament writings there is a series of commands on how believers should relate to each other. These "one another" commands describe how Christians should behave toward each other. One of the functions of the church is to encourage the practice of the "one another" commands. This emphasis on unity and caring for one another sets the church apart from other groups. It is only through God's Spirit working in the hearts of believers that we can obey these commands. Some of the "one another" commands listed in Scripture are:

- wash one another's feet (Jn 13:14)
- love one another (Jn 13:34; 15:12,17)
- be devoted to one another (Ro 12:10)
- accept one another (Ro 15:7)
- instruct one another (Ro 15:14)
- greet one another (1Co 16:20)
- serve one another (Gal 5:13)
- forgive one another (Eph 4:32)
- admonish one another (Col 3:16)
- encourage one another (1Th 4:18)
- encourage one another (Heb 3:13)

### E. Evangelism

The Church exists to reach the lost with the Gospel. Evangelism is one of the biblical functions that apply to every level of the church. We are to evangelize individually, in small groups, and as a local church. Each of these requires that the Gospel be presented clearly. However, there are differences between the methods that work most effectively. Friendship or relational evangelism seems to be a more productive method for individuals. Small groups can begin to use a more structured situation. A local church may effectively use music or other kinds of programs to persuade unbelievers to listen to the message. Ideally, a local church program should employ and encourage all of these methods. Individual friendships should convince the lost to attend a non-threatening cell group. And a good experience in the cell group should persuade them to attend evangelistic events of the local church. They might trust Christ at any point along this journey.

## F. Giving

The early church was deeply involved in meeting the physical needs of others. Although the specific emphasis of their giving was toward the other believers, their concern included both Christian brothers and sisters in their own churches, and also in other areas. In addition, they also gave to the needs of those who went out to plant new churches and reach the lost. There appear to have been organized local church programs for giving, but there was also spontaneous giving by the believers. The kinds of giving listed below should probably begin as a small group and become more organized as the church is formed.

### 1. *The Poor*

The believers sold their possessions and gave to their needy brothers and sisters from the very founding of the church (Ac 2:45; 4:34-35). However, it appears that this giving involved an organized program within the church. They brought the money from the sale of their goods and land and presented it to the apostles for their distribution to the poor (Ac 4:35).

The disciples did the same in Antioch. When they sent aid to the churches in Judea, they did so by sending their contribution with two appointed men (Barnabas and Saul) to the elders in Judea (Ac 11:28-30). The elders in turn would have distributed the gift. The church was to collect this money each week in an organized fashion (1Co 16:2).

### 2. *The Widows*

A similar system was also in place to help the widows. The dispute of Acts 6 arose because the number of widows needing aid grew to the point that the apostles were not able to adequately supervise the money. Therefore they asked that the church choose seven Spirit-filled men to take care of this task. There was also an organized list of widows in the Ephesian church while Timothy ministered there (1Ti 5:3-16). Paul gave Timothy general guidelines so that only the widows who were truly in need would be placed on the list for aid. If they had believing families, the church was not to be responsible for them. Also, if they were young enough to remarry, they should do so and not be a burden to the church.

There seems to be a clear precedent for an organized church program to distribute help to needy members. When such a program is organized, it is imperative that godly people be chosen to supervise it, as in Acts 6. It is also wise to make sure that there are several involved, so that there will be no chance of scandal.

### 3. *Church Planters*

The Apostle Paul was often the recipient of support from the churches as he ministered to the lost in unreached areas. In fact, the occasion for the writing of the Book of Philippians was the sending of a gift from the Philippian church to Paul as he ministered in Rome. In the final section of the book, Paul praises and thanks them for their generosity, and assures them that God will supply all their needs *as a response to their giving to him* (Php 4:18-19). Believers often claim the truth of verse 19 *without realizing the importance of the context, and to whom it was promised!* Such gifts allowed Paul and others to devote full-time to ministry rather than to the sewing of tents.

Philippians 4:19 is a promise to those who are supporting church planting.

There are many occasions in Scripture where believers supported the ministry, but one other deserves special mention. The normally gentle and loving Apostle John appears to have written his third epistle as a scathing rebuke of Diotrephes, who refused to help support the brothers who were traveling and preaching the Gospel (3Jn 9-10). Giving to the Lord's work is not optional—nor is it replaced by only helping the poor among us.

### 4. *Pastors and leaders*

It is the responsibility of a local church to take care of the needs of the pastor and other leaders. The Old Testament principle of the 'tithe' lays the foundation for congregations being responsible to pay their leaders. In the New Testament each church normally took care of the

financial needs of its leaders. For example, Paul told the Galatians to support their own teachers (Gal 6:6). He told Timothy to teach churches to pay their teachers of God's word (1Ti 5:18). Churches that take this responsibility seriously are normally blessed by God for their faithfulness.

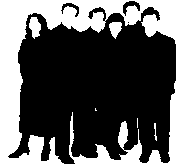

### III. WHEN TO DO CORPORATE FUNCTIONS

The previous section described a number of the biblical church functions. These are so important that it would be helpful to think carefully about the issue of *when* a group of believers should begin to do them. Should they wait until they are an organized church or start even while they may be very few in numbers?

Table 6.1 lists a number of functions in the left column, and has room for additions. As a group, discuss the table and do the following activities:

- Note whether you agree with those functions listed.
- Add any other functions that you think are important, but missing.
- Mark "yes" or "no" in the middle and right column to indicate whether or not you think these are required of a small group, a local church, or both. Discuss your reasoning.

**Table 6.1 Corporate Functions**

<b><i>Biblical Function</i></b>	<b><i>Small Group</i></b> 	<b><i>Local Church</i></b> 
Friendship Evangelism		
Giving to Church Planters		
Discipline		
Corporate Worship		
Preaching		
Personal Testimonies		
Baptism		
Lord's Supper		
Giving to the Poor		
Group Singing		
Caring for church leaders		

### QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION, REVIEW AND APPLICATION

- What are the corporate functions of the church?
- How do the corporate functions relate to a small group of believers?
- What is the function of preaching in the corporate gathering? What is the function of group Bible study?



- What do you understand to be the main meaning of water baptism?
- Why is giving a corporate function of the church?

## **ACTION PLAN**

With the members of your church planting team, decide when you will begin to hold corporate gatherings. What form will these gatherings take?



# Baptism In The New Testament

## INDUCTIVE BIBLE STUDY

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### INTRODUCTION:

One of the elementary or foundational teachings of the Christian life, according to Hebrews 6:1,2, is that of baptisms. Several different baptisms are mentioned in the New Testament, but this study is limited to a few *examples* of water baptism done by the Apostles and other leaders in the early Church, along with some *explanations* from the epistles of the Apostle Paul. For a complete study, use a Bible concordance to find all references to baptism.

### I. OBSERVATION

From the following passages, tell WHO was baptized, WHO did the baptizing; WHEN and WHERE the baptism occurred; WHAT was the meaning of the baptism.

	WHO was baptized?	WHO performed the baptism?	WHEN?	WHERE?	WHAT was the meaning?
Acts 2:38-41					
Acts 8:12,13					
Acts 8:36-38					
Acts 16:31-34					

## **II. INTERPRETATION**

From your observation, summarize the place of baptism in the early Church.

From the teachings of the Apostle Paul, we learn more about the meaning of Christian Baptism. From Romans 6:1-4, explain the connection between baptism and the death and resurrection of Christ.

Some other verses for your study: 1Co 15:12-20; Gal 3:26,27; 1Pe 3:21,22

## **III. APPLICATION**

How will you apply the principles you learned through this study in your new church?

Note: Some other baptisms mentioned in Gospels are found in Matthew 3; Mark 3; Luke 3; and John 3.



THE CHURCH

7

LESSON

# Developing A Church Purpose Statement

## WHY WILL YOUR CHURCH EXIST?

### Lesson Purpose

The purpose of this lesson is to help church planters to develop their own purpose statement for emerging church plants.

### Main Points

- A purpose statement answers the question "Why does this local church exist?"
- A local church purpose statement should be linked to the purpose of the Church in general.

### Desired Outcomes

When the content of this lesson has been mastered, each participant should:

- Recognize that a clear understanding of the Church's purpose will affect the way the church planter approaches the church planting task and ministry.
- Be able to write out a clear and concise local church purpose statement for his or her emerging church plant.

### Suggestions to Trainers

This is a workshop. Participants should write out their own local church purpose statements and share them with the rest of the participants.

## INTRODUCTION

Churches that make a difference are guided by a sense of purpose. They have a clear understanding of the biblical purpose for the Church in the world as well as a clear conviction concerning what God wants for their particular local church. They also understand that their responsibility does not end with planting of one church but should contribute to the multiplication of churches. The New Testament Church was established in order to bring glory to God through the edification of the believers and the evangelization of the lost. The task of discipling all nations for Christ was given for all believers for all ages. Early in the church planting process, it is necessary to consider the role the church will play in fulfilling the Great Commission, to think through the purpose for the particular local church intended to be planted. The process of writing a purpose statement can unify the believers, clarify their goals, motivate action, give direction to their efforts, and generate energy and power. This statement of purpose is not just a hoped-for target; it clearly states the reason that this particular church exists. A primary task of leadership is to clarify and communicate the purpose and the vision of the emerging church to the people of the congregation. This lesson will provide the opportunity to do that.

A primary task of leadership is to clarify and communicate the purpose and the vision of the emerging church to the people of the congregation.

## I. WHAT IS A PURPOSE STATEMENT?

In Lesson 4, "Defining the Local Church," you developed a *definition* of the local church. A definition answers the question "**what?**" By contrast, a *purpose statement* answers the question "**why?**" That is, a local church purpose statement answers the question "Why does this particular church exist?"

## II. FINDING YOUR CHURCH'S PURPOSE

The Word of God is always the best place to start when we want to know something about the church. Your purpose statement should not contradict what the Bible affirms about the church. Read the following passages to see what each has to say about the purpose of the church. Write any principles you observe in the space provided. You have already looked at some of these verses in Lesson 4 when you were asking the question "what?" in search of a definition. This time, you are specifically asking the question "why?" in search of the purpose.

Mt 16:18

Mt 28:18-20

Ac 1:6-8

Ac 2:42-47

Eph. 3:10-11

Eph 4:11-16

Col 3:12-17

Heb 10:22-25

1Pe 2:1-5, 9-12

Other

## III. WRITING A LOCAL CHURCH PURPOSE STATEMENT

The process of writing a purpose statement is one of the most exciting activities in the life of a church. The purpose should be discussed at length, prayed about, accepted by leaders by faith and then announced and explained at church gatherings, and printed and published on any church literature (such as invitations) or stationery so that it is ingrained in the consciousness of the church participants.

To write your purpose statement, ask yourself the following questions:

- Why should the church you are called to plant exist?
- What will be its unique and special place in the work of God's Kingdom?
- As God's representatives in your target location, what are you there to do?

*Use the space below to list 10 reasons why people should attend and participate in this new church. Be as specific as you can.*

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The purpose statement should agree with the biblical purpose of the Church in general, but take into account the cultural context of the particular target people. It should be stated uniquely for your church plant. Many purpose statements specify the ministry target. The target might be a geographic region, a cultural people group, or best of all, a combination of both.

Here are a few fictional examples of church purpose statements.

- Good News Church exists to worship the Lord, edify believers and proclaim the Gospel to the lost in Smithville.
- Gospel Fellowship Church exists to proclaim the Gospel in Grant city, Brown County, our nation and the world.
- Resurrection Church exists to minister to the families in the city of Riverbend.
- Faith Church exists to make university age people complete followers of Jesus Christ.

Which of the above purpose statements do you find most helpful and why?

Combining what you have gleaned from Scripture with what you have identified as unique to your church plant, you are now about ready to write a purpose statement. Remember, a purpose statement should include five things:

1. It should be as clear and concise as possible.
2. People should deeply desire the ideals of the statement.

3. It should inspire enthusiasm.
4. It should be followed faithfully.
5. It should be reviewed and adjusted periodically.

In the space below, take time now to write out a statement of purpose for your church. It should answer the simple question, "Why Does This Church Exist?"

## QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION, REVIEW AND APPLICATION

- Is your definition of the church, and church purpose statement based on your personal experience in church, or on Scripture?
- Is your purpose statement compatible with the biblical purposes of the church discussed in Lesson 2? If not, what is missing?
- Why is a written church purpose statement important?
- How is your church going to be different from other churches?

## ACTION PLAN

Repeat this process of working out and writing a church purpose statement with the leaders of your church plant. These may be recently saved, emerging leaders, or others with whom you are cooperating to plant a church. If this is a daughter church, these may be from the mother church; the leaders who are most engaged in the process of birthing new daughter churches.

## SOURCES

Jenson, Ron, and Jim Stevens. *Dynamics of Church Growth*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1981.



THE CHURCH

8

LESSON

# Philosophy of Church Planting Ministry

## HOW CAN A CHURCH MINISTER TO THE LOST WORLD?

### Lesson Purpose

This lesson explains what a philosophy of church planting ministry is, and why it is important. It is intended to challenge the trainee to think through relevant issues pertaining to the "how" of a church-planting ministry.

### Main Points

- A philosophy of church planting ministry is built on the biblical definition and nature of the Church, rather than on human traditions.
- A context-specific philosophy of church planting ministry increases the effectiveness of the church planter and his team.

### Desired Outcomes

When the content of this lesson has been mastered, each participant should:

- Be aware of the vital need for a philosophy of church planting ministry and consequences of not having one.
- Know the essential components and priorities for an effective philosophy of church-planting ministry.
- Develop a philosophy of ministry statement.

### Appendix

8A Worksheet: Developing A Philosophy of Church-Planting Ministry

### Suggestions to Trainers

This lesson will draw upon local church purpose statements drafted in Church Lesson 7. Trainees should be instructed to read this lesson before the class session. At the outset, be sure to explain to trainees that we are here discussing very practical matters of strategy, foundations, principles and outlook. The title "philosophy" should not lead them to doubt its importance, even though this word is used in the secular world to lead people off to other structures of thought that are not based on God and His word. Our church planting task must be rooted in theories and concepts (i.e. philosophies) that are consistent with Jesus Christ, the Lord of the Church. During the lesson time, this material should be covered very quickly in order to spend most of the class time as a workshop using the Worksheet in Appendix 8A.

## I. WHAT IS A PHILOSOPHY OF CHURCH PLANTING MINISTRY?

A philosophy of ministry can be used in a general sense for any kind of ministry. It can also be used with a more narrow focus on a particular kind of ministry. This lesson will specifically emphasize a *philosophy of church planting ministry*. The principles, however, can be used by any church, ministry, or Christian leader.

### A. Philosophy of Ministry

In general, a philosophy of ministry is a statement or understanding that helps to answer the question "HOW will we do our ministry?" It is a practical guideline that helps us evaluate whether

we are doing the *right things* in the *right way*. A philosophy of ministry takes our values into account, and therefore it will be different for every person or group.

It is also important to distinguish a *philosophy of ministry* from a "*deceptive philosophy*." In Colossians 2:8, Paul warns us to avoid "hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition and the basic principles of this world rather than on Christ." This verse clearly describes how our philosophy can be:

- Philosophy based on human tradition—avoid
- Philosophy based on Christ—embrace

It is often unnoticed that this verse does not condemn the *idea of a philosophy*, but rather contrasts the two sources of philosophy. This wrong understanding has led many believers to react negatively to the concept of a philosophy of ministry. Sadly, when they choose not to *think about* their philosophy of ministry, they end up *blindly clinging to their current philosophy*, which is usually based on their traditions. As a result, they become guilty of doing exactly the thing that Paul was preaching against. The purpose of this lesson is to think through "how we do things" so that we can confidently say they are based on Christ and his Word rather than our human traditions.

When we choose not to *think about* our philosophy of ministry, we end up *blindly clinging to our current philosophy*, which is usually based on our traditions.

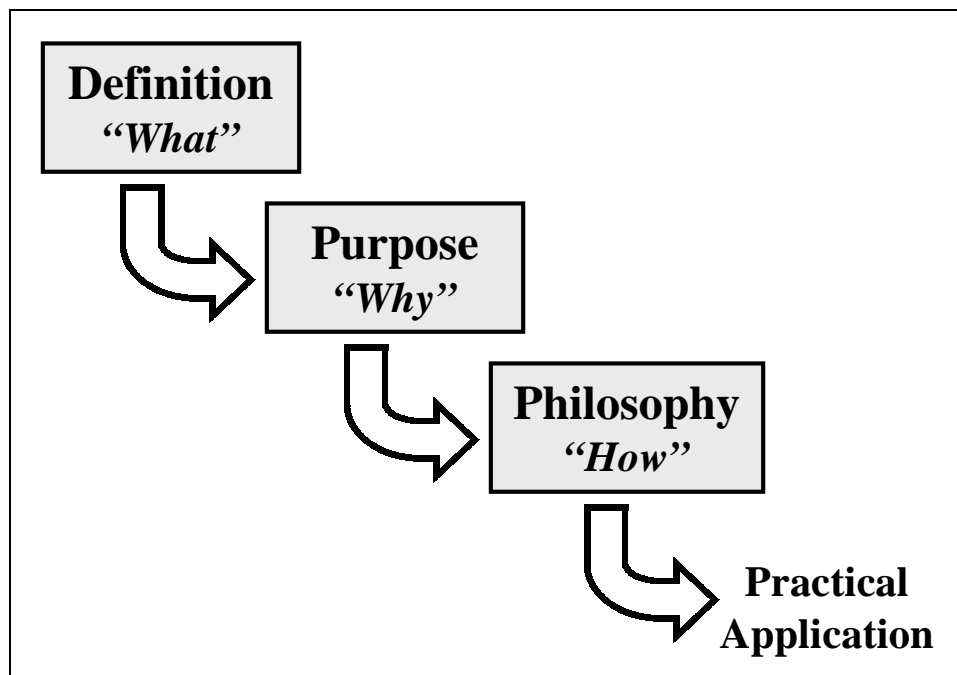
## B. A Philosophy of Church Planting Ministry

Previous lessons have already looked at the definition of the Church and its purpose statement. These three build upon each other in the following manner:

- Definition – **What** the Church is.
- Purpose – **Why** the church exists.
- Philosophy Strategy – **How** the church ministers.

In this lesson, the question is specifically "How should the church planter minister?" Each trainee will have opportunity to think through this important question as he or she completes the worksheet in Appendix 8A.

Figure 8.1 The Logical Progression



## II. THE NEED FOR A PHILOSOPHY OF CHURCH PLANTING MINISTRY

There are a number of reasons why each church planter should have a philosophy of ministry that is formulated specifically for his or her ministry situation. These reasons include both the biblical teaching and also the practical outworking of the philosophy.

### A. The Bible Teaches the Need for Thoughtful Planning

The term "philosophy of ministry" is not found in the Scriptures, but the concept of thoughtful planning, in reliance on God, is found there.

- Proverbs 14:15: "A simple man believes anything, but a prudent man gives thought to his steps."
- Proverbs 15:22: "Plans fail for lack of counsel, but with many advisers they succeed."

#### 1. *The Example of Jesus Christ*

Jesus' life and ministry reflect that He had a very definite purpose and a definite way by which to reach those goals. We see that Jesus always had the end result in mind. He didn't let anything distract Him from His purpose. Consider the following texts:

- Matthew 16:21-23: Jesus confidently directed His steps towards the cross.
- Mark 1:45: We see that Jesus had to refrain from doing some good things and from preaching to more people, in order to stay focused on His mission.
- John 6:5: Jesus planned in advance the miracle that He was about to perform, even though He had not revealed it to His disciples.

#### 2. *The Example of Paul*

The Apostle Paul also planned what and how he would minister according to his Christian principles and beliefs. He recognized that God could, and often did, change his plans. However, Paul obviously did not think this should prevent him from thoughtfully planning how he would do his ministry. A few examples of Paul's planning are found in:

- Romans 15:20: Paul decided that his strategy would be to preach Christ in those places where He was not yet known.
- 1 Corinthians 2:1-2: Paul chose to limit the content of his preaching to the simple facts of the cross of Christ.
- 1 Corinthians 9:12: Paul decided not to receive support so that there would be no question as to his motives for preaching.
- 1 Corinthians 9:20: Paul chose to adapt to the cultural practices of those he wanted to reach.
- Acts 16:3: Paul circumcised Timothy in order not to be offensive to the Jews.

### B. A Philosophy of Church Planting Ministry is Practical

A philosophy of ministry helps us to focus on the "good works that God has prepared for us to do" (Eph 2:10). It can guide us and help us to make decisions in difficult situations when two paths or choices seem right. It is like a measuring rod to check what does or does not fit in our ministry.

It is a fact that everyone who is involved in ministry have a philosophy of ministry. It may not be written down. They might not be able to state it clearly. They may not even be aware that it exists—but it does. This is because *we all have an understanding of how to minister!* And that constitutes a philosophy of ministry. Therefore, it is not possible to not have a philosophy of ministry. There are only two available options. We can:

- Carefully examine our philosophy to make sure it is based on Scripture.

Everyone who is involved in ministry already has a philosophy of ministry—whether or not they are aware of it.

- Ignore it and risk propagating human traditions instead of truth.

Clearly, the first approach is the best one. This lesson and the worksheet in the following appendix are designed to help you articulate your philosophy of church planting, and to critically examine whether it is the most effective one.

### **C. A Clear Philosophy of Church Planting Ministry Focuses Our Actions**

The definition of the Church and the purpose of the Church remain theoretical until we allow them to shape our philosophy of church planting ministry. At that point we move from theory to the very, very practical issues of "*How do I plant the church?*" The philosophy of church planting ministry statement that you will write will shape your thinking about the specific steps and priorities that you will have as you develop the new church. It will keep you from the following errors:

- Spending time on unproductive activities or programs.
- Overlooking vital activities or components that the growing church needs.

### **D. A Church Planting Philosophy of Ministry Should Be Specific**

Each church planter, church planting team, or church should have its OWN philosophy of church planting ministry. God has given each believer different spiritual gifts. Also, each person is physically, spiritually, and emotionally unique. As a result, the method that one person uses effectively in ministry may not be appropriate for another. Similarly, the people to whom we minister are also unique. Furthermore, every town or target area has a different history and culture. Therefore a philosophy of church planting ministry should be specific to each of these areas.

#### **1. *The Church Planter***

The philosophy of church planting ministry should begin with an understanding of both the strengths and weaknesses of the church planter. It should define *how* he or she can best utilize his or her strengths, and minimize weaknesses. It should take into account such things as family, work, or personal responsibilities. For instance, a church planter who is a poor speaker might develop a philosophy of church planting ministry that would stress individual relationships and friendship evangelism. Family needs might allow or rule out actually living in the target location. In every case the philosophy should be workable and effective for the person who will implement it.

#### **2. *The Church Planting Team***

Teams are certainly the best way to plant new churches. In some cases a team is simply not available, but whenever possible, teams should be used. It is very rare to find a person who is so well-balanced and capable that he can accomplish more than a team. The mix of people on a good team multiplies the number of spiritual gifts and abilities, as well as the experience and energy that can be put into the planting of the new church.

For this variety of gifts, abilities, and personalities to reach its potential, there must be a workable plan to coordinate the team members and to guide their activities. A well thought out philosophy of church planting ministry will take the strengths and weaknesses of each member into account and maximize their productivity. Since every combination of team members is different, the philosophy must be created to fit each team.

A well thought out philosophy of church planting ministry will take the strengths and weaknesses of each member into account and maximize their productivity.

#### **3. *The New Church***

Every new church varies greatly according to the culture, age, social level, education, experience, language, and even personal preferences of its members. It is impossible to effectively use the same plan in all situations. An appropriate philosophy of church planting ministry will examine the target area and people to determine how to *most effectively* reach them. It will also determine which *forms* would be most appropriate for the spiritual growth of that particular group.

### III. CONTENTS OF AN EFFECTIVE PHILOSOPHY OF CHURCH-PLANTING MINISTRY

While every philosophy of church planting ministry will be unique, there are some common building blocks that should be present in each. Each of these requires thought and preparation, but will make the finished product much more helpful and effective.

#### A. Builds on Definition and Purpose

As shown in Figure 8.1, the church planting philosophy builds on the definition of the church and the purpose of the church that you have developed earlier. Once you understand **what** the church is, and **why** the new church you will plant should exist, the next step is to decide **how** you can effectively accomplish that task.

The important concept here is that the philosophy of church-planting ministry *must be based on the biblical definition and purpose of the Church*, rather than simply restating how we have done things in the past. Building on human traditions, no matter how well meaning, is *never* an acceptable substitute for making the effort to study the Word and follow its precepts.

The philosophy of church planting ministry *must be based on the biblical definition and purpose of the Church*, rather than simply restating how we have done things in the past.

#### B. Is Context Specific

An appropriate philosophy will be based on the specific context in which it will be used. This demands that we do the necessary research into the target area. Other sections of this material describe how to compile and analyze this research. This initial effort in research and planning can greatly reduce wasted time and effort later by guiding us in the right direction and helping us choose the right methods and approaches.

#### C. Is People-Centered

Buildings, equipment, transportation, finances, and other practical matters should be considered in the philosophy of church planting ministry. However, they should never *dominate* the process! It must always, always be remembered that people are the most important focus and that their salvation and spiritual growth is the object of our efforts. A good philosophy of church planting ministry will make sure that we meet the needs of the true *church—the people*—rather than focus on secondary things.

#### D. Is Useful as an Evaluation Tool

A philosophy of church planting ministry, correctly designed, will be very practical and useful. It will help keep us doing the most important things at the right time, and in the right way. We should see more fruit from our effort, since we are making better decisions about each step of the ministry. This is why we spend the time to prepare the statement.

To realize the maximum positive results, we need to be careful to make the philosophy simple, clear, and understandable. The entire church planting team should understand it and agree with it. It should state the consensus as to *how, exactly, we are going to plant this new church*.

### IV. MAKING YOUR OWN PHILOSOPHY OF CHURCH PLANTING MINISTRY

Appendix 8A is a worksheet to help you through the process of writing a philosophy of church planting ministry. Most of the class time should be spent on this process. If you have a church planting team, you should repeat this process with them to arrive at a philosophy on which you can all agree and wholeheartedly work together.

## V. SAMPLE PHILOSOPHY OF MINISTRY

Figure 8.2 following is a sample philosophy of ministry of one church. It is not specific to a new church plant, and therefore your statement will be somewhat different. It can, however, serve as a guide for you as you write your own.

As you read through this sample, note the emphasis on the people, their worship, and their spiritual growth. What are some of the other ways in which this statement is a good philosophy? What are areas that might need improvement, according to the principles that we have just studied?

### Figure 8.2 Sample Local Church Mission Statement

*Note to translator: If possible, please substitute examples of mission statements from churches in your own country context, rather than the using the sample statements that are given here.*

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>SAMPLE MISSION STATEMENT</b></p> <p><i>Smithville Community Church exists to:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. <b>EXALT God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit through</b><ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>a. Praise, prayer, worship and celebration of God's glory, holiness, truth, beauty and love.</li><li>b. Communion with Jesus Christ as the loving, powerful Savior, Lord and King.</li><li>c. Oneness and praise created by the presence of the Holy Spirit and expressed corporately through the Spirit's fruit and gifts.</li></ol></li><li>2. <b>ESTABLISH a caring community of believers through</b><ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>a. Encouraging an environment of love, acceptance and forgiveness.</li><li>b. The development of warm, caring and supportive relationships.</li><li>c. Service and sacrifice to meet each other's needs.</li></ol></li><li>3. <b>EQUIP believers for effective ministry through</b><ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>a. Preaching and teaching that faithfully expounds the Word of God while relating to the issues of the day and the need of the people.</li><li>b. Teaching, discovery, recognition, development and use of the gifts of the Spirit by each believer.</li><li>c. Ministry training and equipping believers to know Christ's will, to experience Christ's power and to do Christ's works.</li></ol></li><li>4. <b>EXTEND the Good News of Christ to the world through</b><ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>a. Outreach into the surrounding community that is imaginative, sensitive and compassionate using creative forms of evangelism and communication, proclaiming that people should repent, confess Christ, put their trust in God through Him, accept Him as Savior and serve Him as their King in the fellowship of His Church.</li><li>b. Concern for the whole person by ministering to emotional, physical, social and spiritual needs and bringing them to wholeness within our community.</li><li>c. Commitment to church planting and the revitalizing of the church throughout the world.</li></ol></li></ol>
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## QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW

- How does a philosophy of ministry help church planters?
- How is a philosophy of ministry biblical?
- What does a philosophy of ministry include?

## ACTION PLAN

Complete Appendix 8A, "Developing a Philosophy of Church Planting Ministry".

## SOURCES

- DeWitt, Larry. *Unpublished Notes from CPR2000*, Calvary Community Church, 1985.
- Fuller, Charles E. *How To Plant A Church; Advanced Seminar*. Church Growth Institute. 1986.
- Logan, Robert. *Beyond Church Growth*. Grand Rapids, MI: Revell, 1989.
- Martin, Robert W. *Notes on a Philosophy of Ministry*. Camino Real Community Church. 1993.
- Morris, Linus J. *The High Impact Church*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Christian Associates International, 1998.

THE CHURCH  
APPENDIX

8A

# Developing a Philosophy of Church Planting Ministry

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## INTRODUCTION

*In order to develop a clear philosophy of church planting ministry, you need to consider the following:*

- You should have a clear understanding of what God has called The Church to be and do (The Purpose Statement) and what God is calling your new church to be and do. What does God want you to accomplish over the next 3-5 years as a new church?
- You should have knowledge of your target audience. Who are the people you are seeking to reach?
- What are some of the possible structures you could use to establish your new church (worship services, cell groups, Bible school, outreach prayer triplets, etc.)
- What are the gifts, strengths, and weaknesses of yourself and of your team?

## I. QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER FOR DEVELOPING A PHILOSOPHY OF MINISTRY

*Answer the following questions with others on your church-planting team.*

**A. What three words would you like to describe the new church you are planting?**

**B. Who makes up the community you are seeking to reach? What kinds of people will become part of your church?**

**C. What will make this church unique?**

**D. What could be the most attractive things about your church?**



**E. What is it about your church that would appeal to the people in the town/village you are seeking to reach?**

**F. To whom will your church have the greatest appeal?**

**G. To whom would you like your church to appeal?**

**H. What programs and activities could be successful for the church? How will you measure this success?**

## **II. UNIQUE DISTINCTIVES ABOUT YOUR CHURCH**

What is unique or distinctive about how your church does what it does (will do) in the following areas—worship, teaching of the Scriptures, evangelism, fellowship, administration, youth and children's work, community relations, social services, missions, doctrine, finances, resources, buildings, other.

## **III. STYLE OF MINISTRY**

In one or two paragraphs, describe the style of ministry you envision for your church. What will be your unique church "personality?"

#### IV. VALUES

What are the guiding **values** of your new church? What convictions will guide your ministry efforts in the coming months and years? List at least 10 values now.

#### V. STATE YOUR PHILOSOPHY OF MINISTRY

In two paragraphs, try to write out a statement of your philosophy of ministry that includes components from this worksheet. Can you come up with a slogan that captures your philosophy of ministry in just a few words?

*My Philosophy of Church Planting Ministry:*

*The Slogan of My Church:*

#### VI. DISCUSS AND COMPARE YOUR STATEMENT WITH OTHERS

Remembering that no two situations are alike, and therefore no two philosophies will be alike, discuss and compare your statement with those of other trainees. Then discuss it with church leaders and members of your church planting team. Review this statement often, and use it during the church planting process to evaluate whether or not you are doing the right things in the right way.

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# SPIRITUAL CHARACTER

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SPIRITUAL  
CHARACTER

6

LESSON

# Living Like Sons Instead Of Orphans

## GALATIANS 4:1-7

### ☛ Lesson Purpose

The purpose of this lesson is to help the church planter become more sincere in his or her relationship with God, as he understands the truth and implications of his adoption by God.

### ☛ Main Points

- Life as a spiritual orphan leads to spiritual insecurity and self-reliance.
- Life as a spiritual child of God leads to a walk with God based on gratitude and faith.

### ☛ Desired Outcomes

When the content of this lesson has been mastered, participants should:

- Understand that they have been adopted by God and have become beloved sons and daughters.
- Understand how they can fall back into an orphan mentality, which paralyzes life and ministry.
- Become more confident of God's love as sons and daughters, being able to deal with failures, insecurities, and fears on the basis of their relationship with God, not on the basis of performance.
- Boldly evangelize and carry out the church planting task not as those who are alone, but as beloved sons and daughters who are in partnership with their heavenly Father.

### ☛ Suggestions to Trainers

Give the trainees the "tongue assignment" on the first day (found at the end of this lesson), then check to see how well they have fulfilled it after a few days. This assignment is simply to help us become more honest about the power of sin within us and our true need for grace and power.

Please note: the term 'son' is not intended to exclude women. 'Son' is used because Paul uses the term in his letter to the Galatians. Daughters are also children of God.

It would be helpful to share your own experiences related to this material. Be vulnerable!

## INTRODUCTION

The Word of God teaches us that we all have a Creator who wants to be a loving Father to us (Mt 6:26, 32). Because of our tendency to rebel, we have left Him to live our lives the way we want. This decision to turn away from God greatly impacts our thinking and our behavior. In many ways, it causes us to think and act like orphans.

In this lesson, we will consider together how we think and act like orphans, even as Christians. We will look at Galatians 4:1-7, which describes the kind of relationship that every Christian enters into with God. And finally, we will learn how to live more like sons/daughters who belong to the heavenly Father and are eternally loved by Him.

## I. LIFE AS AN ORPHAN

If you have ever visited an orphanage and have spent time getting to know these special kids, you may have noticed some patterns of thinking and behavior that are quite common among them. Here are a few.

### **A. Orphans are full of fear and great insecurity**

The neglect, and in some cases abandonment, by the parent leaves the orphan with a deep uncertainty about life and what possibly could happen next. For most of us, the unforeseen future isn't anything we worry about (too much), but with a child where the unthinkable has already happened (mom and dad aren't there for him), the future looks pretty scary.

### **B. Orphans live with an abnormal measure of self-concern**

Each orphan compares what he/she has against what the other children possess. For this reason the 'home mother' states that whenever a gift is given to one child, it ought to be given to every child. Even then, the children prefer certain colors, and terrible jealousy breaks out when one child receives a "special color."

### **C. Orphans carry a deep sense of aloneness**

Orphaned children have the sense that because their mom and dad have given them up (or have been taken away), that they really don't belong to anyone. With the biological "right" stripped away, there is no one "connected" to them and it is difficult for these orphans to believe that someone truly cares for them.

## **II. CHRISTIANS WHO THINK AND ACT LIKE ORPHANS**

Now let's first consider how we think and act like orphans ourselves. Orphans, as we have said, feel alone in the world. They are also full of fear and insecurity. Without a father or mother to care for them, they are full of concern for their own needs. They feel that they have to take care of themselves. *Does this sound anything like your own life?*

Perhaps we feel this the most when life seems to be falling apart or something goes wrong. How do we respond to our difficulties? What do we think? Don't we become anxious and panic? Don't we sometimes think that things go wrong because God with His many concerns has forgotten about us? We begin to worry or we become discouraged and give up. Many times, feeling that we are greatly misunderstood, we blame someone else for our problems. We consider ourselves to be the "victims." At other times, we get frustrated and take matters into our own hands by setting up strict controls. With these controls, we strive to stop the world from falling apart any further. In all these responses, we show our pride or lack of faith in what God has revealed about Himself and His relationship with us. We become spiritual orphans.

### **Example**

A woman had become a Christian, but was unsure of God's love for her. One reason for this was because of an incident in her childhood with her own father. When she was very small, her sister and she were hanging up the wash outside. She could not reach the wash-line, so she decided to hang her dad's white shirt over the handles of a wheelbarrow, which were very rusty. Of course, when the shirt dried, it had become stained by these rusty handles. The shirt was ruined. When her father found out, he became unreasonably angry with her.

This child had done nothing wrong in her mind. She hung the shirt with the best of intentions, not knowing the consequences of hanging it on a rusty bar. Many fathers would have forgiven a child for such a thing or at least have scolded the child very mildly. Yet this father scolded her as if she had deliberately disobeyed, or rebelled against him. She grew up thinking that her father never loved her.

This is how we often view God. We think he is angry with us, that He is distant, that He is just waiting to punish us. We feel like we are never truly accepted and loved by Him. Our view of God is one of a judicious, unconcerned Judge. Our relationship with Him seems to be tenuous and uncertain, based upon how well we perform.

But this is not how our relationship with God is described in Galatians 4. We will not stop thinking and acting like orphans until we believe God's description of our relationship with Him. We need to understand the basis of this relationship, and the implications of our sonship. As we turn to Galatians 4, let's consider this analogy of our relationship with God (Read Gal 4:1-7).

### III. OUR SONSHIP WITH GOD

#### A. Analogy of a "full grown" son

The Apostle Paul confronts the error into which the Galatian Christians had fallen. As we look at the text, we see the Galatians had begun to forget how they entered into a right relationship with God, how they were to continue in this relationship, and how they would receive the promises of God. They had gone back to thinking that they had received salvation and acceptance by God, at least in part, because of their obedience to the law of God. Paul teaches them once again, that it is by faith alone in the Gospel that they have been justified before God and have received the Holy Spirit. On the basis of faith in the promises made by God through Christ, they see His present blessing and work in their lives. He concludes at the end of chapter three that the Law was given by God to reveal our true sinfulness and to lead us to Christ. After we have believed the Gospel and are in Christ, we are no longer under this law. We now are sons of God.

Paul then, in chapter four explains in fuller detail how we have been adopted by God and what our sonship truly means. He uses the following common practice of his day to give us a picture of this relationship that we now have with God:

When the son was young, though he was certainly the heir to his father's possessions, he remained under guardians and stewards, who were responsible for the upbringing and affairs of the child. During this time, the son had no rights to do business or make decisions that would affect the father's estate. In a sense, he was no different from a slave. At a certain time which was determined by each father, this restriction was taken away, and the estate was handed over to the son to govern as he saw fit. At this time, the heir became a full-grown son of "privilege." This is how we are described in our relationship with God. We are full-grown, privileged sons. Now, what does this mean for us?

#### B. The meaning of this analogy

As the Apostle Paul explains, before we are in Christ, we are held in bondage by the elementary principles of the world. For the Jew, the Law of Moses holds him in bondage and condemns him, preventing the promises of God from being received. The Gentiles also experienced condemnation from their conscience (Ro 2:14-15) out of which the moral and religious norms are formed. Whatever principles we first live under, these principles accuse us of our shortcomings and our unworthiness to be loved by God. We are held in bondage by them and sense our condemnation.

But in Christ, we are redeemed; the penalty of our sin is completely forgiven. We are released from this bondage of condemnation (Ro 8:1). Therefore, we are not to go on putting ourselves under this bondage. We should believe that we have been set free, having been adopted by God as privileged sons; receiving all the promises made to those who have been redeemed by Jesus Christ. To assure us that this release has truly taken place, God has sent His Spirit to dwell within us, to call out to our spirit that the sentence of condemnation has been taken away. God is no longer a judge to us but is now our loving Father. Paul uses the word, "Abba" which in those days was the most endearing description of a father (Ro 8:15-17). Our modern day expression of "Daddy" or "Papa" captures the idea of this term that speaks of God's endearment to us. God's justice has been turned to mercy. He no longer condemns us, but has adopted us so that He may grant all His promises to us.

God is no longer a judge to us but is now our loving Father.
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We can live with boldness and confidence because of whom our Father is. No more insecurity, no reason to prove our worth. No more fear of cruel punishment. No more loneliness. We have a loving father who will not abandon us. He loves us!

#### IV. HOW WE FAIL TO UNDERSTAND OUR SONSHIP

Why is it that we, adopted sons and daughters, often find ourselves acting like orphans? Why do we feel all alone, full of fears, and self-concern? It is because we trivialize the Gospel of Jesus Christ and its relevance to our lives. The Gospel is the basis of our sonship. When we fail to recognize the Gospel, we fail to understand our relationship as children of God. We do this in several ways.

The Gospel is the basis of our sonship. When we fail to recognize the Gospel, we fail to understand our relationship as children of God.

##### A. Trivializing the Gospel through pride

The Gospel is good news but it is also a strong medicine that can be hard to take. It humbles us, reminding us that we are sinners who cannot save ourselves. Even as Christians, we often exalt ourselves above others. We even think we really don't need God's help. We live for our glory and for our own selfish purposes. We live to accomplish our own goals, to exalt ourselves. If some activity or person doesn't contribute to our agenda, then we don't want anything to do with it or him. Our independence forces Him to let us alone to struggle on our own. We become orphans because of our pride.

The fact is, we have a great problem when we put confidence in our own ability (in the "flesh" - Gal 3:3). When we are prideful, we try to establish our own righteousness instead of relying on the righteousness of Christ. One indicator of this is always thinking about how others will perceive our actions.

For example, we even do this in the area of loving our family. Imagine the man who thinks, "I can love my wife and children, how hard can it be?" As he puts confidence in his own ability, he does the things that he thinks will please his wife. One day, after he comes home with a bouquet of flowers for his wife, she shocks him and says, "Honey, I really don't feel like you love me. I know that we are having some friends over for dinner tonight. Whenever we have someone over, you buy me flowers." The ulterior (self-exalting) motive to be seen as a loving husband before others was hidden in the heart of this man, so that he didn't even notice what he was doing. If we took a closer look at the way that we love our wives/husbands, we would probably see how poorly we truly do love them.

We have been born anew by the Holy Spirit and we have been set free from the mastery of sin. The Spirit now dwells within us to help us to overcome sin. However, we are mistaken if we think this means that the flesh itself has somehow been cleaned up (Ro 7:17-18) and we will no longer fight the influence of its evil desires. **We must be extremely honest with God about our sin.** We still have a serious problem with our flesh, and we must become deeply broken over this. We need to grow in our dependence upon the Holy Spirit to help us overcome such a strong force of evil within us. The Spirit's power can be released only as we sense our need for His help, but pride will keep us from realizing this need.

##### B. Trivializing the Gospel through unbelief

Another way in which we trivialize the Gospel is that we stop believing God's promise of grace based solely upon the death of Jesus Christ on the cross. Out of love, many of us seek to serve God and honor Him. We fail, and we are devastated by our failure. Again, we must repent- this time for our sin of unbelief. We must keep believing the truth of the Gospel, which tells us that it is by grace, and no other reason, we have been made children of God.

We must become much more honest about our sin and stop trivializing the Gospel if we are to understand the true nature of God's love for us and the rich blessing of our sonship with Him. This is so important. Otherwise, we will go on feeling alone, thinking that life is all up to us. Our failures will continue to haunt us, as our guilt is turned into condemnation. Our service to God will become a slavish obligation, the weight of which we cannot bear. We will become ungrateful toward God and others, unmoved by the reality that Jesus Christ suffered and died for our sin in order to make us privileged sons.



## QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION, REVIEW AND APPLICATION

- How have you trivialized your sin?
- How have you trivialized the Gospel?
- In what ways do you act like a spiritual orphan?
- Does God condemn His children as he does those who don't know Him?
- Why has God given us the privilege of sonship?
- How does understanding sonship help us to be honest about our sin?

## ACTION PLAN

### ***The "tongue assignment":***

For the next two days, do not gossip, do not speak badly about someone else, do not complain, do not defend yourself when someone talks about a fault, and do not boast of your achievements. Speak only good of others, give thanks to God in all things, honestly admit when you are wrong, and only boast of your weaknesses.

The tongue assignment will help you see the powerful influence that sin still has in our lives and our ongoing need for the grace of God. After this assignment you will have a deeper gratitude that God has made you His son not on the basis of your obedience, but on the basis of Christ's redemption for you. This is a lifetime assignment, but consciously fulfill it in the next two days.



**SPIRITUAL  
CHARACTER**

**7**  
**LESSON**

# Learning To Be Sons

## ☞ Lesson Purpose

The purpose of this lesson is to move deeper into the applications of believers' sonship with God. Motivation for spiritual growth and ministry should come from a heart of love and gratitude toward God rather than fear and guilt.

## ☞ Main Points

- A heart weighed down can be set free
- A heart of pride can be changed into a heart in partnership with the Father
- A heart of self can learn to love others

## ☞ Desired Outcomes

When the content of this lesson has been mastered, each participants should:

- Understand the implications of adoption by God.
- Understand the practical, every day expressions of thinking like a son/daughter vs. an orphan.
- Live and serve with a greater conviction of God's presence and partnership.
- Live and serve with a new compassion for people, reflecting God's grace toward them.
- Serve the Lord with greater confidence, greater power, and greater love.

## ☞ Appendix

7A Orphans vs. Sons

## ☞ Suggestions to Trainers

As in the last lesson, the term "son" used commonly in this lesson is not intended to exclude women. The term "son" is used because Galatians uses the term. Daughters are also children of God.

## INTRODUCTION

The concept of adoption is foundational to how God now relates to us. How a believer understands this has daily impact upon his thinking, attitudes, actions and present relationship to God. This is an in-depth study of the ramifications and applications of adoption by God.

In order for a person to more significantly comprehend his adoption by God (which has made the believer a "son of privilege"), it is important to think through the common mindsets that are present in day-to-day thinking. How often do we function like orphans instead of like children of God? It is important that the Holy Spirit open our eyes to these matters.

There are three primary areas in which we can evaluate whether or not we are living like orphans or sons. Consider the following:

### I. A HEART WEIGHED DOWN VS. A HEART SET FREE

The first "measuring stick" is whether or not you typically have a heart that is weighed down and feeling defeated, or a heart that is set free. Obviously, there are different reasons why a person's heart may be

weighed down, but in this context, the heavy heart is caused by the weight of our guilt and a sense of unworthiness.

As we grow in the Christian life, we grow in the awareness of sin. King David said, "For I know my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me" (Ps 51:3). For a young Christian, it can be very devastating to feel the weight and reality of personal sin.

For example, when "Sergei" first turned to God and received forgiveness for his sins through Jesus Christ, he felt such incredible joy. He was like a man let out of prison, and his deepest desire was to please God in everything that he did. It didn't take long before he failed in something and became very disappointed. His sin so overwhelmed him that for many weeks, he was discouraged and even depressed. He struggled to believe that God still loved and accepted him. He wasn't able to settle this issue until he finally discovered the truth about God's relationship with him.

In Romans 8, God tells us what He thinks of His children, even when they fail. Six questions are asked: "What shall we say in response to this? If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare His own Son, but gave Him up for us all- how will He not also, along with Him, graciously give us all things? Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God Who justifies. Who is he that condemns?... Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?" (Ro 8:31-35).

Whenever someone asks six questions in a row, it is obvious he is not looking for an answer. It is the same case here in this passage. The answer is obvious: God is not looking for an answer from man, but is making a statement to him: "I love you, I don't condemn you, and nothing will separate you from My love."

This declaration became clear to Sergei when he finally saw the basis for God's love for him in verse 39. God says nothing "will be able to separate us from the love of God that is *in Christ Jesus our Lord*." That final phrase provides the basis of God's unchanging love. It is based in Christ Jesus the Lord. Not in the believer, but in Him because of what He did on our behalf. Sergei discovered that if God were to stop loving him, He would be denying what Jesus Christ, had accomplished on the cross. He would have to say that His Son's death was not enough! God could never say that, and therefore, God can never stop loving His children.

God can never  
stop loving His  
children.

When Sergei discovered this, he again became like a prisoner who had been set free. The burden of his failure was lifted, and he was given new freedom to acknowledge his sin and then to disown it, claiming Christ's blood and righteousness for his own. Previously, Sergei had repented of his sin, but did not continue to believe in the finished work of Christ on the cross. Ironically, he discovered that his pride kept him from doing this. It was hard for Sergei to admit to God that his need for Christ was just as great as it was on the first day he had believed. As he humbly admitted his need, joy again filled his heart. He had never felt so deeply and unconditionally loved.

God wants to set every believer's heart free with this kind of love. Love that is not deserved; love so unconditional, love so abundant, that people can't help but love Him back.

It is easy to feel unworthy and undeserving. However, God keeps showing love anyway. And if a person's heart is not set free by this love, then his faith in Christ's work on the cross is too small. In essence, he is trivializing the Gospel message. God said, "It was for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery" (Gal 5:1). Jesus said, "For my yoke is easy and my burden is light" (Mt 11:30). It is only as we build our lives on sonship with God that we can experience this freedom. If our lives are based on anything else, our hearts will be continually weighed down.

## II. A PROUD HEART VS. A HEART IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE FATHER

Anatoli was born in a strong Christian home. He repented of his sin and found salvation at a very young age. All his life, he had been able to maintain an excellent Christian testimony in spite of many who tried to discredit him. Anatoli's strong commitment to the Lord inspired him to become a missionary in Siberia where he planted three churches among Buddhists in the past few years. Many looked to Anatoli as a model Christian, and if Anatoli were honest, he would admit that he felt like one. At least he would like to

feel like one. Deep in his heart, Anatoli was proud of his strong commitment to the Lord and he assumed that God was proud of him for this as well.

If you, like Anatoli, think God blesses you because you are so devoted to Him, you think too highly of yourself. Anatoli did not have the sin of unbelief like Sergei, but he, too, was an orphan. An orphan thinks he alone can solve problems. What demonstrates this more than anything is a person's reliance upon himself as opposed to his reliance (by faith) in God. Relying on oneself eliminates God's partnership in ministry. He is forced out, and the person is truly alone, but not because God has abandoned him. He is an orphan *by choice*.

The fruit of a person's life can indicate his motivation for ministry. Self-reliance bears the fruit of fear, tight control over others, worry, sleeplessness, doubt, defeat and a complaining spirit. If a person feels he has to fix everything and make it work, this is what he will produce. He may try harder, but will end up frustrated because often he cannot solve his problems in his own strength. This can manifest itself in wasted time or neglect of other areas of ministry or family life. If a person's problems are constantly on his mind, it will take his attention away from truly caring for others. It can also lead to sleeplessness, constant complaining, and other problems.

In order to break this independence, God will often bring a challenge into a believer's life so that he seeks God's presence and partnership in his life and ministry. This is what Jesus did in the life of His disciples. For example, when Jesus fed the five thousand (Jn 6), it seems that He had a particular lesson to teach His disciples- specifically, Philip. Jesus asked Philip, "Where shall we buy bread, for these people to eat?" The text says that He asked him this in order "to test him" (Jn 6:6). It was obvious that no human resource could provide for such a multitude of people. He was testing Philip to see if he had learned Jesus' true power and identity, and if he had learned to rely upon his Lord.

As children of God, the "messes" of ministry shouldn't unravel us, if we believe that God is in control; and if we surrender our messes to God.

When you face challenges that test your relationship with God, your response will demonstrate your view of God. Are you full of fear or do you know God is a loving, trustworthy Father? Have you redoubled your efforts—perhaps even come down hard on someone else—in order to get control of a messy situation? (One pastor excommunicated most of his church because they were not falling in line with what he wanted them to do!)

If the concept of sonship is applied to the way we think and function in our daily lives, we ought to become people of prayer, continually entrusting our lives and ministry to the care of God, assured that He is in control. God's Word teaches that God has works already prepared for His children to accomplish (Eph 2:10). Through prayerful dependence, we come in step with what God wants to accomplish through us. So we ought to continually invite people to join us in prayer, and continually go to God in secret, that we might understand what God has already prepared for us.

A son has a strong confidence that God is His beloved Father who truly cares about his concerns. As children of God, the "messes" of ministry shouldn't unravel us, if we believe that God is in control; and if we surrender our messes to God.

### III. A SELFISH HEART VS. A HEART FREE TO LOVE OTHERS

Whether we think like orphans or sons also penetrates into other areas. It greatly affects our relationships with others. When we are preoccupied with our problems, when we are under a load of concern, when we feel we are alone in this world, we become self-centered.

Consider a young boy named Dennis, a Russian orphan. He is full of energy and loves to have fun. He is also full of mischief. Once when Christians visited Dennis and the other orphans over the New Year holiday, they brought a few games to play. There was one game that the kids liked in particular, so the visitors decided to let them keep it. When Dennis found out that the people were giving the game to the group, he grabbed the game and wouldn't let go of it. The other orphans also fought for it, and the visitors had to step in, take the game from Dennis, and give it to the housemother.

What had been freely given to Dennis and the rest of the children became something each one felt he had to personally guard so that he would not lose it. They could not share it with one another.

We become the same way when we think that our heavenly Father doesn't truly care for us. We act like He is not strong enough to protect what He has freely given to delight our hearts. Many times, our orphan minds blind us from seeing the divine blessings He has given to cheer our hearts along the way. Even when we see His blessings, these become idols in our lives, because we feel we must cling to them to keep them. This perhaps is the saddest consequence of all. We are not led to delight in the Giver of the gift or to delight in the way He truly loves us. Ironically, when our possessions become the objects of our love, we never really feel loved ourselves. Our idolatry acts as a thief, stealing the most precious experience of our life- being loved by the Almighty.

Has this happened in your life? Has your orphan mind-set left you feeling unloved? Or do you feel you must tightly hang onto what God has given you for fear of losing it. Are you able to freely give to others, because you believe that God has freely and abundantly given to you?

## **CONCLUSION**

As you can see, how we view God and His relationship with us greatly impacts our daily lives. Motivation for spiritual growth and ministry should come from a heart of love and humility characteristic of a son, rather than a heart of fear and guilt characteristic of an orphan. In what ways do you see you have been living like an orphan, instead of a son?

## **QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION, REVIEW AND APPLICATION**

- How does an orphan see God?
- How does a son see God?
- What are the real reasons we see God in the particular way we do?
- How do we know that God still loves us?

## **ACTION PLAN**

In Appendix 7A of your lesson you will find a copy of the "Orphans vs. Sons" list. Go through this list, and then pick the three areas that you struggle with the most. Think of an example for each of the three areas in which you have experienced this struggle. For each example how do you want God to change you? Then commit this in prayer to your heavenly Father.

**SPIRITUAL  
CHARACTER  
APPENDIX**

**7A**

# Orphans vs. Sons

Read the list below and pick the three areas that you struggle with the most. Think of an example for each of the three areas in which you have experienced this struggle. For each example how do you want God to change you? Then commit this in prayer to your heavenly Father.

<b>ORPHAN</b>		<b>SON</b>
LIVING BY "TRYING HARDER." JESUS OUR FLESH'S "HELPER" Jn 14:18 <i>"I will not leave you as orphans"</i>		LIVING BY FAITH. CHRIST IS OUR LIFE! Jn 15:4, Gal 2:20 Ro 8:15 <i>"He has given us a Spirit of Sonship"</i>
Feel alone; lack a vital daily intimacy with God; "a vacuum of self concern."	1.	Have a growing assurance that God is really <u>my</u> loving Heavenly Father (1Jn 4:16)
Full of anxiety over "felt needs;" friends, money, etc.; "I'm all alone and nobody cares."	2.	Trust the father and have a growing confidence in His loving care; freed from worry.
Live on success/fail basis; must "look good" at any cost; performance-oriented.	3.	Learning to live in daily self-conscious partnership with God; not fearful.
Feel condemned, guilty and unworthy before God and others.	4.	Feel loved, forgiven and totally accepted because Christ's merit really clothes me.
Have a "little faith," lots of fear, no ability to really trust God. "I've got to fix it."	5.	A <i>daily working trust</i> in God's sovereign plan for my life as a loving, wise and best plan.
Labor under a sense of unlimited obligation, trying hard to please, burnout.	6.	Prayer is the first resort; "I am going to ask my father first!" Daddy (Abba), Father!
Rebellious towards God and others; often spiritually cold and hard-hearted.	7.	Strength to be submissive; soft (broken and contrite) heart (Ps 51:17).
Defensive; can't listen; bristles at the charge of being self-righteous (virtually proving the charge).	8.	Open to criticism since I consciously stand in Christ's perfection, not my own; am able to examine my deeper motives.
Must always be right, safe, secure; unwilling to fail; defensive; unable to tolerate criticism; can only handle praise.	9.	Able to take risks—even fail. Since righteousness is in Christ, needs no record to boast in, protect or defend.
Self-confident but discouraged, defeated and lacking the Spirit's power.	10.	Christ-confident and encouraged because of the spirit working in me.
"I'll show 'em—just watch my smoke!" "Where others failed." (will power).	11.	"I can do everything through him who gives me strength" (Php 4:13).

<b><u>ORPHAN</u></b>		<b><u>SON</u></b>
LIVING BY "TRYING HARDER." JESUS OUR FLESH'S "HELPER" Jn 14:18 <i>"I will not leave you as orphans"</i>		LIVING BY FAITH. CHRIST IS OUR LIFE! Jn 15:4, Gal 2:20 Ro 8:15 <i>"He has given us a Spirit of Sonship"</i>
Self-effort; rely on gifts and abilities to get by in life and ministry.	12.	Trusting less in self and more in the Holy Spirit (with self-conscious daily reliance).
Complaining and thankless toward God and others; must tear others down; display a bitter, critical spirit.	13.	Rely on the Holy Spirit to guide the tongue for use in praise, edification, thanksgiving and encouragement (Eph 4:29).
An expert at pointing out what is wrong; always dissatisfied about something.	14.	Not blind to wrong, but choose instead to focus on what is good and lovely (Php 4:8).
Gossip (confess other people's sins); need to criticize others to feel secure; a competent analyst of other weaknesses; has the gift of "discernment."	15.	Able to freely confess faults to others and preferring to major on their strengths; don't always have to be right; finding that I am often wrong; eager to grow.
Always comparing self with others, leading either to pride or depression (depending on how bad or good others look).	16.	Stands confidently in Christ; real self-worth comes from Jesus' blood and righteousness, not man-made props (Php 3:9).
Powerless to defeat the flesh; no real heart victory over "pet sins," yet has lost sense of being a "big sinner."	17.	Resting in Christ, and seeing more and more victory over the flesh (Ro 8:1-9), yet seeing self as a "big sinner."
Relatively prayerless; prayer is a "last resort;" prays often in public, seldom in private	18.	Prayer is a vital part of the day, not confined to just a regular "quiet time;" Talking with the Father is a joy (1Th 5: 16-18).
The Bible's promises of spiritual power and joy mock self: "What has happened to all your joy?" (Gal 4:15)	19.	God's promises of power and joy are beginning to describe self (Ro 15:13).
Needs to boast; must constantly point out own accomplishments for fear that someone might overlook them (Gal 6:14).	20.	Finds that Jesus is more and more the subject of own conversation; boasts in the Lord and in own weaknesses (2Co 12: 9-10).
Unconsciously building "a record" of works that needs noticing and defending.	21.	Christ's righteousness is own "record," stands complete in Him (1Co 1:28ff).
Self-centered: "If they would only see things my way!" Deep need to be in control of situations and others.	22.	Becoming Christ-controlled; ministering in the power of the holy spirit, not in the strength of own "redeemed flesh."
Something other than Jesus can satisfy; "idols" in life (possession, position, passions) give sense of worthiness and justification.	23.	Christ is meat and drink; God truly satisfies soul. "...and earth has nothing I desire besides you" (Ps 73:25).
Little desire to share the Gospel(since own Christian life is so miserable) when sharing, tend to be motivated by a sense of obligation and duty, not love.	24.	Desire to see the lost come to know Jesus, shares the Gospel with others, <i>even when not under the outward pressure of a church program</i> . "...the love of Christ compels us" (2Co 5:14).



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# PRAYER

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PRAYER  
4  
LESSON

# Concert Of Prayer

## WORSHIP AND MEDITATION

### ☞ Lesson Purpose

The Purpose of this lesson is to worship the Lord together and to encourage each other in the Lord.

### ☞ Main Points

God convicts and directs us as we take time to worship Him and meditate on His Word.

### ☞ Desired Outcomes

This is not a lesson, but a workshop. People will have had an experience of strategic prayer and gain an idea of how to lead a concert of prayer.

### ☞ Suggestions to Trainers

This concert of prayer is NOT a time to lecture but to lead the trainees through a time of prayer. You will need to study Psalm 95 ahead of time and notice the divisions given in the lesson.

This prayer and worship time should provide an opportunity for each trainee to reflect on the content of the seminar and humbly seek God's direction as to how it should change his or her life and ministry.

## INTRODUCTION

The Psalms were written to inspire God's people to celebrate, worship and obey the Lord our God. They were not written just to be read. For this concert of prayer, follow the pattern given in **Psalm 95** as your outline for praise, worship, and prayer.

This psalm leads us through three steps, as shown in the graphic below:

<i>Psalm 95</i>	
<b>1. Sing to the Lord</b>	<b>vv. 1-5</b>
<b>2. Bow before the Lord</b>	<b>vv. 6-7</b>
<b>3. Listen to the Lord</b>	<b>vv. 8-11</b>

### I. CELEBRATE THE LORD (PSALM 95:1-5)

*Come Let Us Sing For Joy To The Lord*

- Sing joyous songs

*Shout Aloud to The Rock Of Our Salvation*

- Read together in a loud voice from a Psalm of deliverance: Psalm 18:1-3, 30-36

***Come Before The Lord With Thanksgiving***

- Have a time of testimony, especially thanking God for what He is doing in the prayer triplets and other areas of church planting

***Extol The Lord With Music And Song***

- Have another time of singing praises to the Lord
- Read together verses 3-5; thank Him for His sovereign rule over all the universe

**II. WORSHIP THE LORD (PSALM 95: 6-7)**

***Bow Down...Kneel Before the Lord Our Maker***

- Encourage trainees to pray in a spirit of humility. If they feel free to do so, kneel down.

***He Is Our God...We Are The People Of His Pasture***

- Acknowledge Him as your personal Shepherd. Praise Him for His care for you.

**III. HEAR HIS VOICE (PSALM 95: 8-11)**

***Do Not Harden Your Hearts...***

- Confess any known sin in your life. Read 1 John 1:9.
- Take time to listen to the Lord. Ask Him to show you if there are areas where you need to yield old forms, habits, or methods of church planting that no longer seem biblical as a result of the Scripture you have studied in this seminar. Wrestle with God about what He would have you keep and what He would have you change in your life and ministry.
- Read Hebrews 3:7-19. Verse 13 says to encourage one another daily. Divide into pairs. Pray prayers of encouragement for each other.

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# LEADERSHIP

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LEADERSHIP

1

LESSON

# Biblical Principles of Leadership

## Lesson Purpose

This lesson defines leadership and introduces five biblical teachings concerning leadership. When discussing leadership, it is essential that we begin with the absolute truth of Scripture, rather than with our own personal assumptions.

## Main Points

- Leadership is influence.
- All authority is from God.

## Desired Outcomes

When the content of this lesson has been mastered, each participant should:

- Know the one-word definition of "leadership."
- Know five basic biblical principles of leadership.

## Appendix

1A Leadership Case Studies

## Suggestions to Trainers

This lesson includes three in-class activities. Use your own judgment on the time spent on them. In addition, appendix 1A gives you an opportunity to consider the implications of the principles described in the lesson. If it is at all possible, this would be best done in class in small groups, or at least in a format that will encourage discussion

## INTRODUCTION

It is often said that one of the greatest needs of the church is a need for better-equipped leadership. The search for leaders, or the training of them, can be best accomplished once we have defined what leadership is. How do we understand leadership? "Leadership" is a term with many connotations. When we discuss leadership in the specific context of the Church, then its actual meaning may be even more difficult to understand. Most of us have certain assumptions about leadership, which come from our particular cultures, traditions or experiences. Principles of leadership also come from Scripture, which contains absolute truth. When we study the biblical principles of leadership, we realize that godly leadership is dramatically different from the leadership in the world. In this lesson, we will focus on what the Scripture teaches about leadership.

## I. THE DEFINITION OF LEADERSHIP

**ACTIVITY:** *Take a minute to define the term "leadership" in as few words as possible. Share your definition with others.*

Note the two definitions below:

*"Leadership is influence, the ability of one person to influence others" (Sanders, *Spiritual Leadership*. p. 31).*

*"Leadership is a dynamic process in which a man or woman with God-given capacity influences God's people toward His purposes for that group." (Clinton, *Making of a Leader*, p. 14; cf. p. 127).*

The key word in both definitions is "influence." A one-word definition for leadership may be that leadership is "influence." People gain influence (and thus leadership) in a variety of ways. Sometimes people have influence by virtue of their position. Others are influential because of their competence. Still others may have influence because of their personality. It may be difficult to determine what it is that gives people leadership, but somehow those who lead are able to do so because they have influence.

A one-word definition for leadership may be that leadership is "influence."

When we talk about leadership in these lessons, we are not talking about leadership as a formal position. Rather, we wish to emphasize leadership as a *function*, so that the person with the most influence in a group may be viewed as the real leader despite his or her position. This understanding can greatly change the perspective of those with leadership responsibilities. As a great Church leader recently said: *"When you understand that leadership is influence instead of position, that changes everything. You do not strive to be a leader; you strive to add value to people, and they'll let you be the leader"* (Maxwell, *The Potential Around You*. p. 25).

## II. PRINCIPLES OF BIBLICAL LEADERSHIP

Many of our ideas concerning human nature, motivation and leadership come from the world. The worldly way of dealing with people can be quite devious. The secular business world often assumes that "leaders can't trust their subordinates to do what they should do," and that "if you trust people too much, they will take advantage of you." Worldly leaders may further believe that people will do what you want them to only when motivated by reward or threatened by punishment. As a result of these presuppositions, worldly leaders often assume authority purely on the basis of either the position they hold, or by the power of personality.

**ACTIVITY:** *In groups, take several minutes to discuss how you have felt victimized by leaders who behaved according to the above ideas.*

Since we live in a depraved world where we see these ideas at work so often, they may make sense to us. But we are called to another approach concerning leadership. Note the biblical principles about leadership.

### A. Authority to Lead Comes from God

The centurion in Luke 7:1-10 was in charge of 100 Roman soldiers. Yet he described himself first of all, not as a leader of many, but as a "man under authority." It seems that he properly understood that though he was a leader, he was not free to lead in any way he chose. He answered to those over him.

God has established legitimate authority in a variety of institutions such as civil government (Ro 13:1-7, 1Pe 2:13-17), the family (Ex 20:12, Eph 5:22-23, 6:1-4) and the church (Heb 13:17). Just like the centurion, no human leader has complete authority. Rather, all authority comes from God. God alone is sovereign, so all those in leadership must always be in submission to Him. He works through those He places in leadership for His purpose (Pr 21:1). Jesus modeled this submission to His Father in His earthly ministry (Jn 8:28-29).

With this in mind, we can understand that the best leaders are good followers - followers of their Lord Jesus Christ. No one is free to lead in any way that he wishes. In fact, Christian leaders are not leaders by their own choice; rather, they are chosen or called by God (Jn 15:16). Great Christian leaders realize that they have a great responsibility to lead as God directs, and thus they strive to follow God as He leads. Instead of relying on their position, personality or personal power for authority, they look to God, the source of all authority.

The best leaders are good followers—followers of their Lord Jesus Christ.

### B. Humble Servanthood Should Characterize Christian Leaders

A Christian leader is first and foremost a servant. Servanthood should characterize all that a leader says and does. Perhaps nothing is more deadly to a Christian leader than the opposite of



servanthood—pride. Not only does pride create barriers between leaders and followers, but also it is one of those things that the Lord hates (Pr 6:16-17).

The Christian leader is not a "ruler" in the sense of a dictator. Instead he is a servant. The word "rule" is never used in the New Testament to describe relationships between Christians. Seeking a position of leadership for personal ego satisfaction or as a base for exercising personal authority is contrary to the biblical concept of servant-leadership (Php 2:1-8).

The Christian leader is not a "ruler" in the sense of a dictator. Instead he is a servant.

Jesus made it very clear to His followers that leadership should not be self-serving (Mt 20:20-28; Jn 13:1-16). Only once in Jesus' ministry did He specifically state that He was doing something as an example for His disciples, when He was humbly serving them by washing their feet (Jn 13:15). Though many worldly leaders use intimidation or a sense of superiority to get followers to submit, these things should never be characteristic of a church leader (Mt 20:25-28, 1Pe 5:1-7).

Some Christian leaders start out humbly, but after some success in ministry, they develop a subtle pride or sense of status. But the apostle Paul grew in humility over the course of his ministry. Notice that early in his ministry he describes himself as "the least of the apostles" (1Co 15:9). Later in his letter to the Ephesians he calls himself "the least of all saints" (Eph 3:8). And at the end of his life he describes himself as the "chief of all sinners" (1Ti 1:15).

### C. Christian Leadership Needs to be Developed through Careful Study and Exercise

We often wonder whether leaders are born or made. There can be no doubt that certain people are born with leadership ability, but Christian leaders are made. After all, who is born with the ability to do all of the tasks below, which might be expected of a Christian leader?

- Instruct the church in God's Word
- Help others to identify and use their spiritual gifts, talents and abilities
- Motivate others to good works
- Plan and organize the activities of God's people
- Encourage the weary
- Counsel the weak in faith

Most of these activities are supernatural and foreign to us. Christian leadership goes against our in-born sinful inclinations; therefore, it must be developed. Notice the table below which indicates many of the differences between worldly leadership and Christian leadership.

**Figure 1.1 Worldly vs. Christian Leadership**

Worldly Leadership	Christian Leadership
Self-confident	Confident in God
Understands man	Understands God and man
Makes his own decisions	Seeks to find God's will
Ambitious	Servant
Develops his own methods	Finds and follows God's methods
Enjoys commanding others	Delights in obeying God
Motivated by personal considerations	Motivated by love for God and man
Independent	God-dependent

Perhaps you know someone who is characterized as a "natural leader." Probably the qualities that have earned him that title are the ones in the left column of Figure 1.1. In the same way, one without these qualities would probably not be described as a "leader." In reality, both the "natural leader" and the "non-leader" probably need to work equally hard to become true "Christian leaders." The "natural leader" must learn to rely on God, instead of on himself. The "non-leader" must learn that he *can* rely on God, even if he himself is weak.

Both the "natural leader" and the "non-leader" need to work hard to become true "Christian leaders."

Leadership is also one of the spiritual gifts. Those who have this gift (and not all do) are instructed to exercise their gift diligently (Ro 12:8). The Holy Spirit may give this gift of leadership to "natural leaders" or "non-leaders." It does not depend on natural ability. Therefore, it is important for each believer to discover whether or not this is one of his or her gifts. This is best done through participation in serving others.

The gift of leadership might be compared to the gift of evangelism. Some believers have it, and some do not. However, all are expected to *serve* in evangelism and leadership as the occasion and need arises. Those with a gift of leadership will see more fruit from their labor, but each believer is responsible to apply the principles of biblical, Christian leadership in his life and ministry. This may be in the home, at work, in the church, in a new church plant, a small group, a cell group, or another situation. Because Christian leadership is a function (something we do) rather than a position, the Lord expects us to use it.

#### D. The Bible Describes a Diversity of Leadership Styles

A close examination of the Bible reveals that no two leaders are exactly alike. Leaders range from the apostolic type (Paul), characterized by the ability to motivate people to respond to God in new ways in new situations, to the pastoral type (Barnabas), characterized by nurture and management ability. Personalities and circumstances increase the diversity of leadership styles. Certainly Joshua responded differently to his leadership challenge than David did to his. Different styles are understandable because personalities and situations are always different.

Ephesians 4:11-12 describes several leadership roles that were present in the New Testament Church. Although very different from each other, each one functioned to "prepare God's people for works of service" or, in other words, to lead them into ministry.

**Figure 1.2 New Testament Leadership Functions**

<i>Calling</i>	<i>Concern</i>	<i>Function</i>
<i>Apostle</i>	Vision	Pioneer
<i>Prophet</i>	Sin	Preach
<i>Evangelist</i>	Salvation	Outreach
<i>Pastor</i>	Nurture	In-reach
<i>Teacher</i>	Truth	Instruct

The functions listed in Figure 1.2 are often needed in the church today. One leadership style is not necessarily better than another, but one may be more necessary than another given the needs of a group at a certain time. Throughout the duration of your ministry, you may have to assume various styles at different times because of specific needs.

**ACTIVITY:** Take several minutes to look at the "Church Planting Cycle" (manual 1, vision lesson 3). In small groups or as a class, discuss the styles of leadership that are necessary for each phase of the cycle.

### E. The Primary Function of Church Leadership is to Equip

Traditionally, the pastors and church leaders have been thought of as the ones who "do" the ministry—as the Old Testament priests ministered for the people. However, the clear teaching of the New Testament is that *every* believer is a priest, and we are all supposed to minister. Ephesians 4:11-12 shows that the primary responsibility of the pastor should be to envision and equip the believers so that *they* are able to do the ministry. His attitude should be: "better to put 10 men to work than to do the work of 10 men." In other words, church leaders need to be facilitators.

**Figure 1.3 Directive and Facilitative Leaders**

DIRECTIVE LEADER	FACILITATIVE LEADER
Work oriented: "Get the job done"	People oriented: "Get people involved"
Doer	Delegator
Goal - "To do the work of the ministry"	Goal - "To equip others to minister"
Practitioner	Equipper, Enabler, Trainer

The concept of facilitation may be illustrated by the saying of an ancient Chinese wise man named LaoTse: *"When the work of the best leader is done, its task accomplished, the people will say 'we have done it ourselves.'"*

## QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION, REVIEW AND APPLICATION

- What are the implications of defining leadership as "influence?" Who are the leaders in your church or ministry with this definition in mind?
- How do people become leaders in your culture?
- Why is it important that all leaders first be good followers?
- How does the understanding that your authority to lead comes from God change your perspective on your leadership?
- What chances are being taken when a new believer with natural leadership ability is given leadership in the church?
- Which of the five leadership styles shown in Figure 1.2 are most natural for you?
- In what ways are these biblical concepts of leadership contrary to worldly principles of leadership?

## ACTION PLAN

Discuss worksheet 1A, "Leadership Case Studies." For each of the case studies, note what biblical principles are or are not being applied. For each situation, how would you advise the leader if you were called upon to assist?

## SOURCES

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- Sanders, J. Oswald. *Spiritual Leadership*. Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1980.
- Maxwell, John. "The Potential Around You," *Leadership Journal*. Fall, 1996.



# Leadership Case Studies

## PRINCIPLES APPLIED

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**Worksheet:** *answer the questions related to the case studies below.*

1. Yuri has been leading a church plant project in Yekatarinburg. Misha and Marina have been members of the team for three months. Recently Misha and Marina began to feel a great deal of frustration with the ministry. They have some good ideas for evangelism but they do not feel the freedom to even state their ideas. Their leader, Yuri, seems unwilling to listen to their suggestions. Instead he tells them what they should do and how they should do it. As a result, Misha and Marina are thinking about leaving the ministry and starting out on their own. **How would you evaluate Yuri's leadership?**
2. Gennadi is a prominent university professor who found Christ when his neighbor Nic gave him a Bible to read. He began to attend church with Nic and was impressed with the adult Bible study that meets each Wednesday night. In the first few weeks, someone suggests that Gennadi, an excellent teacher, lead the study. Gennadi's leadership could bring many visitors to the group as he is very popular and of course a good teacher as well. **Should Gennadi lead the study group?**
3. Slava leads a team of three couples in a church plant in Rostov. Slava provides excellent sermons during worship each Sunday morning and he leads a mid-week cell group, which has grown to nearly 20 faithful members. Everyone loves Slava's ability to teach and preach the Word of God, as well as his ability to organize activities. However, Slava is beginning to feel exhausted from the workload. Slava asks fellow team member Anatoli to start a new cell group with several from Slava's group. But, there is little interest, which is very discouraging for Anatoli. **Evaluate how Slava handled the transfer of responsibility to Anatoli.**
4. The new church in the Smolensk region is growing at a rapid rate. Many attribute this growth to the excellent leadership that Victor and Luba have provided. They began the church after Victor returned from Moscow with a Seminary degree. Most of those who attend are new believers with no previous church background at all. Victor does most of the preaching and Luba organizes the Sunday school program. As they have grown, Victor has had his eye out for some new leaders to assist him in the church work. But no one else seems qualified to lead. He feels fortunate to have found three young men who could be trained for church leadership. Victor found scholarships for two of them to attend the seminary in Moscow. They leave in the fall to begin a 3-year program. **How would you evaluate this method of leadership development?**
5. Boris lives in a small town in southern Russia that has no evangelical church. Boris recently discovered several believers in his village who travel all different directions to attend church- some as far away as 30 km. Under Boris's leadership, the believers are organized into a new church. As the believers gather, they are all excited about a local church and everyone enthusiastically shares ideas about how the church should be organized based on their experience in their former churches. But Boris makes it clear that he will be the pastor and that the people should forget about any traditions or practices in the churches they came from, because he is in charge as the pastor of this new church. **What do you think will be the result of Boris' approach?**

6. Keril has planted three churches in various cities in western Russia. Keril is a natural church planter. He is very energetic and outgoing, having gifts as an evangelist. He plays the guitar and sings and can entertain an audience for hours. He loves to start things and then move on to something else. The churches he starts seem to resemble his personality. They are very exiting at first but soon fizzle out when something more exciting comes along. Keril contends that this is just his personality and that there is really nothing he can do to change. He knows that God uses him in spite of this. **How would you evaluate Keril's leadership?**
  
7. Zhenya has been working hard in his church plant for several years. The church is doing very well. It has grown to nearly 200 in the past three years. His wife and four children sometimes go for several days without seeing him because he leaves early in the morning and returns late at night. Zhenya does not like to live this way but his people are so needy. Many are sick and need to be visited, and the soup kitchen for the homeless demands constant attention. Zhenya knows that if he stops doing all that he is, the ministry will suffer, people will not get saved and the church will not grow any more. **Do you think Zhenya is a good leader? Why or why not?**



LEADERSHIP

LESSON 2

# Profile of a Leader

## Lesson Purpose

The purpose of this lesson is to help the trainee to understand his role as a leader in the specific context of church planting.

## Main Points

- There are eight characteristics of a Christian leader.
- 'Natural leaders' and 'non-leaders' can improve their leadership skills.

## Desired Outcomes

When the content of this lesson has been mastered, each participant should:

- Know the role of the leader in the church planting process.
- Know his/her personal strengths as a leader.
- Be committed to work on two specific areas where he/she intends to grow in leadership ability.

## Appendix

2A "The Leader"

## Suggestions to Trainers

Keep in mind that almost all of these concepts are expanded on in greater detail in later lessons.

## INTRODUCTION

There are different styles of leaders. However, no matter what style is most natural for the church planter, he should always be a facilitator. A facilitator is someone who enables others to use their gifts and abilities more effectively. Church leaders are responsible to *prepare God's people for works of service* (Eph 4:12), rather than do most of the ministry themselves. Although a church planter must be a "doer," it is even more important that he "causes things to be done."

Below is a list of several personal characteristics and skills that enable a church plant leader to see a church planted under his ministry.

### I. MAINTAIN CHRIST-LIKE CHARACTER

The church planter, first of all, must possess Christ-like character. Ministry flows from character. Consider the maxim: "private victory precedes public victory." Unless Christ has claim on your heart so that Christ-likeness is evident, how can you expect to see Christ work through you in your nation? If the church planter is not being changed by Christ, it is doubtful that others will be changed through him.

Christ-likeness springs from understanding God's love for us, and from our own need for him to work in our lives. Ministry must be a result of God's grace at work in our lives; no other motivation will be honored by God or will sustain commitment when times are tough. Awareness of God's grace in our lives is gained and sustained by meditating upon God's Word, believing his promises, prayer, and worship.

Through daily fellowship with Christ, focus on God's promises, and on the vision that He has given for your ministry. Acknowledge your dependency upon Him to accomplish His purpose in your life and ministry. Worship God for what he has done in your life already.

## II. WORK WELL WITH A TEAM

Many church-planting projects start out with a leadership team in place. Other times, a church planter starts out alone and must develop others who join his team as the project develops. Whatever your situation, always work toward developing teams, both leadership teams and ministry teams. Make it a normal pattern for your ministry and for the church in its development.

Teamwork was the normal pattern for ministry in the New Testament.

Effective church planters do not work alone. On the contrary, they stand with others, or others stand with them in the work that God has called them to do. Often working with others as a team can be just the crucible in which our true character is seen and developed. Beware of the leader who is not surrounded by a team. If one cannot work with a team, how can one lead a church? Teamwork is the normal pattern for ministry in the New Testament. The Holy Spirit set apart Paul and Barnabas as a missionary team (Ac 13:2). Although Paul and Barnabas went their separate ways later in ministry, they both formed new teams with whom they ministered (Ac 15:36-41). Teamwork was so important to Paul that even when he had an open door for ministry, he held off because he was alone (2Co 2:12-13).

A "team" may be defined as a group of people who have banded together to work toward a common objective. A good team has common values and philosophy of ministry. The giftedness of the various team members ought to be diverse while mutual respect, affirmation and loyalty should be evident through open and constructive communication on the team. It is the job of the leader to work with the team not as a boss or chief, but as a facilitator. His teammates are not his personal staff, but his co-workers. Building and working with a team can be extremely difficult and time intensive process, but you can be certain that its dividends are great.

## III. DEVELOP THE GIFTEDNESS AND ABILITIES OF OTHERS

The leader of a church plant multiplies himself through the identification and development of other workers. Many leaders try to build their ministries around themselves and their own accomplishments. But God calls us to disciple and train others (2Ti 2:2). It is always better to put 10 people to work than to do the work of 10 people.

It is always better to put 10 people to work than to do the work of 10 people.

One of the main tasks of the leader of a church plant must be to enable others to identify their spiritual gifts and to become effective in ministry. This involves training mature church workers as well as new converts to do the tasks of the ministry, and matching people with appropriate gifts to the ministry opportunities as they arise. This also means the leader is, first of all, a *trainer*. Even if he does not spend a lot of time training in the technical sense, his life models how to do ministry. People develop their gifts and abilities by just being around this person.

Part of the discipleship process of new believers is to help them identify and use their gifts. Involving them in ministry is a great way to do this. Consider taking a disciple on a visit to a sick person, or on an evangelistic opportunity. This is an effective way to train him or her for ministry.

## IV. KNOW HOW TO DELEGATE RESPONSIBILITY

A wise leader is happy to delegate when it is appropriate (Exodus 18). Delegation accomplishes more than working alone, by involving others in the ministry.

There are several reasons for delegation. The church planter may delegate responsibilities in areas of ministry where he is weak and others are gifted. In other situations, he may delegate so that others will feel a sense of ownership for the ministry. People tend to be more committed to things they themselves participate in.



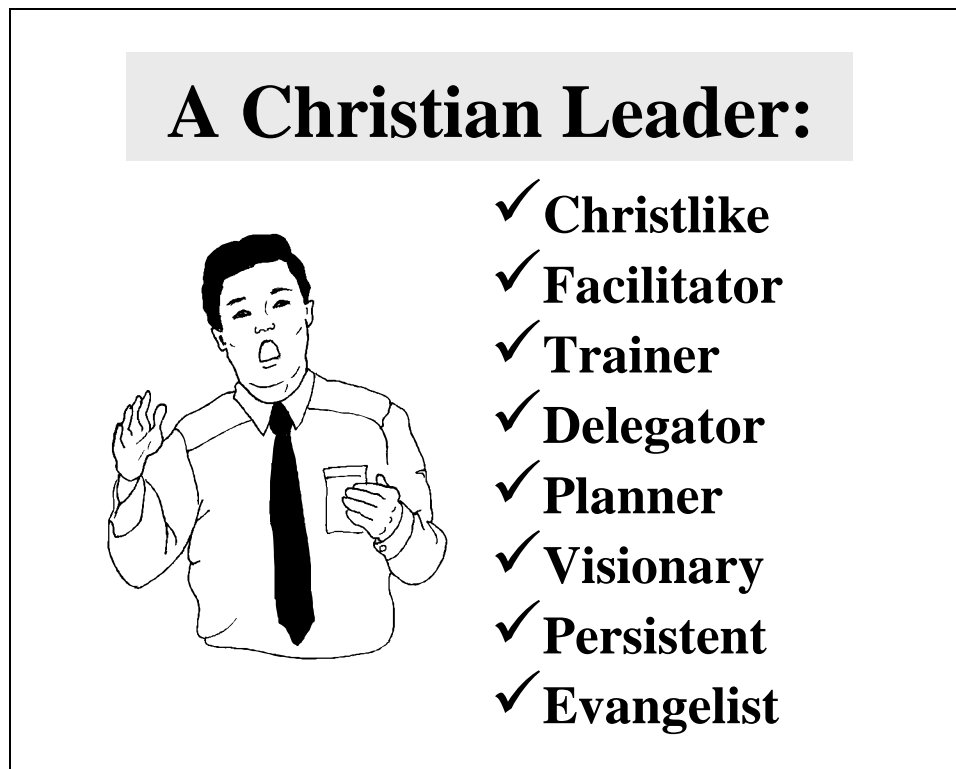
While a church planter always looks for ways to delegate, he does so without demanding more from others than he himself is willing to give. He avoids overworking others. When assigning people to ministry responsibilities, he also makes sure that they have the necessary resources to complete the task. When appropriate, the wise leader models ministry before expecting it from others.

## V. SET GOALS, PLANS AND OBJECTIVES AND WORK TOWARD THEM

Setting goals and planning is a normal practice approved in Scripture. In Proverbs, we learn that we should "Make plans by seeking advice, if you wage war, obtain guidance" (Pr 20:18). Jesus used the illustrations of a builder who did not plan before building a tower and of a king who did not prepare properly for a battle as examples of people poorly committed to their tasks (Lk 14:28-33). If we are truly committed to our ministry, then setting clear goals and plans is proper for us as well.

A church planter prayerfully establishes goals, objectives and strategies in consultation with his team. His plans are realistic. He avoids unrealistic goals that cannot be achieved. His plans are flexible, so that he can cope effectively with ambiguity and change. He is able to adapt strategies and plans to specific situations. When necessary, he adjusts his priorities and emphasis according to the various phases of church birth and growth.

**Figure 2.1 Characteristics of a Christian Leader**



## VI. ARTICULATE VISION IN SUCH A WAY THAT IT INSPIRES OTHERS

The leader is a person of vision. That is, he sees not only the present, but can also imagine what the future could be like. For the church planter, this means communing with God through the Word and prayer, with the result that he has a clear sense of what God wants to do through him in the future. He also recognizes the importance of persuasively communicating this vision to the church or to the other believers who will help him plant a new church. He may develop a theme/slogan that highlights the vision and philosophy of the ministry. A visionary church planter is able to keep the vision central to everything that is done in the establishment of the new church. Through his efforts, those involved in the church plant remain committed to the vision, and feel responsible for the growth and success of the ministry.

## VII. BE PERSISTENT AND OVERCOME SETBACKS

A Christian leader must be persistent. Satan will resist any attempt to build the Church of Jesus Christ. Problems *will* arise. He must be willing to work hard and long and not give up. He takes initiative and is aggressive in getting things done, without being bossy or unpleasant. He is a self-starter like the ant in Proverbs 6:7 who works because of his own initiative, without waiting to be directed. He approaches challenges as "opportunities" rather than as "problems." He believes that God will do great things for His Own glory.

A leader approaches challenges as "opportunities" rather than as "problems."

Most people are reactive; meaning their activity is controlled by events as they happen to them. A reactive person is always responding to what is going on around him, and ends up being the victim of circumstances. A Christian leader or church planter should be pro-active. He needs to think *ahead* and prepare himself and those to whom he ministers so that they can victoriously work through problems when they happen. For example, a Christian leader teaches truth *before* the cults steal his sheep, and deals with problems while they are still small and manageable. Inevitably, there will be times when the best leader must react to a problem. But a good leader will lay a good foundation in advance, so that problems are easier to solve. Even in difficult times, he will remain a *leader*, rather than a *victim*.

**Table 2.2 Victim or Leader?**

Victim	Leader
Says: "There is nothing we can do"	Says: "Let's look at the alternatives"
Focuses on the problems	Focuses on the possibilities
Lives in the past	Lives for the future
Pessimistic	Optimistic
Waits for others to move	Takes initiative

## VIII. LEAD IN EVANGELISM

It is impossible to plant a church without evangelism. Because evangelism is such an important part of church planting, it must be clear that it is a priority of the leader. Many in the church planting project will have the same attitude as the leader when it comes to evangelism. If the leader is not involved, they will not be. If the leader only talks about evangelism, and never does it, neither will they. If the leader is passionately active as an evangelist, they will be too.

Evangelism is a fundamental task commanded repeatedly in the New Testament (Mt 28:19-20). Jesus trained 12 men to take His place. Training them was His main focus - but He never lost sight of the reason He was training them. He made it obvious by His teaching and His example that His concern was for the masses who needed salvation. His disciples caught that same concern through Jesus' example as well as His explicit teaching. Paul also told Timothy to do the work of an evangelist (2Ti 4:5). Evangelism may not have been his gift, but Paul felt that Timothy had to make it a priority.

Evangelism and ministry training are both crucial activities of church planters. One may ask how the church plant leader can concentrate on each of these activities at the same time. This is a good question. One way to answer it is to involve the leaders you are training in evangelism. Always work with a partner and he will always be learning.

## CONCLUSION

The above personal characteristics and skills better enable a church plant leader to successfully see a church planted under his or her ministry. A church planter will be wise to develop these skills and characteristics. Yet it should be kept in mind that church planters are not all alike. Personalities and styles differ as with any other ministry gift. In which of the above ways are you gifted as a church planter? In which ways are you limited, in your opinion?

## **QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION, REVIEW AND APPLICATION**

- Why should a leader delegate?
- What particular task are you doing that you should delegate to another?
- What is a facilitator?
- In what ways is a church planter like a farmer?
- How can a leader get others involved in setting goals?
- Which is more important, the training of leaders or active evangelism?
- What does it mean to be pro-active and why should a church planter have this characteristic?
- Do you have a team to work with? Why or why not?
- Do you or your team have goals for your ministry?

## **ACTION PLAN**

See Appendix 2A: "The Leader." What characteristics of Christian leadership do you see in this account of the life of Christ? List them for yourself on a sheet of paper, and then compare them to the characteristics discussed in this lesson. Do they agree? How important do you think they are? How does your life and leadership compare?

LEADERSHIP  
APPENDIX

2A

## The Leader

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The leader had quite a job to do. His mission was to transform the world. The transformation this leader sought was not merely cosmetic, or temporary. It involved a whole new philosophy of life resulting in a new culture reaching every tribe and nation. To say the least, the leader had a most difficult task before him. Other great leaders had attempted less grand things and failed. Humanly speaking, this leader was completely alone in this mission. No one else was committed to it, nor did anyone else even understand it. How would he ever accomplish his task? How would he get his message out? How would he inspire others to live according to it?

An examination of the leader's method contains many surprises. The leader did not do many of the things that we might expect. He did not seek public office or gather an army. He didn't open an institute, or hold formal seminars to train others in his new philosophy; he did not pull his followers away for a period of secluded intellectualism. He did not submit writings to a printing press to produce books and newsletters pitching his plan. Instead, the leader started by gathering a small group of followers to himself (Mt 10:2-4). Rather than concentrate on the multitudes, he spent three years specifically training these men in his transforming way of life in hopes that they would then help him in the transformation of the multitudes.

The leader did not do many of the things that we might expect.

With only 12 men, this seemed like a hopelessly small start. Nevertheless, he lived his beliefs and deeply loved these 12 as if they were his own family. They lived together, eating, resting, working and relaxing without any constraints or barriers. In all this, the leader put his ideas into action by living them out with his followers. They traveled together from village to village where he interacted with others, meeting all kinds of needs. The leader commonly preached to enormous crowds (Mk 4:1). His sermons weren't elaborate; he used many illustrations from life as it was lived in that land at that time. He would often retreat with his followers alone to the countryside where he made his sermons especially meaningful through in-depth follow-up discussions (Mk 4:34).

The followers were committed and seemed eager to learn, but they showed little promise. Several were backward villagers, barely literate; one had been a tax collector, a profession despised by the general population; a few were in the fishing business. At best they were ordinary men, not the 'cut above' kind from whom one would expect great things. None of them possessed the statesman-like charisma desired for leaders of a great movement. And although the leader carried a spiritual message, none of the men he picked were religious leaders. In spite of all these disqualifiers, these unlikely followers were the ones that he personally picked to stand alone as the front-runners of a great movement. The leader thought that the qualifications of these men would be that they had been with him.

The followers he picked were at best, ordinary men.

The leader had an unusual humility. He paid no attention to sarcastic remarks about his hometown. He was content to be known as a small-town boy and the son of a carpenter. He did not seek attention or self-gain, but sought to empower others and to stay out of the limelight himself. Some thought that he could have had a greater impact if his leadership would have been more formal, if he had worked in the existing system. But the leader rejected formal status. He rejected the direct control of the kingdoms of the world even when it was offered to him (Mt 4:8-10). Instead of working toward reformation of the current system, the leader endeavored to ignite a whole new movement.

In retrospect, we might wonder about the leader's competency. He befriended sinners (Mk 2:15-17). His sermons and his teaching stepped on the toes of many who were in positions to help the cause. With few exceptions, this leader showed no confidence in the religious leaders of his day. His standards were high—he demanded all or nothing from would-be followers and many could not make the commitment (Mt 10:37-39).

The leader evaluated customs and routines according to their resulting function. For example, to the leader, "busy work" could be a trap that kept people from really important things (Lk 10:41-42). Concerning the religious law, the leader was always respectful while also being practical, not getting hung up on the letter of law. He vented the full extent of his anger when he observed the Temple not being used for its intended function. The leader scorned traditions and rituals that weighed people down instead of providing inner freedom. He was much more concerned with inner transformation according to the 'spirit of the law' than with outward conformity to rules and regulations (Mt. 15:7-9).

The leader loved people deeply; his mission involved servant-like ministry to other people. Perhaps this is why many people do not remember him first and foremost as a 'leader.' Misconceptions of leadership as 'rank,' 'position,' or 'status' keep many from thinking of this person as a leader. Rather, he is remembered as a servant, a teacher, a healer, a counselor, or any such designation that makes clear that this man assisted and guided people. His personal routine was often influenced by the needs of others. He always took time to talk to common people, to meet their needs by healing them or guiding them toward inner freedom. When large crowds came to him, he responded to their interests and needs with little regard to formal schedules or his own needs. He did not mind the interruptions of children (Mt 19:13-15). He dealt graciously with all sorts of unruly interruptions, even when the ceiling was torn away over his head. He did not get caught up in petty divisions of people. So important were people to him that he summarized the law relationally.

The leader loved people deeply; his mission involved servant-like ministry to other people.

He was not impressed as much by knowledge, riches, or rigid obedience to the law, as he was by faith. In fact, if you wanted to impress the leader, mustering up faith seemed like the best way to go about it. Faith was perhaps his only measurement for others. He constantly urged others to believe and was prone to almost embarrassing outburst of excitement when he found people of faith. When an outcast of society demonstrated faith in him, even in a disruptive way, the leader accepted him (Lk 7:36-38). Though he personally possessed supernatural ability, at several points he stated that he was actually limited by the lack of faith of others.

Near the end of his work with his followers, it seemed that there were many failures. His followers often could not understand what he taught. The general population was confused about who he was. His followers were committed to him when he was popular but they did not stand by him when he needed them most. Even one of his closest followers denied even knowing the leader at a crucial moment (Mt 26:69-74). Another follower betrayed him in favor of the first solid cash to come along, but then soon committed suicide. Eventually the establishment turned on the leader. He was arrested, tried, convicted and put to death as an enemy of the people. So much for transforming the world.

His followers were no doubt surprised and disheartened by the leader's strange and sudden departure. They did not feel ready for him to leave. It seemed that he had just begun. He had had an amazing impact, but the world, having just rejected the leader, was far from transformed. Because the work was not complete, the leader, in his leaving, gave his followers the mandate to lead on as he had done (Mt 28:18-20). He had sufficiently prepared them so that if they applied what they had learned from him, they would have a similar (even greater) impact.

And lead on these followers did. They emerged as people of great faith and vision for the transformation the leader had sought. With tremendous zeal and enthusiasm they carried on the mission. As they did so they made one thing very clear—the leader had never really left. It only seemed that way for a moment. In fact, his spiritual presence was key to the very transformation he sought. He, the leader, was with them as they set out to spread his message to every tribe and nation. His presence was their message and their inspiration!

These followers, showing themselves to be good followers after all, did not depart significantly from the pattern that the leader had established. They carried on influential discussions with common people in the market places, as well as the established temples and synagogues (though their own worship centers were apparently in homes). They lived their message boldly and loved others deeply, while gathering still other followers to do the same. As people accepted the message, local fellowships celebrating the leader's presence were established. Like the leader, these followers and their local fellowships had such an impact that the formal establishments of government and religion were seriously threatened—to the point of retaliation.

His followers lived their message boldly and loved others deeply.

Not many generations later, followers developed more 'sophisticated' methods of following the leader. Sometimes with more regard for "doing as the Romans do" than for doing as the leader had done, they made use of the dominant modes of worldly operations. The informal spontaneous movement that emphasized the leader's presence gave way to formal institutions and rigid programs. Impressive organizations, large buildings, and 'cutting-edge' programs replaced the simple celebrations and heartfelt proclamation which allegiance to the leader had inspired. This trend provided a certain security and control, but the leader's presence was overshadowed and much of what the leader stood for was denied. By establishing and honoring forms at the expense of functions, the real impact of his mission was lost.

Formal institutions and rigid programs overshadowed the leader's presence.

The leader's influence continues. Those who follow the leader are commanded to work as he did. As elaborate schemes for transforming the world through programs and institutions show less promise than ever, his followers should again be reminded of the unique approach of the leader. The basic idea is strangely simple: a leader, who lives what he believes, deeply loves his followers with whom he shares a way of life—this is leadership at its best. This is The Great Leader who touches lives and transforms the world.

## SOURCES

Adapted from *The Teacher*, an unpublished manuscript by Ted Ward and Lois McKinney.

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# CELL GROUPS

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CELL GROUPS

1

LESSON

# Functions and Benefits of Cell Groups

## Lesson Purpose

The Purpose of this lesson is to present the advantages of using cell groups for ministry.

## Main Points

- Cell groups are different from small groups because they multiply.
- The four primary functions of a cell group are: fellowship, worship, discipleship and evangelism.

## Desired Outcomes

When the content of this lesson has been mastered, each participant should:

- Be able to describe how a cell group is different from a small group.
- Be able to discuss the benefits of using cell groups in evangelism, developing relationships, discipleship and church planting.

## Suggestions to Trainers

This lesson contains a reference to Vision Appendix 3A (from Manual 1) "Church Planting Models." You should review this appendix beforehand and have it available as you teach.

## I. FOUNDATIONS OF CELL GROUP

### A. Introduction

More and more churches all over the world are realizing the tremendous importance of cell groups. Through cell group ministry churches are growing and people are using their spiritual gifts. The body of Christ is being mobilized for ministry, and the end result is that the lost are finding the truth and love of Jesus.

Are cell groups something new, the latest fad or fashionable ministry in the church? Not at all. The use of cell groups in the church began with the New Testament Church described in the book of Acts. The "cells" of the church met in people's homes for worship, for fellowship, for growth in their new faith, and for sharing with neighbors and friends this good news they had found. These cells also came together for larger meetings in the temple courts for worship, teaching and evangelism.

Why do we use the term "cell" group? Why not call it a "small" group? Many churches have small groups that meet for various types of ministry, most often for Bible study. To understand the difference between small groups and cell groups, we can use an example from science. In biology, a cell is a living, growing organism that multiplies itself over and over again. The main difference between a cell group and a small group is that a cell group **multiplies**, whereas a small group may not. This is a vital distinction. You can perform many different types of ministry in a group, but if one of the goals of the group is not to grow and multiply itself into new groups, then it cannot be called a cell group.

The main difference between a cell group and a small group is that a cell group **multiplies**, whereas a small group may not.

## B. Distinctives

Rather than giving a comprehensive definition of a cell group in this lesson, we will develop a "progressive" understanding of what a cell group is and does as we work through the cell group lessons in this manual. However, it is important from the beginning to understand the foundational distinctives of any cell group. Every cell group has:

1. ***A commitment to evangelism.***
2. ***A commitment to nurture and disciple believers.***
3. ***A commitment to develop leaders.***
4. ***A commitment to multiplication, so as to fulfill the Great Commission.***

## II. FUNCTIONS OF CELL GROUPS

There are many ways to use groups in the process of church planting. Even so, cell groups that are used in church planting seem to have some common ingredients—or common functions—among them. These ingredients are fellowship, worship, discipleship and evangelism. These same functions can be found from the example of the early church of the New Testament. Of course, these are not the only functions seen in the New Testament church, but these are areas where cell groups and the early church share commonality in function. The following tables compare these functions in the New Testament Church and in cell groups.

The Function of Fellowship	
<i><b>In the New Testament church</b></i>	<i><b>In Cell Groups</b></i>
<p>The fellowship that the believers enjoyed was one of the distinguishing characteristics of the early church (Ac 2:42).</p> <p>They encouraged one another (Heb 10:25, 1Th 5:11) and often broke bread together (Ac 2:42, Ac 20:7,11).</p>	<p>In a cell group, fellowship is mutual encouragement, sharing, and friendship in Christ, in order to meet the needs of love, acceptance, unity and support.</p> <p><b><i>Possible Activities:</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sharing problems with one another</li> <li>• Bearing one another's burdens</li> <li>• Interceding in prayer one for another</li> <li>• Eating meals together</li> <li>• Having fun together as families</li> <li>• Encouraging one another</li> </ul>

<b>The Function of Worship</b>	
<b><i>In the New Testament church</i></b>	<b><i>In Cell Groups</i></b>
<p>Prayer and praise are a recurring theme in the New Testament church (Ac 2:47, Ac 1:14, Ac 6:4, Col 4:2).</p> <p>Their worship came from hearts that were "glad and sincere." It was a natural response to God for the joy they had found in Christ and in the presence of other believers.</p>	<p>In a cell group, worship is praising and magnifying God by focusing on His nature, actions, and words, in order to bring joy to God.</p> <p><b>Possible Activities:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Singing songs</li> <li>• Praising God for His greatness</li> <li>• Thanking God for all things</li> <li>• Worshipping God for who He is</li> <li>• Praying out loud or silently</li> <li>• Reading passages of worship (e.g. Psalms)</li> <li>• Writing and/or reading Christian poetry</li> </ul>

<b>The Function of Discipleship</b>	
<b><i>In the New Testament church</i></b>	<b><i>In Cell Groups</i></b>
<p>There was a strong commitment in the early church to "the ministry of the word" (Ac 6:4).</p> <p>The first believers devoted themselves to the apostle's teaching (Ac 2:42), and as the church spread, this teaching took on the form of the letters from the apostles to the church (Col 4:16, Php 1:1, Gal 1:2).</p>	<p>In a cell group, discipleship is the process of being helped, taught and mentored by others, in order to grow in mind and spirit toward the image of Christ.</p> <p><b>Possible Activities:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Memorizing Scripture</li> <li>• Studying Bible passages as a group</li> <li>• Learning to apply the Bible to everyday life</li> <li>• Spending time with a mature brother/sister</li> <li>• Being involved in ministry with the group</li> <li>• Learning and using spiritual gifts</li> </ul>

<b>The Function of Evangelism</b>	
<b><i>In the New Testament church</i></b>	<b><i>In Cell Groups</i></b>
<p>Sharing the good news of Jesus came naturally to the believers in the early church. Evangelism was not a "program" that they had to develop, nor was it something they had to be specially trained for – it was the love of Christ expressing itself through their lives and words to those around them (Ac 5:42, 4:20). It was the Holy Spirit working through them (Ac 4:31), as they shared Christ both in homes and in public places (Ac 20:20). The result was that people believed on the name of the Lord Jesus and were saved (Ac 8:12, 16:31-34).</p>	<p>In a cell group, evangelism is reaching out with the good news of Christ's love to people in need, in order to help them know God as Father and Christ as Savior.</p> <p><b>Possible Activities:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Praying with two others in a Prayer Triplet for unsaved friends</li> <li>• Inviting unbelievers to the group</li> <li>• Meeting needs of people outside the group</li> <li>• Making friends with unbelievers</li> <li>• Sharing Christ with unbelievers</li> </ul>

### III. BENEFITS OF CELL GROUPS

#### A. Benefits for Evangelism

Too often, our churches have visible or invisible barriers that keep people out. We have traditions, we have certain ways we dress and act, and we might even have expectations for those who would visit. Tradition can be good in order to provide a sense of community and continuity, but it can really make it hard for people to come in to a church from the "outside."

Research has shown that it is difficult for people to cross cultural barriers to go to church. If they perceive that they have to dress differently, behave differently, or pretend to be someone they are not, they will not attend church. They feel like there is a vast gulf between them and the church.

The informal nature of cell groups provides a more natural "bridge" to unbelievers.

Cell groups provide a much more natural "bridge" to unbelievers. As members in a cell group develop relationships with unbelieving friends, it is much more natural for them to invite them to a group meeting. And for the unbeliever, coming to a small, informal gathering is much less threatening than going to a place where they don't know anyone and aren't sure what the "rules" are.

In John 13:35, Jesus said, "By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another." As visitors come to a cell group, one of the most powerful witnesses they will have is the caring and nurturing which occurs in the group. They should see a difference in our attitudes, words and deeds, and begin to wonder why we are different. As they see the love in the group and begin to experience that caring and love themselves, they will be drawn to Jesus, the Source of that love.

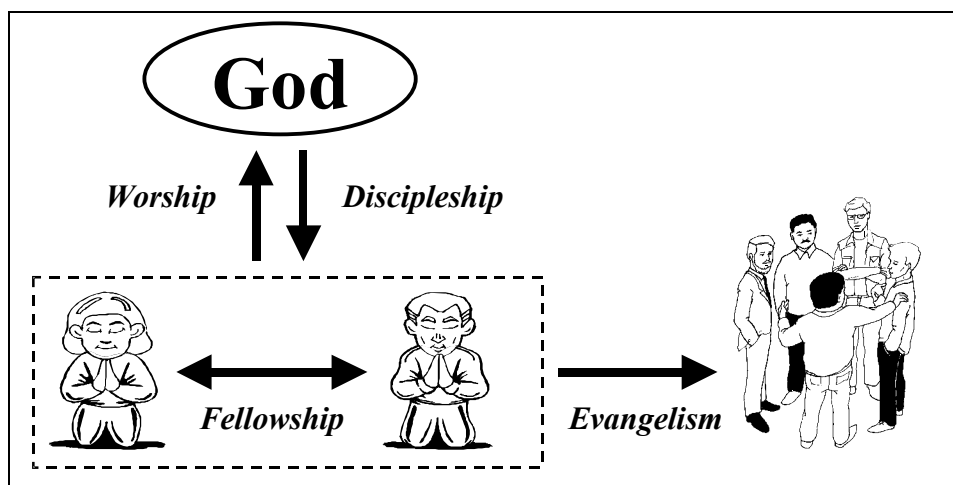
#### B. Benefits for Developing Relationships

When we look at Jesus' ministry here on earth, it's important to note that He chose to live in community with His disciples. These twelve men prayed together, worshipped God together, learned by Jesus' words and example, ate together, encouraged one another, and proclaimed together the good news of salvation. Of course, it's not an accident that Jesus chose to use a group to prepare his disciples for ministry. Their group was the first "cell" of an organism which, like the parable of the mustard seed in Matthew chapter 13, started very small and quickly grew very large.

Ministry that is done in cell groups has many benefits, and one of them is the natural development of relationships in the group. As the group meets for fellowship, worship, discipleship and evangelism, each of these activities fosters a unique kind of relationship. These relationships, also illustrated in Figure 1.1, are:

- Fellowship: Man to Man
- Worship: Man to God
- Discipleship: God to Man
- Evangelism: The Body of Christ to the Lost

**Figure 1.1. Four Kinds of Cell Group Relationships**



In a cell group, the members spend time together, participate in ministry together, encourage and pray for one another, and help each other with struggles and needs. There is a strength and intensity to their love and devotion towards God and towards each other. They feel a sense of belonging, of being part of a community that cares for them. As the group members grow in their love for each other, there is something very special about the time they spend together in worship, as they express together the love they have for God.

A cell group also provides an ideal environment for the development of mentoring or discipling relationships. More mature believers are able to come alongside younger believers to encourage them, to teach them, and to perform ministry together with them.

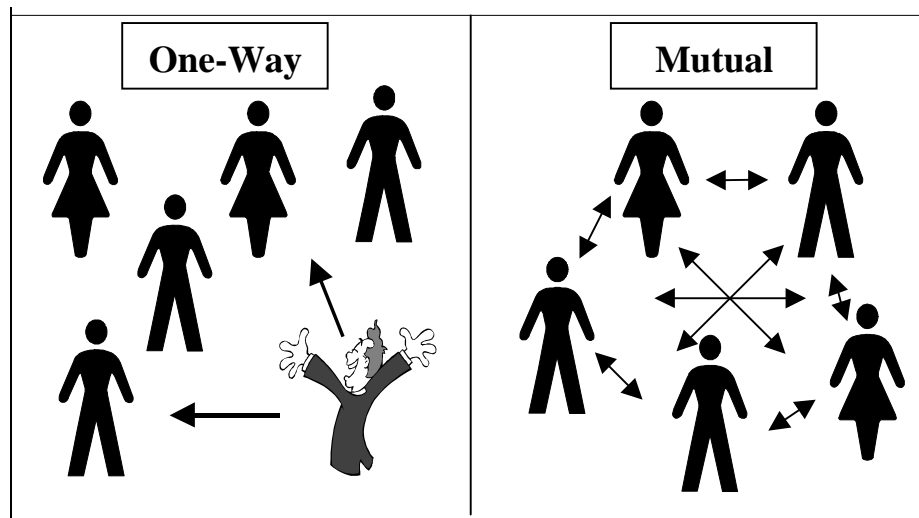
Since one of the goals of a cell group is to grow and multiply itself, the members will continually be looking for ways to reach out to the lost around them. They will be able to share ideas with each other and to learn from each other different ways that they can share Christ with their family and friends. There is a commitment in a cell group to building relationships with unbelievers, in order to share with them the good news of Jesus.

### **C. Benefits for Discipleship**

Romans 14:19 says, "Let us therefore make every effort to do what leads to peace and to mutual edification." Cell groups provide a place where believers can be ministered to, and where they can minister to others. The Bible outlines clear responsibilities that believers have towards one another. All of these occur naturally in a cell group, as each person ministers according to his giftedness.

Ministry between believers is an important aspect of the cell group church. Believers are to try to excel in gifts that build up the church (1Co 14:12). Spiritual gifts were given to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ might be built up (Eph 4:12). We are supposed to encourage one another (1Th 4:18) and speak words that will build up others according to their needs (Eph 4:29). This assumes that we share our burdens one with another (Gal 6:2) so that we are able to help each other. Our greatest desire should be to honor one another in brotherly love (Ro 12:10) and to love one another deeply, from the heart (1Pe 1:22). The dynamics of a cell group provide a natural and effective way for believers to fulfill the biblical mandate to build up one another, as illustrated in Figure 1.2.

**Figure 1.2. Mutual Discipleship**



Cell groups are also the place where the spiritual gifts of each member are discovered, developed and used. In a cell group setting, people are nurtured and encouraged to learn their spiritual giftedness through their involvement in the ministry of the cell. In this way, they grow in their faith and maturity, and have opportunity to be discipled by more mature Christians. In time, they will repeat this process and begin to disciple those in the group who are less spiritually mature.

Many new Christians will have problems and needs with which the group can help. A cell group can effectively care for and meet physical, spiritual, social and emotional needs of people. The members of the group grow to know and love one another through the sharing of these needs and through working together to meet them. For many, it will be the first time they will learn that truths from the Bible can relate to their everyday life. They will learn how to study the Bible for themselves, and how to apply what they are learning to the problems and difficulties which they face.

#### **D. Benefits for Development of Leaders**

Another positive aspect of starting churches by using cell groups is the issue of leadership. Robert Logan, in his article "Multiplication of Cell Groups," says, "How many people can one Spirit-filled human care for or train? Christ himself drew the line at twelve. Yet here we are, pastors and lay leaders, attempting to draw into our fold and then single-handedly care for the needs of people in groups of 50, 100, 250, 500 and sometimes 1,000 people! Are we greater than our master? Although somewhat dependent on cultural differences, ten seems a mid-range ideal for the number of people who adequately can be cared for by a Spirit-filled Christian lay minister." The benefit of cell groups is that leaders are responsible for the spiritual development of only a handful of people, not tens or hundreds. This eliminates leaders who are trying to minister to the point of exhaustion.

The cell group approach also involves many more people as it gives lay leaders the chance to develop their spiritual gift of leadership. Instead of having "professional clergy" who are given positions of leadership based on what they know, cell group leaders are qualified by the maturity and ability they have demonstrated through their ministry in the cell group.

#### **E. Benefits for Church Planting**

The use of cell groups has many benefits in the process of church planting. In order to start new churches, you need to evangelize, build up new believers in their faith, develop new leaders and make sure that all of the functions of a church are present. Cell groups provide the means to accomplish all of these goals. Cells can also provide a sense of corporate identity in a new church.

There are many ways to start a church. Think back to the Vision Appendix 3A "Church Planting Models" from Manual 1. Some new churches are started from existing congregations (daughter church model). Others are started by a church planting team that is sent out to a new area from an existing church (colonization model). Still others are started independent of an existing church structure (mission team model). Some are started in formal church buildings, and others meet informally in people's homes. One of the greatest advantages of cell groups is that they can be used to the benefit of a church planter, no matter which type of church planting model he is working with.

Cell groups can be used to the benefit of a church planter, no matter which type of church planting model he is using.

In a saturation church planting strategy, it is the desire of the church planter to fill an area with churches that reproduce and start new churches themselves. What are some of the traditional barriers to church growth and reproduction? Ineffective evangelism, lack of discipleship, not enough money, insufficient numbers of trained leaders, and quite often, a lack of vision to reach the lost for Christ. Cell groups provide a natural and effective way to evangelize, to disciple new believers and to develop new leaders. If the groups meet in people's homes, there might not be a need for a formal church building. Eliminating this cost enables the church to start new churches when the cell groups are ready, not when funds are available. In other words, lack of funds is not a hindrance to natural church growth.

Cell groups provide the ability to develop a strategy whereby an entire neighborhood, town or country can be saturated with an effective witness for Christ. Without traditional barriers to growth, the cell groups can flourish. Simply stated, **the use of cell groups makes it easier to start new churches.**

## QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION, REVIEW AND APPLICATION

- What is the primary difference between a small group and a cell group?
- Can the "one another" ministries be done in a traditional Sunday morning church service? What will be the impact on a Christian if these needs are not met? Will new Christians grow and mature if these needs are not met?
- Are there any barriers in your church that would prevent an unbeliever who has never been to church from coming to one of your services? How can cell groups be used as a "bridge" to unbelievers?
- In general, how can cell groups be used as part of an effective saturation church planting strategy?

## ACTION PLAN

Find a Christian friend or acquaintance who does not know about cell groups. Explain to him the benefits of a cell group approach to ministry, and ask him to give you reasons why he agrees or disagrees with you. If possible, discuss his responses with other trainees who are studying these materials.

## SOURCES

Logan, Robert. *Multiplication of Cell Groups*. Old Tappan, NJ: Fleming H. Revell Co., n.d.





CELL GROUPS

LESSON 2

# Principles of Cell Group Leadership

## ☛ Lesson Purpose

The Purpose of this lesson is to provide a general overview of the functions and responsibilities of a cell group leader.

## ☛ Main Points

- The four main functions of the cell group must be balanced.
- It is vital to develop an apprentice leader.

## ☛ Desired Outcomes

When the content of this lesson has been mastered, each participant should:

- Understand the unique role of the cell group leader in the overall ministry of a cell group.
- Understand the responsibilities of the cell group leader for each of the activities of a cell group meeting.
- Know the principles of effective planning for cell group growth and multiplication.
- Complete a sample meeting plan for their "first" cell group meeting.

## ☛ Appendices

2A Cell Group Ice Breakers

2B Sample Activities In A Cell Group Meeting

## I. OVERALL LEADERSHIP CONCEPTS

### A. Model the Christian Life

Since evangelism is an essential element of cell group ministry, there most likely will be some new believers or spiritually immature believers in the group at any given time. Many of these people do not understand what it means to be a Christian or what it means to serve God in ministry. The cell group leader has the privilege of teaching them these things by the example of what he says and does. He needs to be open with his group about the blessings in his life as well as the burdens. He should share with the group both victories and struggles in his walk with the Lord, and how he reacts to the different circumstances around him. This will not only encourage the cell group members, but it will also help to teach them how to live out what they believe in very practical ways.

When the leader teaches by "modeling," the group members will be better able to understand the Christian life and to teach it to others. It is one of the teaching methods that Jesus used with His disciples. As they spent time with Jesus, they learned simply by watching and listening. In 1 Thessalonians 1:6-7, Paul, Silas and Timothy describe how the Thessalonians became "imitators" of them, and then became a "model to all the believers in Macedonia and Achaia." Paul, in 1 Corinthians 11:1, instructs the believers to "follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ." A cell group leader needs to set an example in lifestyle and ministry that his group can follow.

## B. Develop New Leaders

One of the foundational purposes of every cell group is to multiply itself. When a group is ready to multiply, a trained and equipped person needs to be ready to take over as the leader of the new group.

One of the benefits of cell groups is that they provide an excellent means to develop new Christian leaders. One of the first priorities of the cell group leader is to prayerfully choose a person from the group to be the "apprentice" leader. This person should show some ability and aptitude for leadership, but by no means will have all the qualities of an effective leader. One of the roles of a cell group leader is to be a mentor for the apprentice leader. The apprentice must not only listen to and see what the cell group leader is doing, but he or she must also take an active role in the leadership ministry as well. Cell Group lesson 9 "Training New Cell Group Leaders" (in Manual 3) will examine in detail the process of new leadership development. The most important thing to remember when a new group is being started is that God desires to raise up one or more of the people in that group to be cell group leaders themselves.

One of the first priorities of the cell group leader is to prayerfully choose a person from the group to be the "apprentice" leader.

## C. Equip and Release for Ministry

All Christians should understand which spiritual gift(s) they have been given by the Holy Spirit, and learn how to use those gifts. Unfortunately, many believers have little opportunity to use their spiritual giftedness, even if they do understand what it is (and many of them don't). The nature of cell groups enables Christians not only to discover their spiritual giftedness, but also to develop and use that giftedness in ministry.

The cell group leader needs to provide ways to help the members discover their spiritual giftedness. There are several "tests" or "spiritual inventories" which are available to help a person understand the spiritual gifts in general, and to help them see which gift the Holy Spirit may have given them. Quite often, a person's giftedness can be confirmed when they begin to be involved in different types of ministry.

The cell group leader must provide opportunities both for discovering spiritual giftedness, and for using that giftedness in ministry. This is done primarily through consistent and increasing delegation of ministry to the members of the group. The leader will only be able to delegate very small tasks at first, but as the group grows and matures, he should continually be striving to involve each member in the activities and ministries of the group.

## II. LEADING THE CELL GROUP MEETING

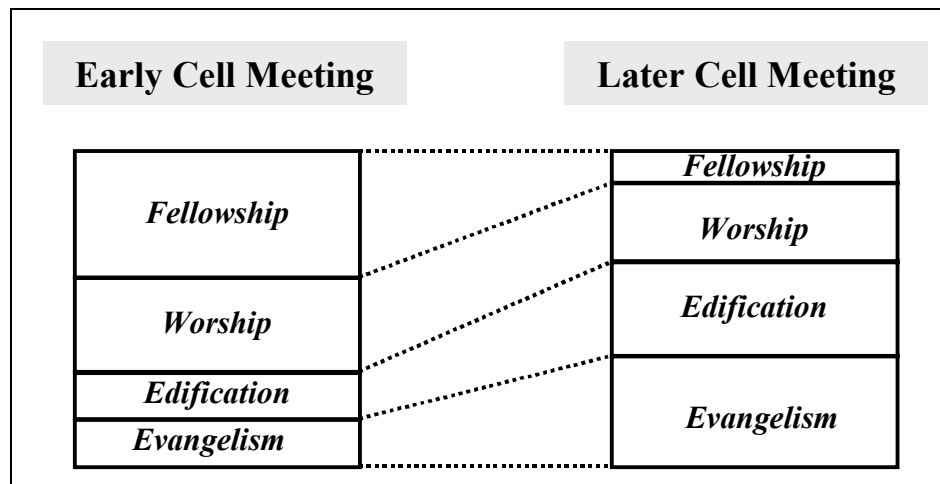
There is no "correct" format for a cell group meeting. It is the responsibility of the leader to decide how the meetings will be organized and conducted. However, each meeting should include some time for each of the four functions of a cell group (fellowship, worship, edification, and evangelism).

A "typical" cell group meeting might have the following order:

- It begins with a time of fellowship and sharing between the group members.
- It is followed by a time of worship with prayer, singing and praises to God.
- After this, there is a time for discussing and studying the Bible.
- Then the group moves to a time for ministry envisioning, where the members discuss personal and group activities to reach friends, neighbors and perhaps larger groups with the Gospel. This might include prayer time for specific individuals who have not yet been invited to the group.

The amount of time spent in each activity depends on how long the group has been meeting. Initially, the group should spend more time in fellowship and less for Bible discussion. In time, more emphasis will be placed on Bible study and evangelism. This changing balance is demonstrated in Figure 2.1.

**Figure 2.1 Balancing Cell Functions**



Generally speaking, the entire cell group meeting should not last more than 90 minutes. For example, the group might spend 20 minutes in fellowship, 20 minutes in worship, 30 minutes in Bible discussion, and 20 minutes in the evangelism time.

The leader has the responsibility to start the meeting on time, move the group from activity to activity, and end the meeting on time. Each of the four functions of the cell is vital to the growth and maturity of the members, so the leader must make sure that the group spends time in each.

A cell group leader is responsible for the planning and direction of each of the cell meetings. As the cell grows and matures, the leader will be able to delegate various activities in the meeting to others in the group. Each aspect of the meeting needs some type of preparation:

#### **A. Location**

The leader needs to decide where the group will meet and who will be the host. Quite often the leader is also the host. The host makes sure that a room has been set up with seats that allow the members to see each other (a circle allows for the greatest amount of interaction between members). Optionally, the host may also arrange for the preparation of refreshments (which can be as simple as tea and/or coffee).

#### **B. Fellowship**

The fellowship time can be as formal or as informal as the leader desires. If there are new members or visitors to the group, it is recommended that you use some sort of "ice breaker" activity to make them feel welcome, and to help each person in the group learn more about the others. The fellowship time is when the members find out what has been happening in the lives of the other members, to encourage them, to share joys and sorrows with them, and to build each other up.

For some examples of activities which will help cell group members get to know one another better, see Appendix 2A "Cell Group Ice Breakers."

#### **C. Worship**

Leading worship in a cell group prepares the members for the rest of the meeting, especially as they look to God to speak to them through the Bible discussion time. If the leader or someone in the group has musical ability, then a guitar, piano or other musical instrument can be used to accompany the worship time. If not, God is just as pleased to hear praises that are sung from glad and sincere hearts!

#### D. Prayer

Prayer will be a part of each of the activities of the cell group meeting. The leader needs to start and end the meeting with prayer. The leader should consider that praying out loud will be very uncomfortable for new members, and he should make it clear that this is optional. As they spend more time in the group and are affirmed by the members, they will begin doing this on their own.

Prayer will come naturally during the worship time, but the leader must plan to have prayer during the evangelism and fellowship time as well. **Prayer triplets** are three people who pray together specifically for the salvation of three friends or acquaintances each (i.e. three believers pray for nine unbelievers) and this can be a part of the evangelism time. During the fellowship time, prayer requests can be shared and prayed for by the group. Another alternative is to pray in groups of two, which can be used to encourage younger Christians to pray (who might otherwise be too shy in front of the group), as well as for sharing more personal needs.

#### E. Bible Discussion

It is the responsibility of the cell group leader to either develop a lesson for the Bible discussion time, or to delegate this to someone in the group who is gifted at teaching. Inductive Bible study is one method which should be used and taught to the cell group members, so that they can learn to feed themselves from the Word of God. While inductive Bible study is not the only method that can be used, the intent of the Bible discussion time should be a discovery of biblical truth and how to apply it to real-life situations.

The intent of the Bible discussion time should be a discovery of biblical truth and how to apply it to real-life situations, not a time to preach.

A word of caution: many groups place too much emphasis on Bible study, since this has been the model they have observed in past church experiences. An overemphasis on the Bible discussion time takes away from the other activities of the cell. It is vital that the leader maintains a balance of the four functions of the cell group.

#### F. Discipling

Discipleship takes place when we consciously help someone to become more Christ-like in character and to be more fruitful in ministry. A new Christian has special needs as he deals with doubt, discouragement, ignorance of spiritual matters, spiritual opposition and a sense of feeling "uncomfortable" in unfamiliar territory. He needs the genuine and sincere care of spiritual parents, who will make his welfare their top priority. The new Christian needs to have someone with whom he can discuss questions, and someone whom he knows cares for him. Because of the close nature of the discipling relationship, only men should disciple men and women disciple women.

The cell group leader should always assign a spiritual "parent" to new Christians in the group. There should never be a case when a new Christian does not have someone to disciple and care for him or her. The group will also help with this process, but just as Christ related to His disciples one on one, so each new Christian must have one person to whom they can relate one on one.

Don't forget that the cell group leader must also prayerfully choose someone from the group to be an apprentice leader, someone whom the leader will disciple to be the leader of another cell group. The apprentice should be involved in all aspects of ministry with the cell group leader, so that he can see and experience cell group leadership first-hand.

#### G. Evangelism

Developing a vision for ministry in the members of a cell group is the responsibility of the cell group leader. The leader gives the group a vision of the need to evangelize and develop relationships that will provide a natural way to share Christ. He helps them see how their individual efforts to reach out fit in with the evangelistic efforts of the cell group as a whole. This can also be done by studying passages from Scripture that admonish Christians to share the Good News, and then challenging the members to apply these passages to their lives.

The evangelism time of a cell group meeting is an excellent time to share testimonies about how God is working in and through the lives of the cell group members to reach out with the love of Christ. It is also the time when the cell group leader can remind the group of both the need for and the process of multiplying their group into two cell groups.

### III. CELL GROUP ADMINISTRATION

Although no one enjoys paperwork, there are several reasons why the cell group leader should work with his group to prepare a plan of goals and objectives for the cell:

- **Accountability:** As Christians we must be good stewards of the resources God has given us, including the time and effort we put into leading a cell group. Planning helps us make the best possible use of the limited resources we have.
- **Growth:** If you compare a cell group to a ship on a journey, having a plan can make the difference between a cell group which follows a set course and finds itself very fruitful and one which wanders aimlessly wherever the wind blows it. God desires that the cells in a church grow and multiply, as they work towards the mandate of the Great Commission. With proper planning, a cell group will stay on target and reach this goal of growth, development and multiplication.

Planning involves a simple three-part process.

1. First, pray and ask God to give you wisdom as you plan (Jas 1:5).
2. Second, try to set realistic goals and objectives for your groups, and create a timeline with dates for each goal and objective.
3. Third, include on that timeline periodic dates for evaluation of your progress.

As you continue this process of praying, planning and reviewing, you will begin to see areas that need attention and steps that need to be taken to reach the goals that you have set. Occasionally your cell group might need to adjust its goals and dates, but this is a normal part of the planning process.

### QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION, REVIEW AND APPLICATION

- Should a cell group leader delegate activities and responsibilities to all members of a cell group, and not just to the apprentice leader? Why or why not?
- Why is it important that each new member of the group be assigned a spiritual "parent" to disciple him/her?
- How long after a group starts should the cell group leader wait until he chooses an apprentice leader? What kinds of activities can the cell group leader do with the apprentice to prepare him to lead his own group?
- Why should the cell group leader bother to develop a plan for the group in general, and for each of the meetings? Why not just let the group evolve "naturally" in whichever direction it wants?

### ACTION PLAN

Review Appendix 2B, "Sample Activities in a Cell Group Meeting." This appendix contains suggestions for what can be done during each of the four functions of a cell group meeting. The cell group leader can use these suggestions, or modify them as needed for his particular situation.

### SOURCES

Trinity Christian Center, *Cell Growth and Evangelism Strategy Seminar*, N.P., n.d.



# Cell Group Ice Breakers

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*"Ice Breakers" are fun, non-threatening ways to get to know people better. These are often used during the fellowship time of a new cell group. Some notes:*

- An icebreaker must be appropriate for the cell group. If it's too childish, people will not feel comfortable. If it's too threatening, people will draw back.
- Make it clear that everybody is expected to participate.
- Some icebreakers can be used many times.
- Be sensitive to people who might become uncomfortable with the game or activity.
- Icebreakers become shorter and less important as the group becomes tightly knit over the course of the cell group life cycle. You might spend half the time on an icebreaker the first two meetings, but you only need to spend 10 or 15 minutes after a few months.

## Opening Questions

When you were between the ages of 7 – 12....

1. Where did you live? How many brothers and sisters did you have?
2. What kind of transportation did your family use?
3. Who was the person you felt closest to?
4. When did God become more than a word to you?

## Who Am I?

Write the names of famous and/or Bible characters on slips of paper. Tape them on everyone's back. The person cannot read his or her own slip. They are to go around the room asking one question at a time about who they are until they guess who they are.

## I'll Bet You Don't Know This

Each person in the group writes down on a blank piece of paper something that he/she thinks that nobody in the group would know about him/herself. The pieces of paper are folded, mixed well, and numbered consecutively. Then a designated person starts to read them, saying the number first. Each member of the group begins to compile a list of people that they feel best matches the number of each clue. After the last clue is read, the person with the most correct matches wins.

## Introductions

Each person in the group is told they have several minutes to think up a question and ask it of the other people in the group. After everyone has thought of a question, they should begin to mingle with each other, asking their questions. Write down each person's name and answer. After about ten minutes, the group goes around in a circle and tells what they found out about each person. The better the questions, the more creative and insightful responses you will get.

## Two Truths and a Lie

Everybody write down two true things about themselves and one lie. Everybody then first decides which slip of paper went with which person, and which of his statements was the lie. You may leave out the first part (i.e. each person holds up their piece of paper and people just guess which statement is the lie). (It's not fair if somebody picks a lie very close to the truth).

## **Weather Report**

Go around the circle, beginning with the leader, and describe how you are feeling right now in terms of a weather report—partly cloudy, sunny, etc. Participants can explain why they chose that type of weather. The leader sets the example for depth.

## **Trust Walk**

Form the group into pairs. Blindfold one person in each pair. Each unblindfolded person leads a blindfolded person around the general vicinity of the meeting place. Try to provide many different experiences—take them up some stairs, go outside and inside, help them feel different objects, walk at different paces, walk on different materials (grass, floors, dirt) but say nothing after the walk has started. You must nonverbally communicate all messages. After about five minutes, change places. After another five minutes the group re-gathers. Share what kinds of feelings you had as you were blindfolded and as you touched objects, etc. How did you feel about the other person? What was it like to have no control over what was happening? What did you learn about yourself? How does this apply to your relationship with God? With others?

## **Coin Game**

If you have new people in your meeting sometime, you might keep the Coin Game in mind for an icebreaker. Give everyone ten coins. Each person must name one thing about himself/herself that is different from everyone else. (For example, an adventurous group member might say, "I have climbed Pikes Peak.") The speaker puts a coin in the middle. If another player has also climbed Pikes Peak, he/she can put in a coin as well. The first person to get rid of all his/her coins wins.

## **Team Charades**

For this activity you need two teams and two rooms. Divide the group into two teams. Team A thinks up some sort of motion or activity for Team B to act out (e.g. eating breakfast) without using any words. Team A tells only one person (we'll call her "Laura") from Team B what the activity is, and Laura is not allowed to tell anyone else on her team. Team B waits in the first room, while Laura takes one other person from her team (we'll call him "Michael") into the second room. In the second room, Team A watches while Laura acts out the activity for Michael (remember, no words!) Then Laura returns to the first room and sends in someone else from Team B. Michael then acts out the activity for the next person, and Michael returns to the first room and sends in someone else from his team. This process is repeated, until the last person from Team B watches the activity. This last person then must guess what the activity is. The teams then switch roles and Team B thinks up an activity for Team A to act out.

## **Answers and Authors**

On pieces of paper, write down four or five non-threatening questions that might reveal something about a person (e.g. What's your favorite possession? What do you wish you could do that you can't do now? What's your ideal vacation?) People should answer all of them, or at least three, but instruct them not to put their names on the sheet. The leader then collects the sheets and reads out the answers, and everyone tries to guess who gave those answers.

## **All My Neighbors**

Everyone begins by sitting in chairs arranged in a circle, except one person who begins by standing in the middle. The person in the middle needs to find some "neighbors." To do this, he needs to make a true statement about himself, which hopefully will also be true about his neighbors (e.g. "All my neighbors play the piano"). Every person who can also truthfully say this statement must stand up and find a new seat. He cannot return to the seat where he was sitting. The person in the middle is also looking for a chair, so each time there will be one person who remains in the middle without a seat. He or she must then make a true statement and look for some "neighbors" for whom this statement is also true.

## Group Discussions

Below is a series of quite a few questions that can be used during the fellowship time. Note that some of these questions are appropriate for new groups, and some questions are better suited for groups in which the members already know each other a little. Normally, only one question will be used in each cell group meeting.

1. What was the happiest moment in your life?
2. What can you tell us about your first date?
3. What is the greatest regret of your life?
4. What was the hardest thing you have ever done?
5. What was the greatest compliment you ever received?
6. Who is your best earthly friend? Describe him or her.
7. Which room in your house do you like best?
8. What is the one thing you want to accomplish next week?
9. Where did you feel warmest and safest as a child?
10. If you had a time machine that would work only once, what point in the future or in history would you visit?
11. When was the last time you did something for the first time?
12. At a meal your friends start belittling a common friend. What do you do?
13. If you could take a pill that would enable you to live until you reach 1,000 years, would you do it? Why?
14. When you do something stupid, how much does it bother you to have other people notice it and laugh?
15. Would you like to know the exact date of your death?
16. If you could change two things about the way you were raised, what would they be? If you came from a divorced family, how did it affect you?
17. Who is your favorite relative? Why?
18. What is your favorite memory time spent, as a child, with your father? Your mother?
19. Who did God use to bring you to the point where you knew you needed Jesus?
20. If you could change places with a Bible character, whom would you choose? Why?
21. What is your favorite book of the Bible? Why?
22. If you could go anywhere in the world, where would you go?
23. Imagine your house is on fire and you only have time to take one possession with you (your family is all safe). What would you take?
24. What is your favorite movie or TV show?
25. Who has had the greatest influence on your life since we last gathered?
26. What was the best thing that happened to you this past week?
27. Recall a time when you failed recently.
28. Name someone you admire who had to overcome great obstacles to get where they are now.
29. What do you value most in a human relationship? In your relationship with Christ? Your parents?
30. How do you react when you aren't thanked for going out of your way for someone?
31. What is your favorite time of day?
32. (Singles) The kind of girl/boy I want to marry...(Couples) What caused me to marry my spouse.
33. What was your greatest disappointment in life?
34. What gift (apart from your conversion) will you never forget?
35. What was the most important event in your life this past week?
36. If you could choose to go anywhere in the world for three days, where would you go, and why?
37. If you could choose to meet anyone who ever lived in your country, who would that be, and why would you like to meet him/her?
38. If you could choose to live anywhere in the world, where would you live, and why?



39. What gift (spiritual, emotional, mental, etc.) do you believe you are bringing to this meeting? (In other words, what do you think you are bringing that might contribute to the encouragement of others?).
40. What was a significant experience in your life that changed your value system completely?
41. What are some of your goals for the year ahead?
42. Who are your parents, what do they do and what would you like to change about them?
43. If you could choose your career over again, what would you do?
44. If you became the leader of any country in the world, which would it be and why?
45. What were the best and worst experiences of your week?
46. If you could take a free two-week trip to any place in the world, where would it be and why?
47. If you could talk to any one person now living, who would it be and why?
48. Give every one a piece of paper and ask them to draw a picture of their jobs or whatever they do on a daily basis. Explain your sketches.
49. Why are you glad to be in this cell group tonight?
50. What are some strong and some weak points in your relationship with your eldest child or your parents-in-law or your husband?
51. Inform everyone that they have just been given one million dollars. Let each share how they would use their newly gained fortune.
52. Do you have a nickname and if so what is it? What nicknames do you have for your husband and children?
53. Is there an era in time that you would have liked to have lived in? If so, why?
54. Has the cell group been a help to you? Spend time talking about it and thanking each other.
55. Tell the cell group three things you appreciate about your family and three ways in which you find them difficult at times.
56. What is one thing you would really like see happen at the moment in your family? Your church? Your cell group? The world?
57. Who is the best friend you have at this point in your life?
58. Have you had an answered prayer recently? Share the story.
59. What is your occupation? What do you enjoy about it?
60. Who has been the greatest influence on your Christian life and why?
61. What book, movie, video have you seen/read that you would recommend to others? Why?
62. What do you think delights God above everything else in your life?
63. What is the most encouraging thing said to you this week?
64. What encouraging action have you done to someone this week?
65. What made you decide to attend this church?
66. What do you still want to accomplish with your life?
67. What is your most embarrassing experience?
68. For what are you thankful?
69. What is the most memorable event of your life and why?
70. Share the most meaningful Scripture to you and why it is so meaningful?
71. How did you and your partner meet and what made you start going out together or what kind of person would you like to have as your partner?
72. How would your life be different if you knew Jesus was returning in one week?
73. Who is the most interesting person you have met?
74. What is your favorite holiday spot and why do you enjoy it?
75. Share about a spiritual experience you have had.
76. What annoys you about your spouse/friend?
77. How do you relax?

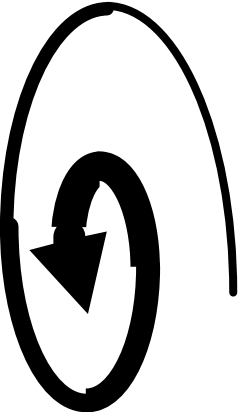
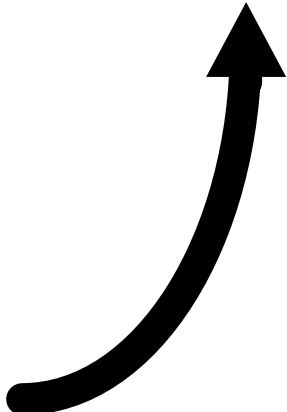
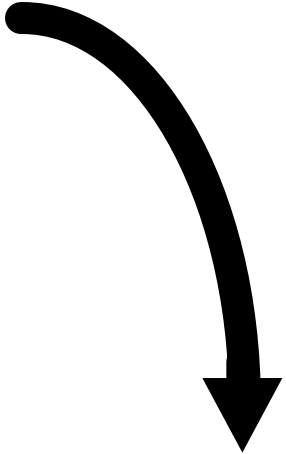
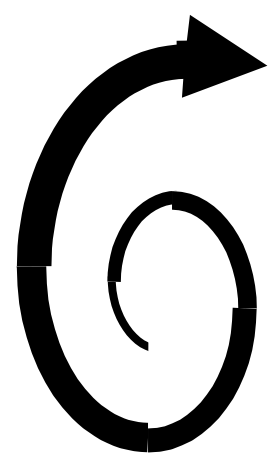
78. What is your favorite type of music/song, etc.?
79. What has happened to you during this week that you would like to tell the rest of the group?
80. When was the last time you got really angry?
81. If you could not fail, what would you like to do?
82. If you had to live your life over what would you change?
83. What do you want written on your tombstone?
84. What do you want said at your funeral?
85. What don't you want said at your funeral?
86. If you were to go and live on the moon and could carry only one thing, what would it be?
87. What would you do if you were to see (1) a person being robbed (2) a person drowning (3) a house on fire?
88. What was one thing that created stress in your life this week?
89. What is one thing that makes you feel guilty?
90. What is one thing that you do not understand about the opposite sex?
91. If you had this week to do over again, what would you do differently?
92. Describe another small group that you were a member of outside of your church. Why do you think the group worked (or didn't work)? You're not limited to "religious" groups. Most of us meet in small groups at work.
93. What is the most memorable Bible you have received? (e.g. at your baptism, wedding, conversion, etc.) Tell us about why it is meaningful to you.
94. What is the first thing that comes to mind when you think about God?
95. What are the biggest questions that you have about your relationship with God?
96. Under what circumstances do you feel most lonely? Least lonely? Why?
97. In what areas of your life is it most difficult to trust God? Other people? Yourself?
98. Why do you get up in the morning? The purpose is to find out what the motivating forces are in this person's life. It is a simple question but it takes a good deal of thought to answer honestly.
99. When was the last time you admitted you were wrong? Why is it so hard to do?
100. What have you learned recently from another believer?

**CELL GROUPS  
APPENDIX**

**2B**

# Sample Activities In A Cell Group Meeting

Following are some sample activities for each of the four parts of a cell group meeting. The times listed for each function are approximate:

Fellowship	Worship	Edification	Evangelism
Man to man	Man to God	God to man	Body of Christ to the world
"Inward"	"Upward"	"Downward"	"Outward"
20 minutes	20 minutes	30 minutes	20 minutes
 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enjoy fun activities together</li> <li>• Eat meals together</li> <li>• Get to know one another better</li> <li>• Encourage one another</li> <li>• Share joys with each other</li> <li>• Share problems with each other</li> <li>• Pray for one another</li> </ul>	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sing songs of praise</li> <li>• Thank God for His greatness</li> <li>• Thank God for all He has done</li> <li>• Pray aloud or silently</li> <li>• Read passages of worship (for example, the Psalms).</li> <li>• Read Christian poetry</li> </ul>	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Study passages of Scripture as a group</li> <li>• Apply biblical truth to everyday situations</li> <li>• Be involved in ministry with the group</li> <li>• Discover and use spiritual giftedness</li> <li>• Memorize Bible verses</li> </ul>	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Form a "prayer triplet" and pray for unsaved friends</li> <li>• Invite unbelievers to the group</li> <li>• As a group, meet the needs of people around you</li> <li>• Develop friendships with unbelievers</li> <li>• Share the Good News of Christ with others</li> </ul>



CELL GROUPS

LESSON 3

# Starting a Cell Group

## ☛ Lesson Purpose

The purpose of this lesson is to provide practical steps for starting a new cell group.

## ☛ Main Points

- Prayer support is extremely important.
- It may take time to develop initial contacts.
- A successful cell group must be planned.

## ☛ Desired Outcomes

When the content of this lesson has been mastered, each participant should:

- Understand what needs to happen in order to start one or more cell groups.
- Develop a plan to start a new cell group.

## ☛ Appendix

3A Planning Worksheet

## ☛ Suggestions to Trainers

This lesson is closely complemented by lesson 2 "Principles of Cell Group Leadership." Both of these lessons should be completed before the trainee starts his first group.

## I. PREPARE FOR A NEW CELL GROUP

### A. Form a Prayer Team

The most important step in starting a new cell group is prayer. The cell group leader should form a team of intercessors who will pray for him and the new cell group on a regular basis. These could be people from his local church, Christian friends and family members, or believers from other churches in the area where the cell group will be started.

Pray for God's clear leading and ask for wisdom concerning timing, location, etc. Pray for the revival of hearts of existing believers in the target area. Pray for each new cell group that is to be started. Satan will try to attack a new cell group church being started. Paul, in his ministry of church planting, specifically requested intercessory prayer (Eph 6:19, 1Th 5:25, Ro 15:30). The church planter must be a person of prayer, and must be surrounded by prayer.

### B. Form a Leadership Team

Although it is possible for one person to start a cell group, it is preferable to have a leadership team of two to four people. The leadership team members can more effectively do the research, evangelism and initial startup of the cell group. In addition, they are able to pray for one another, to hold each other accountable and to disciple the new believers who are brought into the group. Jesus Himself modeled this when He sent out the seventy-two in pairs for their first ministry experience (Lk 10:1). One person from the leadership team should be chosen to be the leader of the new cell group.

## C. Research Your Target Area

In order to study how and where to start cell groups as part of a church planting strategy, research must be done in the target area. In Manual One there is a lesson entitled, "Principles of Research" (SCP Vision lesson 4). If this research has not yet been completed, the leadership team should review this lesson and conduct the research. Research that is done according to the principles listed in the lesson will reveal key factors about how the future cell group should be formed.

## II. MAKE CONTACTS

Decide who your target audience is, and think about their felt needs (as identified in the research you did after completing Manual One). Pray about how your cell group could begin to meet these needs. Pray that God would show you key people in your target area. These are the people who are influential in their community, and who have vision, ambition and energy. Often, key people are already in some type of leadership position. They have the potential as Christians to be powerful witnesses in the lives of the many people with whom they have relationships.

If your target area is your neighborhood, then the process of bringing family, friends and acquaintances into the group is not difficult. You already have relationships developed with these people. Pray that God would use your relationships to give you opportunity to invite them to the cell group. On a piece of paper, make a list of those people whom you talk to or run into during the course of a week. Begin praying about each person on your list, that you will have opportunity to share Christ with them and invite them to the cell group.

No matter who your target group is, begin praying for their salvation even while you are developing relationships with them.

If your target area is not your immediate neighborhood, then the process of developing relationships is slower. You must first get to know those whom you would invite, and begin developing relationships with them. Spend time with them, look for ways to serve them and help them. Be "salt and light" to them even before you start the group. No matter who your target group is, begin praying for their salvation even while you are developing relationships with them. If there are several different social levels or ethnic groups in your target area, you might need to have a cell group to reach each group. Start with one cell group to target one of these social or ethnic groups, but make plans to start other cell groups to reach all levels of society in your target area.

You should also contact any other churches in the target area to talk with them about your plans for starting a cell group church. If possible, get to know the leadership in these churches and ask them for their blessing on your ministry. Make sure that they understand you will not be "stealing" any of their sheep, since your cell groups will grow as a result of evangelism done with non-believers, many of whom do not ever go to a church.

Even if your target area has no churches and no Christians, the process is the same. Get to know people in your target group, spend time with them, learn about them, and try to serve them and demonstrate through your words and actions the love of God. If you are involved in this type of pioneering work, make it a priority to spend time in prayer to break down spiritual strongholds. Expect a lot of resistance from Satan, who will not easily give up an area that has no Christian witness.

## III. CHOOSE A LOCATION

The most natural location for your cell group to meet initially is at your home or apartment. If this is not possible, the second choice would be the home of someone on the leadership team. The next choice would be the home of someone with whom you are developing a relationship. If this is your only option, pray first about approaching them with your request.

The most natural location for your cell group to meet initially is at your home or apartment.

Try to avoid choosing a meeting location for which you have to pay rent. It is an unwanted expense for the cell group, and it has the potential to cause many problems. Right away the group would have to deal with how they would pay for the location, and the focus of the meetings could be sidetracked. Newcomers might feel pressured to have to help financially, especially if other

members are already doing this. This can be a strong barrier that would prevent many people from coming to the group, or from returning to the group once they have visited.

After deciding where to meet, you need to decide when. You should choose the day and time based on job schedules, usual weekend activities and weekday evening activities of your target audience. If everyone in your target group has to shop for food and necessities on Saturday morning, don't schedule your cell group meeting time then. Try to choose a time when most people can come. Use your target area research to determine what times would be best, and ask those whom you would be inviting what times would be good for them.

#### **IV. PREPARE FOR THE FIRST MEETING**

Your first meeting should be well prayed for and well planned. Review with your leadership team what will happen during the meeting time. Make sure the host (if it is not you) understands how many people have been invited, how to set up the meeting area, and (if appropriate) what refreshments will be available during the fellowship time. Plan ahead for songbooks or copies of lyrics for the songs you will be teaching and singing. Have some extra Bibles on hand for those who don't own one or cannot bring one.

Since many of the people coming to the first meeting do not know each other, it's important to have some "ice breaker" activities to begin with. These are activities which simply allow the members of the group to get to know one another in a fun, non-threatening way (see Appendix 2A "Cell Group Ice Breakers").

Keep things informal and natural. Don't begin with a twenty minute prayer, and don't do a Bible study which will confuse and bore the visitors (e.g. don't study the book of Revelation at the first meeting). Instead, the cell group leader should lead the group in a time of Bible study that is appropriate for the group. This might be discussion of a passage in the Bible, inductive Bible study, or authoritative teaching. Introduce the Bible as the word of God, which has answers to the questions and daily problems of life.

Don't begin with a twenty minute prayer, and don't do a Bible study which will confuse and bore the visitors!

Teach them one or two songs and use the songbooks/lyrics to help them sing. Do your first Bible discussion with the group. Don't expect a lot of input or involvement at this stage of the group. Try to show practical application to the felt needs that were identified in the target area research.

Discuss the purpose(s) of meeting together in the cell group. Decide with the group if the day and time of this first meeting is good for most everyone, or if it should be changed. Ask them if there is anything about which you can be praying for them. Write this down somewhere so that you can remember to ask them about it at the next meeting. Close the meeting with prayer. Don't be too hasty to have everyone leave! Many times visitors will be more relaxed after the "meeting" is over, and you can use this time to get to know them better.

After the visitors have left, evaluate with your leadership team what went well and what could be improved for the next meeting. It is best to do this right after the meeting, while details are still fresh in everyone's minds. Write down any suggestions for change or improvement.

#### **QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION, REVIEW AND APPLICATION**

- What basic components would you include in a plan to start a new cell group?
- What are some of the unique problems you might encounter when you are doing "pioneering" church planting in an area with no Christian witness? What could be done to overcome these obstacles?
- What would you say to a believer who is part of your cell group but who is fearful to open his home to the visitors he would not know?

## **ACTION PLAN**

- Let's say you are going to have your first cell group meeting in one week. Use Appendix 3A, "Planning Worksheet, Cell Group Meeting," to create a plan for this first meeting. Go into as much detail as possible. Are there other aspects of the meeting you would also put in your plan? When finished, share your plan with one of the other trainees and have him evaluate it. You evaluate his plan as well.
- If you have not yet completed your target area research, you need to do this now. After performing your target area research, use the principles and practical steps in this lesson to create a plan to start a new cell group. Include names of people on the leadership team, names of your intercessors, how you will make contacts, which felt needs your cell group will try to meet, when and where the group will meet, and anything else you feel should be part of the plan. After completing this plan, have a trainer or your supervisor review it with you.





# Planning Worksheet

## CELL GROUP MEETING

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Date and time of meeting: \_\_\_\_\_

Location and Host: \_\_\_\_\_

### **Fellowship**

Refreshments: \_\_\_\_\_

Activities, Games: \_\_\_\_\_

### **Worship**

Song Leader: \_\_\_\_\_

### **Prayer**

Prayer activities: \_\_\_\_\_

### **Bible Discussion**

Discussion Leader: \_\_\_\_\_

Scripture Passage: \_\_\_\_\_

### **Ministry Envisioning**

Sharing Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Group activities: \_\_\_\_\_

Individual activities: \_\_\_\_\_

Other Planning Items: \_\_\_\_\_

### **To think about:**

- Who is your apprentice leader?
- Who is discipling each member of your group? (Whom are you discipling?)
- What are you doing to help your apprentice leader develop leadership skills? How are you delegating ministry to him/her? How are you modeling ministry with him/her?
- Are you praying for each member in your cell group?



CELL GROUPS

LESSON 4

# Cell Group Evangelism

## ☛ Lesson Purpose

The purpose of this lesson is to explain the process of evangelism in cell groups.

## ☛ Main Points

- *Oikos* evangelism reaches those you already have relationships with.
- Target evangelism reaches those outside your immediate circle.
- There are two types of unbelievers: type A and B.

## ☛ Desired Outcomes

When the content of this lesson has been mastered, each participant should:

- Have an understanding that in general, unbelievers can be grouped into two categories (Type A and Type B), and that different types of evangelism are needed to reach each of these types of people.
- Understand the concept of *oikos*—each person's network of relationships.
- Make a list of their own personal *oikos* relationships.
- Understand the process of *oikos* evangelism and target evangelism in a cell group.

## ☛ Appendix

4A "About *Oikos*"

## ☛ Suggestions to Trainers

This lesson describes one way to look at the spiritual condition of unbelievers by categorizing them into two groups—basically, those who are interested in the *Gospel* and those who are not. This simple definition helps the trainees better understand how evangelism can work in cell groups. Note that the concept of the spiritual condition of an unbeliever and his understanding of God is more fully developed in this manual in evangelism lessons 6,7 "The Process of Conversion."

Be sure to leave enough time during the lesson to have the trainees do the "Making a List of Your *Oikos* Relationships" exercise.

## I. TWO TYPES OF UNBELIEVERS

In order for a cell group to effectively reach lost people around it, there must first be an understanding of how best to minister to those people. In the second chapter of Ephesians, Paul writes about how Christ came to break down the barrier between Jews and Gentiles and make salvation available to all who would believe. Ephesians 2:17 says that Jesus came and preached peace to those who were **far away** (the Gentiles) and peace to those who were **near** (the Jews).

We can use a similar analogy when we look at those who have not yet accepted Christ as Savior. Some people are very far away from this commitment, and others are much closer. Ralph Neighbour has categorized those unbelievers who are **near** as "Type A" unbelievers, and those who are **far away** as "Type B" unbelievers. These designations are arbitrary, and we could call them whatever we wanted. The point is that because these groups of people are different, the cell group is going to have to use different methods to evangelize each of them.

### A. Type A Unbelievers: Those Who Are Interested

Type A unbelievers are people who may already believe in God, and know that Jesus is the Son of God. They might have some knowledge of the Bible, and understand that Jesus died on the cross. They may or may not attend a church, or perhaps just attend occasionally (e.g. Christmas and Easter).

These are people who are open to God's direction for their lives and are searching to find spiritual answers to their problems and questions. Type A unbelievers would not be opposed to coming to a Bible study to learn more about God and His word. Many times, a Type A unbeliever is very close to making a commitment to Christ. Often, he simply has not had the Gospel message clearly explained to him.

### B. Type B Unbelievers: Those Who Don't Want To Know

Type B unbelievers seldom or never attend church, and may or may not believe in God. They don't necessarily accept the Bible as an authoritative book, and probably do not know much about the Bible. Jesus is probably nothing more than a historical figure or they may not even have heard of Him.

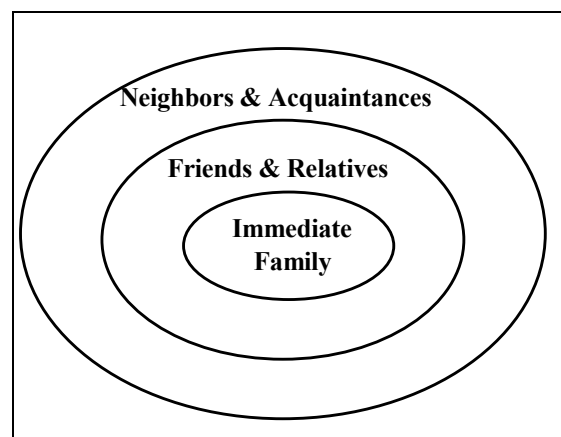
Type B people are perhaps happy with their way of life, and are not searching for God's purposes for them. They will not listen to an evangelistic outreach, and they won't attend any type of "church" activities. In fact, some Type B unbelievers are openly hostile to the Gospel message. They do not want to attend a Bible study, and do not see how "religion" has any relevance to their everyday lives.

## II. UNDERSTANDING *OIKOS*

*Oikos*<sup>4</sup> is a Greek word that appears frequently in the New Testament. It is a term that describes the personal community of relationships which exists for each person. Strong's Greek Dictionary of the New Testament defines *oikos* as "a house, all the persons forming one family, and/or a household." For example, in Acts 16:15, it is used to describe Lydia's family: "When she and the members of her household were baptized, she invited us to her home."

Each of us has an *oikos*, the circle of people in our lives with whom we have relationships. These relationships include our family, close friends, people we work with, neighbors and others with whom we spend time on a regular basis. Figure 4.1 shows the relationship of these groups that make up our own personal *oikos*.

Figure 4.1 *Oikos* Relationships



Our most effective personal evangelism is usually with the people who are already in our lives, the people with whom we have relationships.

There are many methods for doing evangelism, depending on the situation and whom you are trying to reach. We can and should sometimes speak to total strangers about Jesus Christ, as the Holy Spirit gives us opportunities. But our most effective personal evangelism is usually with the people who are already in our lives, the people with whom we have relationships. In His wisdom, God has given us a method to share Christ with others that is based on the trust and caring that comes from having a personal relationship with them. It is not an impersonal "program" with people you do not know; rather, it is a very genuine way to

<sup>4</sup> *OIKOS*

show a friend that you care about them.

Being a "living example" is a powerful witness to the people in our *oikos*. The Holy Spirit uses our problems and victories to show others that Christ makes a real difference in our daily lives, that the Bible has answers to life's problems, and that joy and peace can be found in an often troublesome world.

#### **A. Exercise: Making a List of Your *Oikos* Relationships**

On a piece of paper, take a few minutes to write down the names of the people with whom you talk or interact with on a regular basis during the course of a week or a month. Write one name per line. Limit your list to no more than 20 people (if there are more, choose the 20 with whom you have the closest relationships).

Now, examine the names on your list. For each person who you know is a believer, place a cross in front of his or her name. Next, think about the people who are not believers. For all the "Type A" people, place an **A** in front of their names. These are people whom you think would be open to spiritual things, to studying the Bible, or to learning more about God's purpose for their lives.

Finally, look at the rest of the names. If these are people you know are not interested in God or spiritual things, who would not want to come to a Bible study, and who do not see God as relevant in any way to their daily life, place a **B** in front of their names. These are "Type B" unbelievers.

Save this list, perhaps in your Bible. The people with a cross in front of their names are believers who could possibly help you start a new cell group. The people with an **A** in front of their names are those for whom you can be praying and inviting to your cell group. The people with a **B** in front of their names are those for whom you can be praying about spending more time with.

You might be surprised to see how few (if any!) unbelievers are in your personal *oikos*. Many Christians have few relationships with unbelievers. A new believer will have the most relationships with unbelievers. However, as Christians begin to fellowship with other Christians, they soon find that they spend little or no time any more with their non-Christian friends.

### **III. SHARE GROUPS**

When we think about the functions and activities of a cell group, we see very quickly that this type of group would appeal to a Type A unbeliever. They would probably feel comfortable as the group prays, worships and learns from the Bible. However, it is just as easy to see that a Type B unbeliever would feel very uncomfortable in a cell group. Type B people would either never come to a cell group meeting in the first place, or if they did attend, would most likely never return.

In order to reach a Type B unbeliever, we need to use something which Ralph Neighbour calls "Share Groups." You can call it whatever you like, but the basic principle is that for a Type B unbeliever, relationships must be built before the Gospel can be explained. Developing these relationships takes time and effort, but it is the best way to reach people who are indifferent or antagonistic towards God.

A **Share Group** is simply two or three Christians who begin spending time with Type B unbelievers from their circle of relationships. Initially, this will not be time for Bible study, for prayer, or even for talking about God. Rather, it is time for relationships to be developed, so that the unbelievers can see that the Christians are genuinely interested in them, in their problems and in their families. In time, the Holy Spirit will provide opportunities for the Christians to share how God is working in their lives, how He helps them with problems, and how the Bible has answers to life's questions.

When we think about the functions and activities of a cell group, we see very quickly that this type of group would appeal to a Type A unbeliever.

## IV. THE PROCESS OF CELL GROUP EVANGELISM

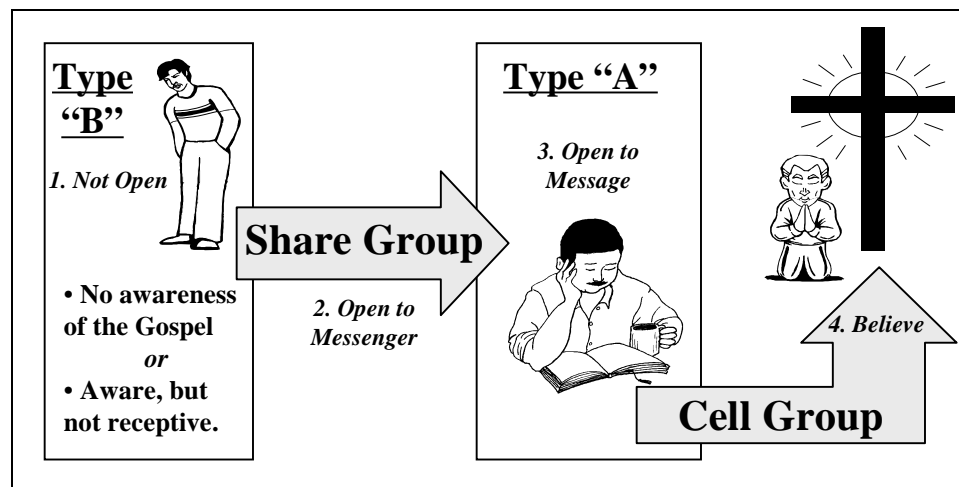
### A. *Oikos* Evangelism

A new cell group is usually started with several Type A unbelievers. These are the people for whom the Christians have been praying and to whom they have been witnessing. The first Bible discussions with the group are very evangelistic in nature, and should be designed to introduce the new members in the group to Christ. As the Holy Spirit convicts hearts, the unbelievers will commit their lives to Christ, and begin growing in their faith. As new believers, these people will have many natural contacts with unbelievers in their *oikos*es. As they are grounded in their faith and begin to mature, they also will reach out to the Type A people they know, by praying for them and inviting them to the group. In this way the process of praying, reaching, commitment and growing in the Lord is repeated in the group. Conversion and growth happen along the lines of *oikos* relationships that God gives to each one of us.

A new cell group is usually started with several Type A unbelievers.

At the same time that the Type A unbelievers are being brought into the group and are committing their lives to Christ, the mature Christians in the group begin to pray about which Type B unbelievers to reach out to. They choose only several people for this type of ministry, since a large amount of time and effort is required. At least two and possibly three of the Christians begin to pray for and spend time with each of the Type B unbelievers. This is not time for Bible study, prayer or "religious" things. Initially, this is time spent simply to build trust relationships. Figure 4.2 illustrates how share groups and cell groups help to present the Gospel to both Type A and B unbelievers.

**Figure 4.2 Reaching Type A and B Unbelievers**



As these relationships deepen, the Holy Spirit will give opportunities to begin sharing how God is actively working in and through the lives of the believers. They can let the unbelievers know they are praying for them in times of trouble, and give credit to God for answers to those prayers. A simple study of the Bible might be started between members of this "share group," but not yet in the cell group. In time, the Holy Spirit will bring the Type B person to a point where he is ready to learn more about spiritual things, and the Christian is able then to invite him to the cell group meetings. This Type B person (who at this point is probably closer to being a Type A) feels comfortable in the cell group, since the same people who were spending time with him before are also in the cell group. He then moves along the path of discovery, conviction, commitment and growth. In time, this new Christian will begin reaching out to the people in his *oikos* who need to learn about Christ's love.

### B. Target Evangelism

*Oikos* evangelism is one of the most natural and effective methods for reaching the lost around us. This is the primary method of evangelism to use with new believers in a cell group. After the group

has been involved in *oikos* evangelism, a second type of strategy (which Ralph Neighbour calls "targeting") can be introduced. **Target evangelism** reaches out to people who are strangers, but share common needs, interests or problems. Target evangelism should be used only in cell groups that are already involved in *oikos* evangelism.

Target evangelism groups are similar to share groups because the people they reach are not necessarily interested in the Gospel. They come together to discuss their needs, problems or common interests. The topic or theme for these groups ranges widely, from self-esteem, building marriages, raising children and divorce recovery to groups that meet to discuss music, pets or car repair! The best way to decide what type of group to offer is to talk with the new members of the share group as they are reaching out to the people in their *oikos*. The need for a certain type of target group is often determined by the hurts or interests of those people with whom new members are building relationships.

*Oikos* evangelism reaches friends and acquaintances.  
*Target* evangelism reaches strangers with common interests.

As the groups meet to discuss needs, hurts, interests or problems, the Christians have an excellent opportunity to share how God and the Bible provide answers, encouragement and relief to these areas of life. Those who express deeper interest can be invited to the cell meetings, where they can begin to experience the fellowship and encouragement of the group. Target evangelism is often an appropriate method for reaching out to an area where natural lines of *oikos* do not exist, as in the case of a "pioneering" ministry.

### C. Group Size and Multiplication

The ideal range for the size of a cell group is 8-12 people, and it should never grow larger than 15 people. Once a group grows larger than 15, the dynamics of communication and interaction change, and it no longer is able to provide the sense of togetherness and intimacy that a cell group will naturally have.

As the group begins to reach out through *oikos* evangelism and target evangelism, the Holy Spirit will convict hearts and people will begin to join the group. Consider the rate of growth of the group versus the maturity of the apprentice leader with whom you are working. Do not allow the group to grow so large so quickly that multiplication must happen before the apprentice is ready. Once the group begins to approach 15 people, share with the group that it must stay at this level until the apprentice is prepared spiritually, mentally and emotionally to take over leadership of the new group.

Once multiplication takes place, the leader of each group will begin working with an apprentice, and evangelism will continue in earnest in both of the groups.

## QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION, REVIEW AND APPLICATION

- In Luke 5:32, Jesus said, "I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." How much time did Jesus spend with "sinners" during his earthly ministry? Give two or three examples of people Jesus met with who would be considered Type A and Type B people.
- What types of activities can you think of to build relationships with the Type B people from your own personal *oikos* list? What other Christian can go with you as you build these relationships?
- How much time do you think it takes to build meaningful relationships with unbelievers? What priorities, if any, would have to change in your life in order to spend more time with unbelievers?

## ACTION PLAN

In your cell group, develop a strategy for reaching out through the relationships of each member. If others in your group have not made a list of the relationships in their *oikos*, have them do it at the next meeting. Have the group decide which Type A people to pray for and contact, and which Type B people to pray for and begin spending time with. The cell group leader should maintain a list of these names, so that the group can hold itself accountable to reaching out to them.

## SOURCES

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## About "Oikos"

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To fully understand the importance of cell groups in a church planting strategy, we must consider the word *oikos*, a biblical term that describes the basic building block of any society. It appears throughout the Bible and refers to the personal community that exists for us all. It is translated into English as "house" or "household." For example, in Acts 16:31, Paul and Silas used it when they said, "*Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved—you and your household.*"

### **OIKOS: THE WORLD'S WAY OF FORMING CELL GROUPS FOR ALL**

The *oikos*es each of us lives within are not large. We may know several dozen, even several hundred, people, but quality time spent with others is extremely limited—and only those to whom we devote quality time can be said to be a part of our *oikos*, our personal community. Each of us has a primary group that includes some of our relatives and some of our friends who relate to us through work, recreation, hobbies, and neighbors. These are the people we talk to, relate to, and share with, for at least one hour per week.

Only those to whom we devote quality time can be said to be a part of our *oikos*.

It is most unusual to find a person who has as many as 20 people in his or her *oikos*. For many years, I have surveyed the sizes of the *oikos*es of those attending my seminars and classes. Christians usually average nine people, and a large percentage of them had not developed a single new *oikos* relationship in the past six months!

Life is made up of endless chains of *oikos* connections. Every person is already entwined in these relationships. If people are accepted into an *oikos*, they feel a security that does not exist when they meet strangers.

In every culture of the world, the intimacy of *oikos* connections is considered to be sacred. The Chinese have a special word for close friendships, and such bonds are considered to be a sacred thing. In Argentina, I was shown a gourd and a metal tube with holes on one end of it for the drinking of "mate tea." A most intimate *oikos* custom in their culture is sharing with a friend by drinking from the same tube. Usually, the ceremony is limited to family members.

### **OIKOSSES VARY WITH EMOTIONAL STRENGTH**

Since the world began, people have always lived in *oikos*es. Every single culture, without exception, has them. The security of the individual is in the affirmation received by those who are significant in the *oikos*. In the earliest hours of childhood, the mother is the one who provides affirmation by her presence and her attention. As the child develops, this affirmation is received, or not received, by the other household members. Then the school teacher becomes a part of the *oikos*, and later it becomes the adolescent's *oikos* group that must approve him. In the workplace, affirmation is tied to promotions and raises in salary.

Each *oikos* becomes a part of a larger social structure. The important thing for us to grasp is that every human being lives in a special, tiny world, often being compelled to relate to people who are forced upon him or her by *oikos* structures. Today, the hurts of being thrust into a home where the mother is an alcoholic or the father is a child molester composes a significant ministry for cell group churches.

As you read this, consider the implications of this in your own life. Take a moment to write down the names of all the people you spend one full hour each week sharing with in a direct, person-to-person manner. (This hour can be accumulated a few minutes at a time, scattered over seven days, but it must be regular—and it

must be face to face). The overpowering impact of a limited few upon each of our lives must be considered. For example: Who are the significant others in your life? Whose approval or disapproval is important to you? (I have counseled those who are still trying to please a disapproving father who has been dead for years). Who do you fear may reject you, and whom do you look to for affirmation? Meditating upon one's own *oikos* can bring great insights!

## CHRISTIAN WORKERS HAVE *OIKOSES* LACKING UNBELIEVERS

My own survey of this subject among Christian workers has revealed amazing facts. I am certain I have polled over 5,000 pastors, pastor's wives, church staff members, and missionaries in at least thirty countries. It is a rare thing to find those who are in "full time Christian work" who have unbelievers in their primary *oikos*.

It is a rare thing to find those who are in "full time Christian work" who have unbelievers in their primary *oikos*.

Unless she is employed in the secular world, the wife of a Christian worker is least likely to have a single contact with the unchurched. Her *oikos* is filled only with church people. On one occasion an educational director of a large church put his head in his hands and wept with embarrassment as he realized he had spent his entire career within the confines of church work. He could not remember having an *oikos* with an unbeliever in it since he graduated from a secular college.

## JESUS CONSTANTLY INVADED PAGAN *OIKOSES*

While the church pulls people out of their *oikos*es and gives them membership in an organization which swallows them up, the New Testament reveals a different approach to people relationships. Jesus constantly did His work by invading *oikos* groups. He knew there was no other way to share the Gospel except to penetrate these small clusters of people. It is obvious that each *oikos* is based in a house, not an institutional building. Thus, the Lord spent His time going from one house to another.

In Luke 19:2-5, we see Jesus making contact with Zacchaeus. He says to him, "*Zacchaeus...I must stay at your house today.*" In Luke 7:36-38 we find Him in the *oikos* of a Pharisee who has invited Him to have dinner with him. While He reclines at the table, a prostitute comes and pours perfume on His feet. What amazing examples of *oikos* penetration!

In Matthew 8:14, He enters Peter's house and heals one of the *oikos* members living there. In Matthew 9:10, He eats dinner with His disciples and many tax collectors and sinners at Matthew's house. Again, He penetrates an *oikos* in Matthew 9:23 as He enters the ruler's house and sees the flute players and the noisy crowd. In Matthew 17:25, Peter finds Him in a Capernaum house, where Jesus speaks to him about paying taxes. We read in Mark 3:20 that Jesus entered a house and a crowd gathered, "*so that He and His disciples were not even able to eat.*" In Mark 7:17, He enters a house where His disciples quiz Him about a parable. In Mark 7:24, He enters a house to be alone, only to be swamped by a crowd that has learned where He was staying.

## THE EARLY CHURCH PENETRATED *OIKOSES*, TOO!

In Acts 5:42, we read that the early church went from house to house. In Acts 8:3, when Saul wanted to destroy the church, he knew where to find the people of God. We are told that "*going from house to house, he dragged off men and women and put them in prison.*"

It is interesting to see in Acts 10 how the Holy Spirit arranged for Peter to get from the house of Simon the tanner to the residence of Cornelius, where Cornelius' conversion took place. The penetration of *oikos*es is the pattern for ministry in the first century.

The penetration of *oikos*es is the pattern for ministry in the first century.

Conversions are frequently recorded as sweeping an entire *oikos* into the Kingdom. In Acts 16, both Lydia and the jailer are converted along with the members of their *oikos*. The first act of Lydia after her conversion was to invite Paul to stay at her house.

## REJECTION BY ONE'S *OIKOS* FOR BECOMING A CHRISTIAN IS PAINFUL

Jesus reminded us in Matthew 10:36 that following Him can be a costly decision: *"a man's enemies will be the members of his own oikos."* Making a decision to follow Him can cause confusion in relationships with primary people. This is why He said in Matthew 10:35, *"For I have come to turn a man against his father, a daughter against her mother, a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law...."* In verse 37, He calls for a decision between the *oikos* and the Kingdom: *"Anyone who loves his father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me; anyone who loves his son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me...."*

In Singapore today, there is a Zone Pastor Intern on the staff I work with who is from a Hindu home. After he committed to follow Christ, the *oikos* descended on him with wrath. His uncle waited until he was present to say to his father, "Why do you allow your son to disgrace us all like this?" In contemporary Southeast Asia, a young physician followed the Lord at the price of his Muslim family declaring him dead and buried. *Oikos*es can be ruthless when one chooses another path for life.

## OUR LORD'S BODY IS CALLED AN "*OIKOS*"

However, there is a very special *oikos* for those who have faced the ultimate rejection. Hebrews 3:6 says, *"But Christ is faithful as a son over God's oikos. And we are His oikos, if we hold on to our courage and the hope of which we boast."* Consider these additional Scriptures that speak of this truth, found in 1 Peter 4:17, 1 Timothy 3:15; Ephesians 2:19; and 1 Peter 2:5:

*"For it is time for judgment to begin with the oikos of God; and if it begins with us, what will the outcome be for those who do not obey the Gospel of God?"*

*"If I am delayed, you will know how people ought to conduct themselves in God's oikos, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and foundation of the truth."*

*"Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God's people and members of God's oikos."*

*"...you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual oikos to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ."*

The concept of *oikos* describing the church should make us recognize the significance of the cell as the basic Christian community. Scripture refers to the early Christians as members of this spiritual *oikos* by speaking of those who have come to faith by family units, rather than just by personal commitments:

*"Crispus, the synagogue ruler, and his entire oikos believed in the Lord... Greet also the church that meets at their house... Greet those who belong to the oikos of Aristobulus... Greet those in the oikos of Narcissus who are in the Lord... some from Chloe's oikos have informed me that there are quarrels among you... Yes, I also baptized the oikos of Stephanas... You know that the oikos of Stephanas were the first converts in Achaia... Aquila and Priscilla greet you warmly in the Lord, and so does the church that meets at their oikos... the saints send you greetings, especially those who belong to Caesar's oikos... Give my greeting to... Nymphas and the church in his oikos... May the Lord show mercy to the oikos of Onesiphorus... Greet Priscilla and Aquila and the oikos of Onesiphorus."*

Truly, the early church thought about the chains of *oikos*es to be won while they simultaneously rejoiced that God had formed them in basic Christian communities. For the church to live at *oikos* level was certainly God's plan. The heart of the Christian life is not related to a word for "temple," or "synagogue," or "church building." As the basic fabric of human life is embedded in the *oikos*, even so the life of the Body of Christ is to be *oikos*-based.

The early church thought about the chains of *oikos*es to be won.

By R. W. Neighbour, edited by J. Geske  
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CELL GROUPS

LESSON 5

# Cell Group Demonstration

## ☛ Lesson Purpose

The Purpose of this lesson is to provide a demonstration (using in-class participation) of some activities of a typical cell group meeting, in order to familiarize the trainees with some "hands on" practical experience.

## ☛ Main Points

- Participants with "hands on" experience with a cell group format will be better equipped to lead their own cell groups.

## ☛ Desired Outcomes

When the content of this lesson has been mastered, each participant should:

- Observe and participate in one or more aspects of a typical cell group meeting.
- Evaluate the actions and responses of group members as they practice leading and participating in the activities.

## ☛ Suggestions to Trainers

This lesson requires planning and preparation in order to be beneficial. The trainer must think beforehand which activities he would like to do with the group of trainees, and plan accordingly. If any type of Bible study time is to be part of the in-class activities, the trainees should be given one or two days before this lesson in order to prepare.

There are basically four types of activities to choose from, and they relate to the four parts of a typical cell group meeting: fellowship, worship, edification and evangelism. Unless there is more than an hour available to spend in this lesson, it is doubtful that the trainer will have enough time to practice all four areas. A more likely scenario is for the trainer to choose one or two activities to practice. These choices will be based on the number, type, experience and needs of the trainees.

The examples and suggestions given in this lesson are only guidelines. If the trainer is aware of certain areas of difficulty or questions related to a specific context, he should by all means adjust the activities of this lesson to answer those problems or questions.

If the group of trainees is large, they should be divided into several smaller groups of no more than 8-10 persons for the in-class exercise. The trainer should assign a cell group "leader" to each of the working groups. Depending on the activity, the trainer might want to have several people assume the role of leadership during this exercise time.

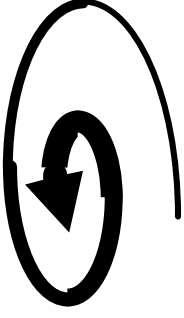
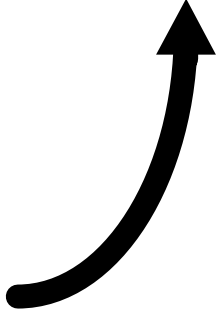
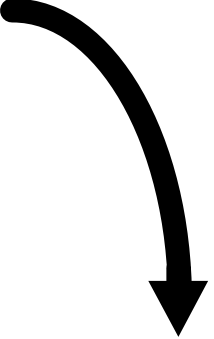
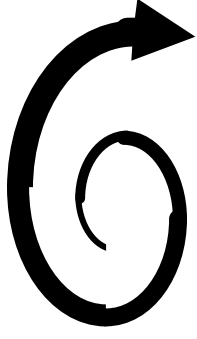
Keep in mind that the overall goal of this lesson is to give practical, hands-on experience in various aspects of cell group life and ministry. It should also be fun!

## I. CELL GROUP DEMONSTRATION

The purpose of this lesson is to provide an opportunity to observe and participate in various aspects of a cell group meeting. Remember that a cell group meeting has four parts: fellowship, worship, edification and evangelism. This lesson has been designed to give the trainer flexibility in choosing which of these four functions to demonstrate. If the group would benefit from practicing a time of fellowship and worship, the trainer may choose to focus on these areas. If the group would like to spend some time in

discipleship, they might practice inductive Bible study. The activities for this lesson will be limited only by the size of the group and the time that is available.

**Figure 5.1 The Four Functions of a Cell Group Meeting**

Fellowship	Worship	Edification	Evangelism
Man to man	Man to God	God to man	Body of Christ to the world
"Inward"	"Upward"	"Downward"	"Outward"
			

Following are suggestions for each of the four areas of a cell group meeting. The trainer should decide which areas should be practiced, and in what specific way(s). If there is time, some evaluation should be done after each activity. If needed, refer back to Cell Group Appendix 2B "Sample Activities in a Cell Group Meeting" for a review of typical activities for each of the four functions.

#### A. Fellowship

*Scenario:* the cell group is having its first meeting. Friends and acquaintances of the believers have been invited, and in general, the people in the group do not know each other. The cell group leader would like to have the group spend some time in activities which will help the members get to know each other better. (Take some time to work with several of the icebreakers in Appendix 2A "Cell Group Ice Breakers." Or, if he prefers, the trainer can use his own activities that will help the group members get to know one another better).

#### B. Worship

*Scenario:* the cell group has been meeting for several weeks. So far, the worship time has consisted of simply singing a few songs that the group has learned. The cell group leader would like to share some other ways in which the group can worship God together. This might include praying through or reading through some of the Psalms (each person reads a favorite Psalm, or each person reads several verses of one Psalm), singing new or unfamiliar worship songs, praying in groups of two or three people, etc.

#### C. Edification

There are several activities that would aid in understanding what happens during the edification time of a cell group meeting:

- *One-on-one discipleship.* Scenario: The cell group has been studying Luke 14:26: "If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his father and mother, his wife and children, his brothers and sisters—yes, even his own life—he cannot be My disciple." The younger Christians in the group are confused, and the cell group leader has asked the more mature Christians to spend some time during the cell group meeting to help explain this passage to them. (The trainer should divide the working group into two parts. The first half of the trainees will play the role of older, more mature Christians. The other half will play the role of brand new Christians).
- *Inductive Bible study.* Scenario: the cell group is going to study a passage in the Bible using the inductive method. (The trainer should ask the class beforehand to prepare a brief inductive

study on a favorite passage. As time allows, each person will lead the group in a time of inductive study using the passage and questions each has prepared).

- *Authoritative teaching.* Scenario: the cell group leader wants to give several people in his group the opportunity to share some teaching from Scripture. However, he wants them to give practical insights rather than a sermon. He has asked them to prepare some thoughts that they can share in 4-5 minutes with the group. The cell group leader is responsible to make sure each person stays within the given time limit. If there is time, the other people in the group can ask questions about statements or ideas that were not clear to them. (The trainer will need to ask the trainees to prepare beforehand for this activity.)

#### **D. Evangelism**

The evangelism time can be practiced in several different ways:

- *Personal testimony.* Scenario: the cell group has invited several visitors who are not believers. The leader has asked one or two people in the group to share their personal testimony in 2-3 minutes using "normal" language that would be understandable to a non-Christian. Several people should play the role of those giving their testimony, and several others should play the role of the non-Christians who are hearing something like this for the very first time. If the "visitors" hear something which is not clear or confusing, they should stop the person sharing and ask the group for clarification. (For this activity the trainer needs to ask the trainees beforehand to prepare a brief personal testimony).
- *Future ministry plans.* Scenario: the cell group is located in an area which is highly industrial and where mothers and fathers usually both work. So far, attempts at building relationships and inviting people to the Wednesday cell group meetings have been unsuccessful. The only day the local population has off work is Sundays. There are a lot of children in the area. The cell group needs to discuss how they could reach out to this target group of people. (The trainer needs to assign one person to be the cell group leader).
- *"Share" group.* Scenario: the cell group has a vision and burden to reach out to the men in their community. However, most of the men have no interest in anything spiritual and refuse to come to the cell group meeting. The cell group decides to start a "share group" which will somehow involve the men of the community in an activity or in a discussion of some topic of interest. It will also provide an opportunity to build relationships with them in order to eventually share Christ with them. In this particular community, the men seem to enjoy playing soccer, and working on their cars on the weekends. The cell group needs to discuss concrete ways in which they could start a share group with some of these men. (The trainer needs to assign one person to be the cell group leader).

## **II. EVALUATION**

The trainees should evaluate the different activities of the "cell groups." What were their strengths and weaknesses? How did the cell group "leader" handle different problems or questions? What could have been done differently?

## **QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION, REVIEW AND APPLICATION**

- Why is it important to plan for each part of a cell group meeting?
- In what ways did the leaders of the "cell groups" in this exercise have difficulty with the roles they played? Will there be similar difficulties in your actual cell group meetings?

## **ACTION PLAN**

Remember the things you learned from this lesson when you are leading your own cell group, or when you are training others how to lead their groups.





CELL GROUPS

6

LESSON

# Philosophy of Cell Group Ministry

## ☛ Lesson Purpose

The purpose of this lesson is to examine the role of cell groups in an overall saturation church planting strategy.

## ☛ Main Points

- Cell groups facilitate Saturation Church Planting.
- There are many ways to use cell groups in ministry.

## ☛ Desired Outcomes

When the content of this lesson has been mastered, each participant should:

- Learn that cell groups are foundational building blocks for larger ministry strategies.
- Understand the life cycle of a cell group.
- Understand the role of cell groups in a saturation church planting strategy.
- Be able to develop his own cell group ministry strategy.

## I. CELL GROUP PHILOSOPHY

Each cell group should function as a "community" of Christians who fellowship with one another, who worship God together, who disciple one another, and who encourage and help each other as they reach out to the lost around them. Within the cell group, there are many areas of responsibility and many activities to plan for and carry out. The cell group leader, as well as the members of the group, will indeed stay very busy meeting the needs and accomplishing the goals of the group.

Cell groups are foundational building blocks for a larger ministry strategy.

However, in the midst of all the activity of individual cell groups, it is important to understand the overall concept of cell group ministry. We need to consciously step back from an individual cell group and examine how cell groups in general fit into a larger ministry plan. Simply stated, cell groups are foundational building blocks for a larger ministry strategy. In terms of starting new churches, cell groups provide a foundation upon which the new churches are "built."

### A. Cells Have a Life Cycle

As a cell group is formed and develops, it will move through different phases of "life," much in the same way that people change as they mature and get older. Every cell group goes through identifiable, systematic phases of development. The cell group leader must think about the current phase of his group as he plans the activities for each meeting, and he must anticipate what may or may not happen during that meeting. By understanding which phase his group is in, a cell group leader can make sure that his group is on target to multiply itself.

Every cell group goes through identifiable, systematic phases of development.

In a typical **small** group, multiplication does not happen. In fact, experience has shown that the tendency in small groups is to stop growing or even die out after about two years. The current group members become comfortable in their relationships, and new people are not welcomed into

the group. Similarly, without proper planning and vision, a cell group can also become stagnant and never multiply. In order to reach the goal of multiplication, there must be evangelism in the group so that new people are brought in, and the cell group leader must consciously guide the group through the life cycle phases so that the group does not get "stuck" and remain in any one phase.

Cell groups can only be part of a strategy to see new churches started if they are consciously aware of where they are in the life cycle, and what they need to do in order to continue moving through the different life cycle phases. The following chart describes the life cycle phases through which every cell group should pass. Note that the times given for the duration are only approximate, and will vary depending on the particular location and context of the cell group. The cell group leader should refer to this chart periodically to determine where the group is in the life cycle, and what he can do so that the group moves to the next phase.

**Table 6.1 Phases of a Cell Group**

<b>Phase</b>	<b>Duration</b>	<b>Description</b>
<b><i>Orientation</i></b>	Week 1-4	People learn about each other. There is a very shallow level of sharing and a low level of trust. The cell group leader directs almost the entire ministry.
<b><i>Transition</i></b>	Week 5-10	Members get to know and accept each other. They adjust to what is considered "normal" behavior in the group. There is a growing level of trust, and the beginnings of real relationships.
<b><i>Community</i></b>	Week 11-15	Members align themselves according to the expectations of the group. There is a growing level of commitment, openness, and involvement in the group's purpose. The members of the group find identity in the group. The leader is able to delegate more activities and areas of responsibility to the group members.
<b><i>Action</i></b>	Week 16-35	There is dynamic group interaction, and people are applying biblical truths to real-life situations. Quite often, the group is actively involved in ministry together. Trust runs very deep between group members, and relationships continue to develop and grow.
<b><i>Multiplication</i></b>	Week 36-40	The group approaches the time when it is necessary to multiply into two groups. Apprentice leader(s) start new group(s), and the original group begins to plan for repeating the multiplication cycle.

## **B. Cells Work Toward a Common Goal**

Cell groups, much like the cells in our own bodies, each have a "job" to do. In a certain city, one cell group might reach out to a particular geographical area, while another cell works with a certain segment of the population. Both of the cells are working toward their individual goals, but at the same time, they are working together to help evangelize the city in which they live.

Research tells us that a group of people working together can accomplish more than the collective result of each person working on his own. In the same way, cell groups working together can also accomplish much greater goals than any of them could on their own.

Before the first cell group is started, thought needs to be given to the group's overall goal. Start with the end result in mind, and work backward from that goal. What types of groups are needed, and where? How many groups would be needed to meet the goal? Each new cell will have its own identity, but it will also be part of a larger "body" of cells who are working together for a common purpose.

### C. Cells Are an Essential Part of a Saturation Church Planting Strategy

A saturation church planting strategy is by nature a "grassroots" movement of reproducing churches. A movement of new churches requires methods that are simple, portable, flexible and reproducible. Without these qualities, a movement cannot be generated or sustained. It is nearly impossible to have a movement of new churches that require paid "professional" pastors and large, expensive church buildings.

A movement of new churches requires methods that are simple, portable, flexible and reproducible.

Cell groups provide the simplicity and flexibility that a movement requires. It is a model that is easily started and reproduced. It has little or no financial needs. It provides hands-on ministry training and application. It provides for community and fellowship among the believers. The focus of a cell group ministry is on people and needs, not on programs and systems. Cell groups work at the level of meeting the most basic of human needs for love, acceptance and significance.

Most importantly, in regards to a saturation church planting movement, cell groups provide the movement with both a vision to reach the lost and a vision to multiply. Without a vision to reach the unreached for Christ, there is no need for a church planting movement. Without the vision and ability to multiply churches, a movement cannot exist.

The mandate of the Great Commission can best be fulfilled by a saturation church planting movement. A saturation church planting movement can best be realized through the use of cell groups as the foundation upon which reproducing churches are established.

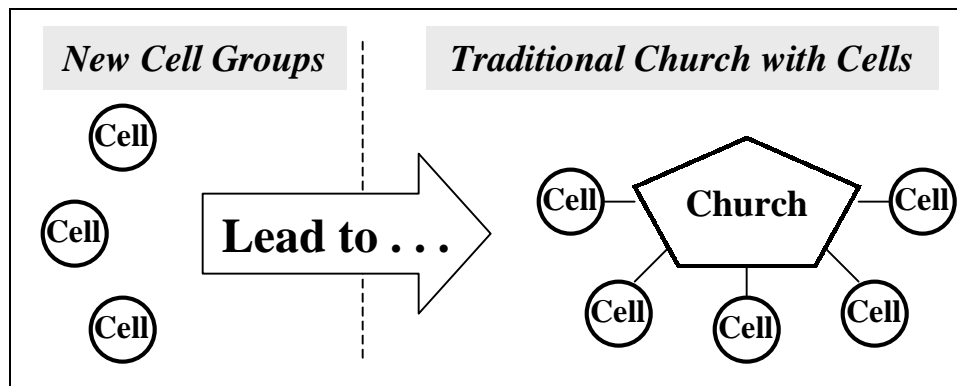
## II. MODELS OF CELL GROUP MINISTRY

One of the main benefits of cell groups is that they can be used in a variety of ways, and especially in the ministry of a church planter. Following are several models that can be used in cell group ministry. Each model has it's own advantages, and the church planter should feel free to choose the model (or a variation of a model) that will work best in his situation.

### A. Model 1: Cell Groups that Start a Traditional Church with Cells

In this situation, one or more initial cell groups grow and multiply. When a certain number of people are meeting in the groups (perhaps a total of 50 people), a decision is made to start a new, traditional church. This church will meet in a central location with a traditional worship service appropriate for the local context and culture. The church will continue to use a ministry of cell groups for evangelism, fellowship, discipleship and continued growth of the church. It may also choose to develop traditional ministry "programs" such as Sunday School, women's ministry, an outreach to children on the weekends, etc. Figure 6.1 shows this kind of model.

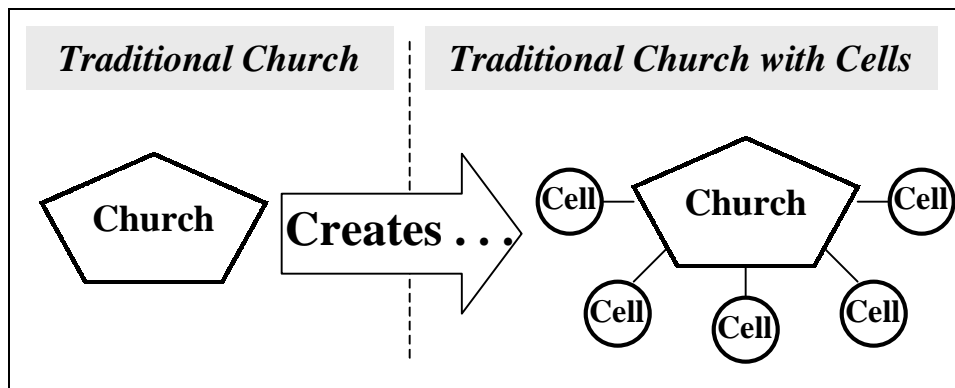
Figure 6.1. Cells Start Church



## B. Model 2: An Existing Church Begins to Use Cell Groups

It is possible for an existing church to begin using cell groups for fellowship, evangelism and discipleship. (Cell Group lesson 12 "Using Cell Groups in an Existing Church" in Manual Five will discuss this in detail). The existing leadership in the church must decide how many groups are needed/possible based on the number of members in the church and the number of people who could be trained to be cell group leaders. In time, the church will begin to grow as the cell groups grow and multiply. This arrangement is shown in Figure 6.2.

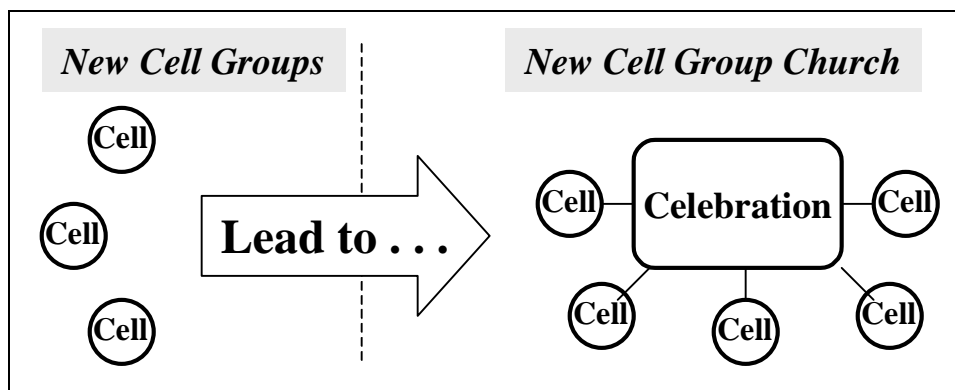
**Figure 6.2. Cells Added to Church**



## C. Model 3: Cell Groups That Start a Cell Group Church

A cell group church differs from a traditional church in the sense that there is no church building, no regular Sunday morning worship service, and the church does not exist to create and maintain "programs" within the church. The church is comprised of the cells themselves, and all the functions of a church happen in each cell, including baptism and communion. The cells come together on a regular basis (e.g. once a month) for a "celebration" meeting. This is a time of encouragement, fellowship, worship and/or teaching. In areas where a cell group movement has grown very large, sometimes theaters and even large stadiums are needed to hold all the people from the cell groups for these celebration gatherings. The cells all consider themselves to be part of one, large church. Figure 6.3 demonstrates this model.

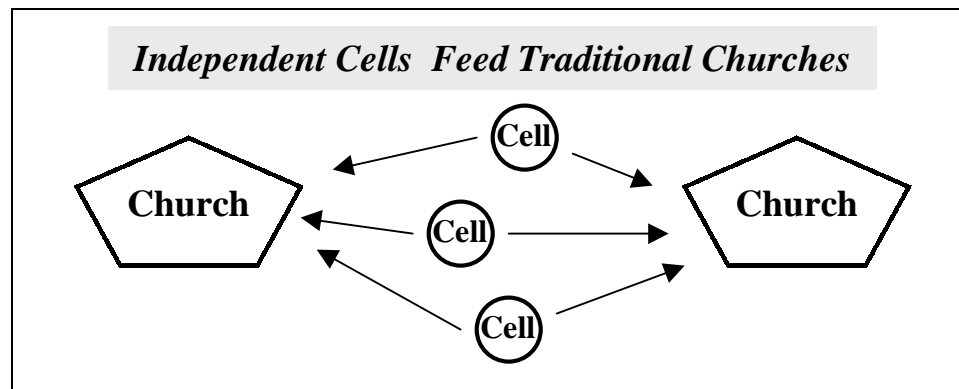
**Figure 6.3. Cells Start a Cell Church**



## D. Model 4: Several Cell Groups Grow, Multiply and "Feed" Existing Local Churches

It is not a requirement that cell groups directly start new churches. It may be more strategic to build up and strengthen existing local churches, which in time will start new, daughter churches. Cell groups are started independently of the existing churches. As new people are brought into the cell groups, they are encouraged to begin attending a local church as well. Often they will continue to be a part of their cell group as well as attend a church. This process is shown in Figure 6.4.

**Figure 6.4. Cells Feed Churches**



#### **E. In-Class Exercise: Case Studies**

Following are some case studies of church planting strategies which many or may not use principles from the cell group models listed above. In class, discuss (1) which model the scenario is based upon (if any) and (2) the advantages and disadvantages of this scenario as a church planting strategy.

##### **Case Study 1**

Resurrection Church needs some help. The church is more than fifty years old, and has about 25 people who meet together for services. Three deacons approach the pastor with an idea to direct the 25 members into three cell groups. The cell groups will be led by the deacons, and will have a focus on evangelism, discipleship, growth and multiplication.

##### **Case Study 2**

A church planter moves to a city with no church and is able to start several new cell groups. The cell groups are very successful, and begin to grow and multiply themselves. The people in the cells feel very close to one another, and decide that they will start a single church from the groups. Each new cell group that is started will continue to be a part of this one large church.

##### **Case Study 3**

First Baptist Church has more than 1000 members. They have several services on Sunday and another service on Wednesday. The senior pastor decides that the members should be meeting together in small groups. The leaders of the church divide the congregation into groups of ten, and assign members to particular groups.

##### **Case Study 4**

Several church planters begin starting cell groups. The groups have a vision to evangelize and multiply, but do not want to start new churches. Instead, they are guiding new believers into one of several existing churches in town. Some of the groups have members who continue to meet in the groups, as well as attend local churches of different denominations.

##### **Case Study 5**

A few years ago a ministry from the West brought over missionaries who started some small groups independent of the existing local churches. These groups meet once a week and do inductive Bible study.

##### **Case Study 6**

An evangelical church has many small groups that meet for Bible study. The same people have met in these groups for several years, and the groups have not grown. Several of the groups contain people who live near each other, but who live far from the church. These groups decide that they would like to start a new church closer to where they live.

### Case Study 7

A church planter moves to a new city and begins doing evangelism. The people are receptive, and soon he has started several cell groups, each of which has a vision to evangelize and to multiply. The groups meet on Sundays for a time of worship and teaching, and on Wednesday evenings they invite non-believing friends for a time of fun and fellowship. There is no plan to build a church building, and once every six weeks the groups rent a hall for an evening of corporate worship and teaching.

There is not one "correct" way to use cell groups in a church planting ministry, but each church planter must consider the best model(s) to use in his context. No matter what the emphasis of a cell group might be, multiplication will always be a goal for that group.

### III. DEVELOPING A CELL GROUP MINISTRY STRATEGY

Since cell groups are building blocks for a larger ministry strategy, thought must be given to the overall strategy for church planting, and how cell groups might be used in order to achieve the goals which have been set. At every phase of the cell group, it is helpful to reflect on the ultimate goal of the group. Following are several points that should be considered:

1. Identify the overall ministry goals. Are you starting a saturation church planting movement? A single church? Enough churches to fill a neighborhood, city or geographical region? Your end result will determine the type, number, and ministry focus of your cell groups.
2. How do the cells need to work independently and together in order to see the goal accomplished? How will this work be coordinated and evaluated?
3. What is the target area, and who are the target people? Research should be done in order to better understand the types of activities which are needed in the cell groups (see the Vision lesson "Principles of Research" in Manual 1).
4. What types of evangelism are appropriate for the target area/people? How will you incorporate this into the new cell groups?
5. Who are the key leaders in the target area? How would it be possible for one or more cell groups to develop relationships with these people and hopefully win them to Christ?
6. What type of cell group "models" do you need in order to accomplish your goals? (E.g. many cells which form one church, cells which are used by existing churches, cells which start a cell group church, etc.). More than likely, you will need to use several different variations of the cell group models presented in this lesson in order to accomplish your overall ministry goals.

### QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION, REVIEW AND APPLICATION

- Your cell group will always be in one of the life cycle phases (orientation, transition, community, action or multiplication). Why does this matter when you are planning for your meeting activities? Why does it matter from the perspective of an overall cell group strategy?
- Why are cell groups an essential part of a saturation church planting strategy?
- Which of the models (if any) from the "Models Of Cell Group Ministry" section would work well in your target area?

## **ACTION PLAN**

- In several sentences, write down a concise but comprehensive definition of a cell group. Give this to the trainer.
- Based on what you know about your target area and the goals you have set for that area, write a basic strategy for how you could use cell groups in order to reach those goals. Include the points from the "Cell Group Strategy Considerations" section in your plan. Share your plan with another trainee, and each of you evaluate the other's plan. For the purposes of this exercise, your plan should be no more than a few pages long.





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# BIBLE STUDY METHODS

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BIBLE STUDY  
METHODS

8

LESSON

# Various Ways to Use Inductive Bible Studies

## ☞ Lesson Purpose

The purpose of this lesson is to encourage the use of inductive Bible study methods in various kinds of studies in addition to short passages.

## ☞ Main Points

- The purpose of *any* Bible study should be to determine what the Bible has to say, and this is best done through the inductive method.
- Types of study that can benefit from the inductive method include biographical studies, book studies, and theme studies.

## ☞ Desired Outcomes

When the content of this lesson has been mastered, each participant should . . .

- Be convinced that the inductive method should be used in whatever kind of Bible study he or she is doing or leading.
- Know how to approach the study of a Bible character, book or theme from an inductive perspective.

## ☞ Appendix

8A Biographical Study on Barnabas

## INTRODUCTION

The previous manual explained how the inductive method of Bible study focuses on discovering and applying the meaning of the Word of God. The emphasis is on the Scriptures rather than our prior understanding of the passage. Hopefully, it has already enhanced your study of the Word.

So far, we have only used the inductive method to look at short passages because of the brief time available during the lessons. However, the inductive study method can be used to study much larger portions of the Bible or to compare verses from different sections—as would be necessary in a theme or biographical study. In this lesson, we will discuss some of the guidelines for applying the inductive method to those other kinds of studies.

## I. REVIEW OF THE PRINCIPLES OF INDUCTIVE BIBLE STUDY

Before you apply the inductive Bible study method more broadly, you should look back through the Bible Study Methods section of the first manual.

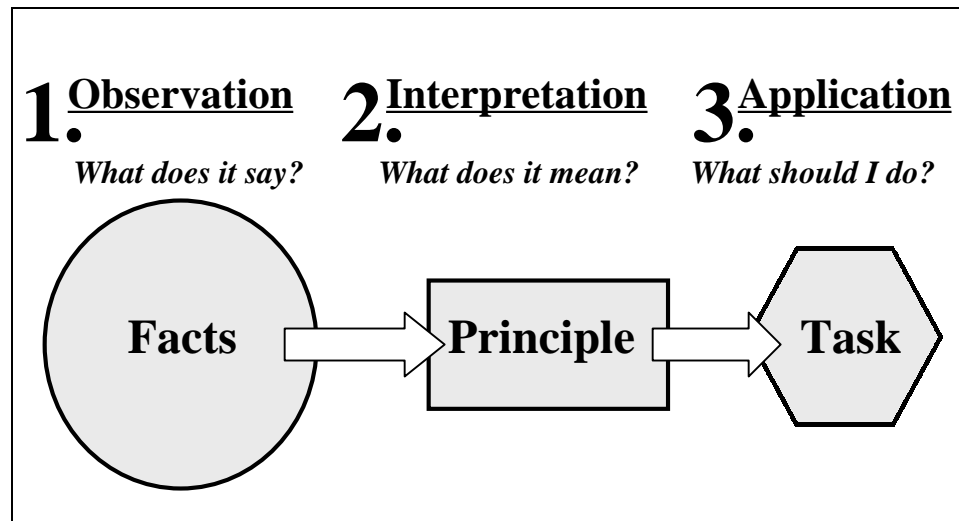
### A. The Reason for the Inductive Method

The deductive method begins with a pre-existing understanding or fact that determines the meaning of the situation being studied. When we use this method to study the Bible, we end up trying to make a verse say *what we already understand* rather than learning from it. By contrast, when we use the inductive method in Bible study, we come to the passage *to learn* and allow the Word to speak to us.

## B. The Steps of the Inductive Method

The three steps of the inductive method—observation, interpretation, and application—are shown in figure 8.1. The inductive method leads us through the process of asking what the Bible says, what it *means*, and what I should *do* about it. It begins by taking time to examine closely the content of the Scriptures, and ends with putting it into practice in my life and ministry.

Figure 8.1 The Three Steps



It is important to work through the steps *in order*, without jumping ahead. The process is like a pyramid, where it was necessary to build a large and strong foundation of observation before building our interpretation on it, and applying it to our lives.

## C. The Emphasis of the Inductive Method

The inductive Bible study method can be used for many kinds of Bible studies, as we will see below. There are a number of general principles that are important, no matter what kind of study you are doing. These include:

- Ask Lots of Good Questions Such as *Who?*, *What?*, *Where?*, *When?*, *How?* and *Why?*
- Look for the Main Point
- Understand the Author's Purpose
- Allow for Progressive Revelation
- Understand the Context
- State the Biblical Principle
- Compare the Biblical and Modern Context
- Pray

Refer to the previous lessons for more information on these principles.

## II. BIOGRAPHICAL STUDIES

Biographical studies, or character studies, involve studying everything recorded about a particular person in the Bible. If this involves a great number of passages, it might be helpful to study a particular event or time frame in that character's life. For example, you might study Paul during his missionary journeys or David during his flight from King Saul. However, even in this situation, consider the entire life of the person, and how the chosen section fits into the whole.

## A. Why Do a Biographical Study?

Everyone likes a story. It is easy to relate to the problems, challenges, temptations, joys, and victories of others when these are seen in story form. The Bible is full of both negative and positive examples seen in the stories of people's lives.

By studying the lives of biblical personages with their strengths and weaknesses, we can learn many lessons to help us conform to the image of Christ. Much of the Bible is concerned with God's working with individuals to restore this process. For example, from Abraham we learn about faith; from Joseph we learn how to face temptations; from Esther we learn about God's sovereign working; from Daniel we learn about prayer; from Jonah we learn what happens to a person trying to run away from God; from Paul we learn about missions. 1Co 10:11 is a key verse: "These things happened to them as examples and were written down as warnings for us." What other examples come to your mind?

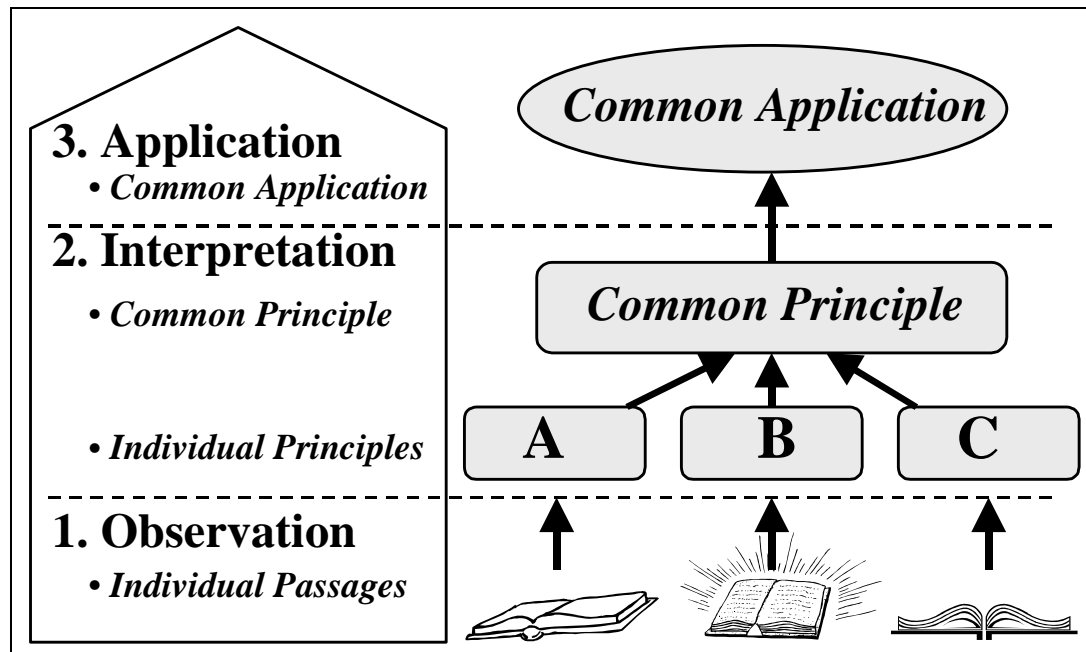
By studying the lives of biblical personages with their strengths and weaknesses, we can learn many lessons to help us conform to the image of Christ.

By using stories about the lives of biblical characters, church planters must be able to communicate many important truths to those they are seeking to evangelize and train. But in order to apply the Bible most accurately, it is necessary to understand what the Bible is teaching through a person's life. Good Bible study principles must be applied to biographical studies the same as to any types of Bible study.

## B. How to Do a Biographical Study

Inductive biographical studies follow a similar pattern of observation, interpretation, and application as the individual texts do, with one significant exception. Figure 8.2 illustrates how *observation* is done on each passage. However, *interpretation* requires an extra step. First, the biblical principle for each passage is determined. Then, a *common principle* is formed from the individual principles. Finally, the *common application* that summarizes all the passages is formulated and put into practice. The sections below will expand these concepts.

Figure 8.2 Biographical Study



### 1. *Observation*

Observation involves thoroughly looking at all the relevant passages—one at a time. Each passage is teaching a particular truth in a specific context. You need to discover what that truth is for every passage before proceeding on to interpretation. Use the steps below as a guide:

- Select the Bible person you wish to study.
- Make a list of ALL biblical references to that person. If available, use a concordance or Bible dictionary.
- Arrange the verses in chronological order.
- Formulate and ask as many observation questions as possible (*Who?*, *What?*, *Where?*, *When?*, *How?* and *Why?*)
- Pay special attention to clues as to the character, personality, thoughts, or actions of the person you are studying. For instance:
  - What can we learn about his ancestry and family?
  - Is the meaning of his name significant? Was it changed? If so, what was the significance of that change, e.g. Abram to Abraham, Jacob to Israel, Simon to Peter, etc.
  - When and where did he live? What do we know from other sources, both biblical and non-biblical, about life in his day?
  - What significant events occurred in his life: crises, accomplishments, call to a specific task, problems faced, etc.
  - Relationships: What was his relationship to God? How did he get along with others?
- Record and summarize your notes on each verse.

### 2. *Interpretation*

Interpretation is a two-part process when it involves more than one passage of Scripture—as is often the case in a biographical study. Each of the passages that you select to study has a specific purpose and teaching of its *own*. Because of the unity of Scripture, these purposes will never contradict, but they may be different. Usually, they add further information. Each of these purposes should be discovered and stated as a biblical principle, using the guidelines presented in earlier discussions of the inductive method.

Each of the passages that you select to study has a specific purpose and teaching of its *own*.

Once these principle for each individual passage have been stated, it is possible to finish the process of interpretation by combining them carefully and thoughtfully into one principle that sums up the contribution of each part. Suppose you chose to study a portion of the life of David. One passage taught that he was devoted to the Word. Another stressed his prayer life. A third emphasized his trust in God in times of trouble. An appropriate common principle might be, "We should be devoted to the Word and prayer as we trust God in difficult times." This principle summarizes the teaching of all three passages.

### 3. *Application*

Once your study of the character has defined a common biblical principle, you can compare your situation to his or hers and determine *what you should do*. That is, you will look for ways in which your context and that of the Bible character are similar, and respond according to the teaching that you have seen in the Word. As you do this step, you may want to review some of the passages when the Holy Spirit brings it to mind, and allow Him to teach you and guide you through the process.

There are many interpretation questions that you can ask to help discover the most important application for you. These include:

- How is my experience similar to his?

- Do I have the same strengths? Weaknesses?
- Why did God include this person in Scripture?
- What specific things does God want to teach me through the study of his or her life?

*Note: An example of a biographical study on the life of Barnabas is found in Appendix 8A.*

### III. BOOK STUDIES

Most Bible scholars agree that the Bible has one common theme—although they debate how exactly to state it. Each book of the Bible develops that common theme by contributing something unique. A good example of this is seen in the Gospels. Four Gospel writers each wrote about the life of Christ. There are many similarities in the Gospels, and also many differences. Each is written from a unique perspective.

- Matthew – presents Christ as the Jewish Messiah (royal)
- Mark – presents Christ as the Servant (humble)
- Luke – presents Christ as the Son of Man (human)
- John – presents Christ as the Son of God (divine)

Each of these portraits of Christ are true, and yet, each is different. Each Gospel describes an important aspect of His person or character better than the others. The four Gospels work together to more fully describe the Lord. In the same way, all sixty-six books of the Bible work together to present the full message that God has for us. One book best describes His love, another His patience, another His wrath. One book emphasizes the lost condition of fallen man, while another describes our glorious salvation through Christ's atonement.

All sixty-six books of the Bible work together to present the full message that God has for us.

#### A. Why Do a Book Study?

Since all sixty-six books work together to present God's message to us, we need to carefully examine each book if we want to accurately understand its contribution to that message. There is also another benefit. When we understand the theme of each book, we know where to turn to quickly find answers to a particular problem. Does someone struggle with legalism? Turn to Galatians. Do we doubt our salvation? Read Romans. Do we question the deity of Christ? Read John. If we doubt the seriousness of sin, we should read Judges. Each book has a special emphasis and message.

#### B. How to Do a Book Study

A book study uses the same steps of the inductive method that we have been learning. Normally, a book study will require quite a bit of time to do it right. The benefits, however, will easily make it worth your time. A book study consists of four stages:

##### 1. Read the Book Several Times

Many of the books of the Bible are simply short letters or messages. They were intended to be read from beginning to end without interruption. The best way to study them is to read them several times until you begin to notice the theme and repeated or stressed ideas. Some of the longer books (such as Isaiah and Jeremiah) were written over many years, but they are also addressed to one audience and will communicate more clearly if we read them in their entirety. Once is not enough—nor is simply looking at selections from the book. Take time to read it repeatedly before you attempt to interpret it.

Take time to read a book repeatedly before you attempt to interpret it.

##### 2. Study the 'Setting' of the Book

There are a number of important factors that we will call the 'setting' of the book. You may find some of this information in the book itself or in notes in your Bible. Other questions will

require the use of commentaries, Bible handbooks, or other helps. As you start your study, limit your use of these helps to introductory facts about the book, and not at the commentator's dialog. Save that for later, once you have had time to let the Scriptures speak to you first. As you start your study, look for the following 'setting' facts:

- *Author* – If possible, decide who wrote the book, and then learn as much about that person as you can. Why did God choose him as the human author? What was his background and experience? What kind of person was he? Who was his family? When and how was he saved? How old was he? What was his profession? Answer as many other questions about him as you can.
- *Recipients* – To whom was the book written? What was their situation at that time? Why do you think the book was written? How was it delivered to them (preached, prophesied, hand-carried letter, etc.)? What was their relationship to God? To the human author? What was their political situation? Their religious situation?
- *Date* – When was the book written? What important events were happening in history at that time? Where does this book fit into God's progressive revelation to man? What was the time span of the writing of the book?
- *Literary Style* – What kind of writing is used (poetry, prophesy, historical, didactic, etc.)? See Bible Study Methods Appendix 2A: "The Language of the Bible" for more information on styles. How will this style affect your interpretation? How would it have affected the recipients?

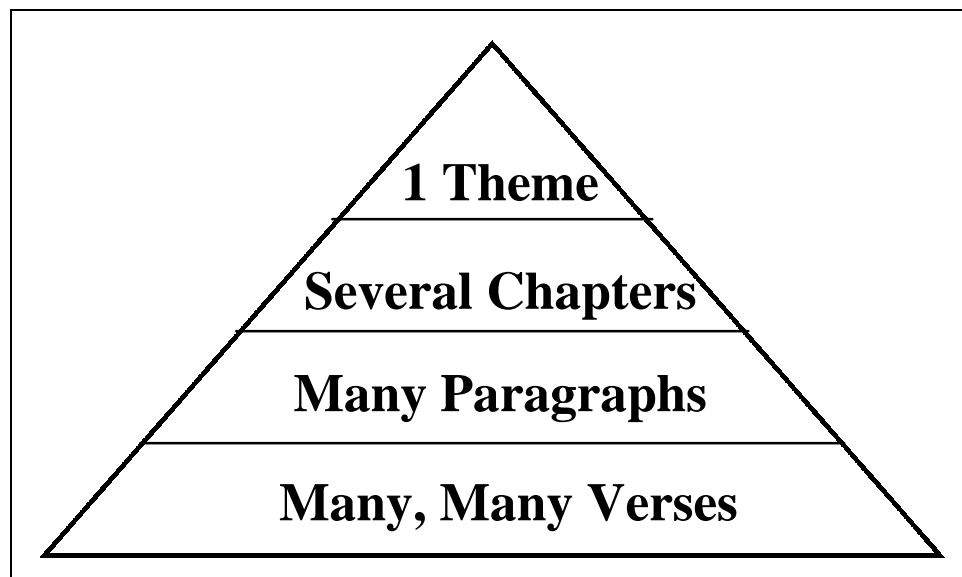
### 3. *Study the Content of the Book*

There are two main considerations in a book study. The first is the theme and the second is how that theme is developed. In other words, the author wanted to communicate a specific idea to us, and he did so in a particular way. Both are important.

#### a. The Theme of the Book

Now that you know many facts about the book, study the content of the book. The book will have one major theme that might or might not be easy to determine. For example, John states clearly the theme of his Gospel (Jn 20:31). So does Jude (Jude 3). Other writers are less clear.

**Figure 8.3 Parts of a Book**





b. The Development of the Theme

The content of the book will work together to communicate the theme of the book to the recipients (and to us). As you study and ask questions, note how the writer accomplishes that task. What kind of attitude does he express (authority, gentleness, love, anger, etc.)? What kind of language does he use—clear, sarcastic, eloquent, persuasive, etc.? Does he focus on the mind or the emotions? How? Why do you think he uses those approaches?

4. *Chart the Development of the Theme of the Book*

One helpful technique in a book study is to make a chart of the major themes, characters, places, etc. that are discussed in the book. Often a study Bible or commentary will include such charts. There are also other sources of these charts, such as Jensen (see Sources). However, you can also make your own. In fact, your study will be much more profitable if you attempt to chart the flow yourself before consulting another source. These charts need not be elaborate—they are meant to help you see the overall nature of the book. Figure 8.3 is a sample chart for the Book of Acts.

**Figure 8.3 Chart of the Book of Acts**

<b><i>The Book of Acts</i></b>						
<b>Theme:</b>	<b>"You will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth" (Acts 1:8)</b>					
<b>Chapters:</b>	<b>1-7</b>	<b>8-12</b>	<b>13-28</b>			
<b>Places:</b>	<b>Jerusalem</b>	<b>Judea &amp; Samaria</b>	<b>The Ends of the Earth</b>			
<b>Ministry to:</b>	<b>Jews</b>	<b>Jew &amp; Gentile</b>	<b>Gentiles</b>			
<b>Key People:</b>	<b><i>Peter</i> <i>John</i> <i>Stephen</i></b>	<b><i>Peter</i> <i>Philip</i> <i>Saul/Paul</i> <i>Barnabas</i></b>	<b><i>Paul</i> <i>Barnabas</i> <i>Silas</i></b>			
<b>Key Events:</b>	<b>Ascension Pentecost</b>	<b>Eunich Cornelius</b>	<b>(13-14) 1<sup>st</sup> Missionary Journey</b>	<b>(15-18) 2<sup>nd</sup> Missionary Journey</b>	<b>(19-20) 3<sup>rd</sup> Missionary Journey</b>	<b>(21-28) Paul Goes to Rome</b>
<b>Principles:</b>	<b>Growth</b>	<b>Persecution</b>	<b>Missions</b>			

5. *Apply the Theme of the Book to Your Situation*

At this point, you should have a good understanding of *what the book says* from your observation. You should also have determined the theme and it's development—that is, *what the book means*. The final step is to think about *what you should do*. As in the previous lessons, this involves examining your own life and situation to see what similarities exist between it and the original context of the book. Questions you might want to ask yourself to help this process include:

- What in my life resembles the situation in the book?
- What in my life resembles the author of the book?
- How would I have addressed this situation?
- What particularly spoke to my heart as I read the book?

## IV. THEME STUDIES

Often, we want to study a particular subject of topic. This kind of study is also referred to as a 'theme' study. The normal rules of inductive study still apply.

### **A. Why Do a Theme Study?**

Many topics or truths are developed throughout the pages of the Bible. Many span both testaments. Book studies will show only a portion of these themes. For instance, teaching on prayer is everywhere in the Scriptures. The only way to adequately study it is to do a theme study.

### **B. How to Do a Theme Study**

Once you have decided which theme you will study, you will want to work through the following steps:

- *Find the Related Verses* – Notes and cross-references in the margins of your Bible can help you find verses that relate to your theme. Find one verse that you know is relevant, and then begin to follow the links from verse to verse. However, a more thorough method is to use a concordance to look up *all* the verses that discuss your topic. Be careful, though—verses that have the same word do not necessarily relate to your topic.
- *Arrange the Verses in Order* – The theme you have chosen may be developed gradually through the Bible. Read the verses that were written earlier before the later ones. That way, you will discover the truth in the same way that God originally revealed it.
- *Study and Summarize Each Verse in Context* – Avoid being guilty of ripping a verse out of its context and trying to make it say what you want it to say. Let the Holy Spirit speak to you through it. Observe and interpret each verse carefully. Summarize what it is teaching about the theme.
- *Summarize the Teaching on the Theme* – After you have studied the individual verses and know what they say and mean, summarize their teaching into a clear statement that includes the contribution of each verse. This process is essentially the same as the method for a biographical study that is shown in figure 8.2. The main difference is that each passage concerns a theme instead of a person.
- *Apply the Truth* – Prayerfully and thoughtfully ask God to show you how this truth should change your life and ministry. You have "looked in the mirror"—now go out and do what you have learned (Jas 1:22-25).

Sample theme studies and key verses for them are listed for you in Bible Study Methods Appendix 10A: "Passages for Inductive Bible Study."

## **SUMMARY**

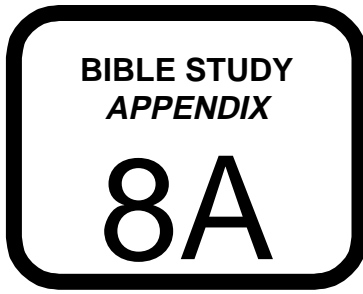
The inductive Bible study method is helpful for many kinds of Bible study. It is so powerful because it reminds us at every step to let Scripture speak to us, instead of enforcing our understanding on it. Even when we study a book or multiple passages (as in a theme or biographical study) we need to be careful to study every verse in its context so that it can speak clearly to us.

## **QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION, REVIEW, AND APPLICATION**

- What is an advantage of doing a biographical study?
- What is the difference between the 'setting' and the 'content' of a book of the Bible?
- Why is it important to arrange verses for a biographical or theme study in chronological order?

## **ACTION PLAN**

- Work through the biographical study on the life of Barnabas in Appendix 8A. Think through his role in the church planting process in Acts. What application do you see for your own life and ministry?
- Take the time to use the inductive method for a book study and for a theme study. Pick a smaller book or a more manageable theme for your first attempt. Evaluate the effectiveness of this method in helping you discover things you had not formerly seen in the Word.



# Biographical Study on Barnabas

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Use the inductive method of Bible study as you work through this biographical study on the life of Barnabas. As you have questions about the process, refer back to point II, "Biographical Studies" of Bible Study Methods Lesson 8: "Various Ways to Use Inductive Bible Studies."

## I. STUDY THE RELEVANT PASSAGES

The verses where Barnabas is mentioned by name are listed for you. Read each verse or passage in the following list, and record your observations. Then summarize the passage. The first one has been done for you.

### A. Acts 4:36,37

#### 1. Observations:

- Was a Levite
- Was from Cyprus
- His given name was Joseph
- The Apostles nicknamed him "Barnabas"
- Son of Encouragement
- He sold his land to help fund the work of the church
- He presented his gift humbly ("at the apostles' feet")

#### 2. Interpretation / Summary:

Barnabas was an 'encourager' by his very nature—even to the extent of giving of his possessions to encourage and enable other believers.

### B. Acts 11:19-24

#### 1. Observations

#### 2. Interpretation / Summary

**C. Acts 11:25-26**

1. *Observations*

2. *Interpretation / Summary*

**D. Acts 11:27-30**

1. *Observations*

2. *Interpretation / Summary*

**E. Acts 12:25**

1. *Observations*

2. *Interpretation / Summary*

**F. Acts 13:1-13;42-43**

1. *Observations*

2. *Interpretation / Summary*

**G. Acts 14:1-23**

1. *Observations*

2. *Interpretation / Summary*

**H. Acts 15:2-4, 12, 22, 25, 35-39**

1. *Observations*

2. *Interpretation / Summary*

**I. Colossians 4:10**

1. *Observations*

2. *Interpretation / Summary*

**J. Galatians 2:11-13**

1. *Observations*

2. *Interpretation / Summary*

## II. SUMMARIZE THE TEACHING

Now that you have looked at the individual passages, it is time to look at the results and summarize what the Bible teaches about Barnabas. As you do so, think through the following questions:

- What kind of background did Barnabas have?
- Why do you think the apostles gave Joseph the nickname "Barnabas?"
- What evidence do you see from these passages that Barnabas was an encourager?
- What is the significance of the order in which Paul and Barnabas (or Barnabas and Paul) are mentioned?
- How did Barnabas respond to the shift in leadership to Paul?
- How did he respond to conflicts? (Ac 15:1-4 and Ac 15:36-40)
- Why do you think he responded as he did in Gal 2:11-13?

Now write down a statement to summarize what you have learned about the life of Barnabas. Make sure that it includes all the key ideas that you have seen in each of the passages:

## III. DECIDE WHAT TO DO ABOUT IT

*A study of Scripture is of little value until we decide how we need to apply it to our lives. Think through the teaching of Barnabas' life as you consider the following questions:*

- Have you had any "Barnabases" in your life? Who were they and how did they encourage you?
- Do you know of a Christian that needs encouragement? What can you do to encourage him/her?
- In Ac 9:26ff and 11:25-26, Barnabas risked his own reputation to encourage another. Are you willing to do the same for the sake of the Gospel?
- Barnabas moved aside and allowed Paul to assume the first place in leadership. Are you willing to train new leaders and allow them to assume leadership even if you must take a secondary position?
- What specific lessons has the Lord been teaching you as you studied the life of Barnabas?

Prayerfully consider how God would have you live differently as a result of this study. In the space below, write what you intend to do about it, and then ask the Lord to help you faithfully accomplish this:

BIBLE STUDY  
METHODS

9

LESSON

# Leading Inductive Bible Studies

## LEADING OTHERS TO DISCOVERY

### ☞ Lesson Purpose

The purpose of this lesson is to explain how to lead an inductive Bible study group in such a way that the members are able to discover the meaning and application of the Scriptures they study.

### ☞ Main Points

- Discovery is more powerful than "telling."
- Good questions facilitate discovery.

### ☞ Desired Outcomes

When the content of this lesson has been mastered, each participant should:

- Know the difference between "teaching" and "leading in discovery."
- Be able to create appropriate questions that lead to discovery.

### ☞ Appendix

9A Inductive Bible Study on Matthew 20:17-28

9B Inductive Bible Study on Luke 15:1-7

### ☞ Suggestions to Trainers

Lesson 10,11 will be a 2-hour workshop to give the trainees practice leading an inductive Bible study. Trainees should have at least one evening to think about how to use the discussion techniques presented in this lesson before the workshop.

## I. CHARACTERISTICS OF AN INDUCTIVE BIBLE STUDY GROUP

Inductive Bible study is first and foremost a method for personal growth of the Christian. However, it is also a very effective form of ministry to others. It can be used for evangelism, or for discipleship. This normally occurs in a group context.

An inductive Bible study group is a small group of people who come together for the purpose of studying the Bible. The members may or may not be believers—although, of course, the leader should be. Inductive Bible study is a good way for unbelievers to discover the message God has for them—that is, repent and trust Christ for salvation. If the members are unbelievers, the leader will want to choose a portion of Scripture for the study that explains the Gospel clearly. The Gospel of John, and especially chapter 3, is a very good example. If the members are believers, the topic can be anything that is of interest to them.

An inductive Bible study group is a small group of people who come together for the purpose of studying the Bible.

There are a number of differences between an inductive Bible study group and a sermon. Three of the most important of these differences are listed below.

### A. The Authority is the Scriptures

In a sermon, the source of authority is all too often perceived as residing in the teacher. As a result, if the speaker is very capable, people listen to what *he* says, and may or may not realize that

message comes from God. In the opposite case, the message of the Word can be clouded or confused by a poor speaker. In both situations, a person stands between the hearers and the Word of the Lord.

Inductive Bible study, by contrast, allows each member of the group to focus on the Scriptures. The living and active Word of God is capable of touching the innermost being of a person, bringing conviction or comfort. Nothing stands between the Word and the hearer. No human interferes. The Holy Spirit applies the message directly to the heart of the reader.

Obviously, there is a time and a place for teaching. Sometimes it is helpful to listen to a teacher when people are not willing to read the Word for themselves, or when the teacher has particularly good insight in to a particular passage or subject. However, teaching should be balanced wherever and whenever possible by personal study of the Scriptures. Teaching should *add to* what we are learning on our own—it should never *replace it*.

Teaching should always be balanced by personal study of the Scriptures.

## **B. The Goal is Discovery**

Educational theory has strongly and repeatedly proved that we learn and remember something best when we discover it for ourselves. Having someone tell us what fishing is like is far inferior to actually going fishing and experiencing it for ourselves. The same holds true for the truth of the Word. When we discover the truth in the pages of the Bible, we are more likely to understand it, believe it, and act on it than when someone preaches it to us. In order to enable this discovery, an inductive Bible study group should be small enough to allow for interaction among the members. Less than 10 people would be ideal, although some group leaders can stimulate interaction with even larger groups.

## **C. The Leader is a Facilitator**

Since the best method of learning spiritual truth is to discover it ourselves, the leader of an inductive Bible study must help the members *discover* truth in the passage—not *tell* them. This is accomplished through the skillful use of questions. Questions are a way of directing the attention of the members to important facts in the passage, without actually telling them. It guides them, but allows them to discover. That is the goal.

The best method of learning spiritual truth is to discover it ourselves.

It should be obvious, therefore, that the questions you choose to ask the group are very important. There will not be time during a group study to ask all the questions the group can think of. Rather, the responsibility of the group leader is to study the passage ahead of time, and note which questions were most helpful for him or her. This includes all areas—observation, interpretation, and application. The number of questions needed depends on the length of time of the study session, but you will not need a lot since you will want to allow enough time to discuss the answers. Also, you should definitely allow the groups members to ask and answer their own questions—especially as they gain experience in the process.

# **II. PREPARATION FOR THE STUDY**

Before the study, the group leader should plan the study carefully.

## **A. Study the Passage Yourself**

It is important that the leader discover the central truth(s) and main application(s) of the passage. The leader should observe, interpret, and apply the passage on his own according to the inductive Bible study guidelines taught in Manual One.



## B. Write Down the Purpose of the Study

The leader should decide the general direction for the small group Bible study to take. This direction should not be too specific. Remember that the Holy Spirit may teach the group in ways that you did not anticipate.

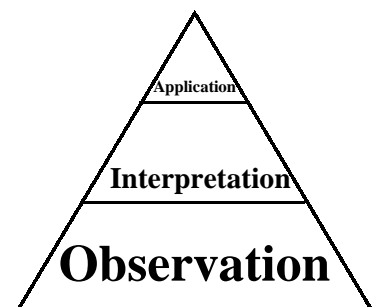
## C. Prepare Questions on the Passage for the Group Which Cover All Three Parts of the Study

The leader should prepare to lead the group to **apply** sound **interpretation** based on careful **observation** by guiding the group through the same process of discovery that he has already taken. Thought-provoking questions should build on one another so that the discussion concentrates on the main purpose and application of the passage. The questions should not require simple "yes or no" answers. Rather, they should guide the group to search the verse for the facts, meaning, and application. If it takes a few minutes and several attempts to adequately answer a question, that is fine. The questions should help the members discover—not insult their intelligence.

The previous manual showed you how to prepare these three kinds of questions, and asked you to prepare a sample study. In all future studies that you lead, you should work through the same process. As you prepare, you will think of far too many questions to use in a group. After you have completed the study of the passage for yourself, you will need to sort through your questions to identify the most helpful or informative ones, and use only those in leading others in a study of the text.

Make sure to include several questions for each of the steps—observation, interpretation, and application. Remember the example of building a pyramid with a strong base. It is preferable to have more observation questions than interpretation questions, and even fewer application ones. This does not mean that application is less important—it is the *most* important thing. However, it will require a number of questions to lead the members of the study group to the point of discovering the one application that is most needed in their lives. Guiding people to discovery through skillful questioning is difficult, but rewarding.

Figure 9.1



## D. Review the Questions

When the questions have been formulated, the leader should ask:

- Are my questions clear?
- Is each brief enough to be readily grasped?
- Do the questions make the group search the passage?
- Do the observation questions provide a solid basis on which to ask interpretive and application questions?
- Do the questions move the group through the whole passage?
- Do the application questions lead the group to specific actions?

## E. Prepare an Introductory Question to Get the Members Excited about the Bible Study

The introductory question can focus on how this passage speaks to a particular situation with which the members identify. For example, 1 Peter was written to churches facing persecution. Studying of this book, you might ask: how do you act when you are persecuted for being a Christian? How did the people Peter was writing to react to persecution?

### III. LEADING THE STUDY

#### A. The Study Should Be Started and Closed with Prayer

Studying the Bible is not just a mechanical process. It requires the help of the Holy Spirit to open our eyes to the truth that God wants to communicate to us. We should pray for enlightenment before we study, and then ask the Lord to help us apply what we learned after the study.

#### B. The Leader Should Be Prepared to Learn from the Group

Remember that the same Holy Spirit who speaks to the leader speaks to others. Others will have insights that the leader missed. If the leader is not prepared to learn, then he will appear to be an 'expert.' The presence of an 'expert' can kill honest discussion. In many cases, people will not want to share their opinions in the presence of an expert who may correct them.

The presence of an 'expert' can kill honest discussion.

#### C. The Leader Should Not Answer His Own Questions or Questions That Might Arise from Within the Group

The leader should avoid answering his own questions. It will limit group thinking. If the leader does answer his own questions, the questions begin to sound like test questions with correct answers. Many people will be reluctant to answer questions that they could get "wrong." When there is a lot of hesitation after a certain question, the leader should be alert to rephrase the question in case the group has difficulty understanding. Likewise, questions that arise from within the group should be reflected back to the group for their consideration. For example, "Sasha has a question about \_\_\_\_\_. What do you think about it?" Or, you can direct Sasha's questions to a particular person in the group: "Tanya, how would you answer Sasha's question?"

#### D. Do Not Be Afraid of Silence

The leader should allow sufficient time to answer the question. There may be a few moments of silence—which is perfectly all right. People need time to think. Silence is a group pressure that works on the behalf of the leader.

#### E. The Leader Should Not Always Be Satisfied With the First Answer Given

If the leader constantly accepts an answer and moves on to the next question, then the group can fall into a question/answer, question/answer pattern. It would be better for the group to have a discussion, not a quiz. By soliciting several responses to the question, a natural discussion is more likely. Also, the first answer given is often not the most complete or insightful. Sometimes there can be more than one answer. By taking time to discuss other answers, a more comprehensive understanding of the passage is gained.

#### F. Questions Not Answered By the Group May Be Left Unanswered

The leader should refrain from answering questions that the group has not been able to process. To do so would be to stifle individual and group thinking by providing the answer. Also, if we trust the Holy Spirit to be the real teacher, then we have to trust that an unanswered question is something that the group is not ready to handle at that moment. The unanswered question may hold their curiosity and bring them back the next week.

#### G. Incorrect or Partial Answers Should Be Corrected By the Scriptures and/or the Group, Not the Leader

There will be wrong answers and incorrect statements. The natural response is for the leader to correct and rebuke. But doing so can discourage group members from opening up. This will in turn kill open and honest discussion. Instead of correcting a wrong or partial answer, the leader can do one of the following:

- Ask the person answering to re-read the text, or refer them to another text.

- Ask the group whether it is in agreement with the answer or not.
- Ask group members for other related Scripture verses to support or correct the answer.

#### **H. Keep the Discussion on the Main Theme of the Passage**

Satan is a master at getting people to divert their attention from the main truth. The discussion of Jesus with the Samaritan woman (John 4) is a good example of an attempt to divert Christ from addressing the woman's real needs. It is likely that good questions, even important ones, will arise out of the discussion. If they are not related to the main theme, then the leader should say something like the following: "Sasha, that is a very interesting question. But since it is not really related to our theme tonight, we will save it until after the study to answer." Or, "Sasha, your question is very important. It deserves a whole study itself. We will plan a study later on. Tonight we want to focus on our theme of this passage."

#### **I. Do Not Forget to Ask the Application Questions**

The goal of the study is not just to gain knowledge about God's word, but to discover how to practically obey God's word. The leader should not be afraid to use rather direct questions that prompt people to action. Group members will not want to be like the man in James 1:22-24 who did not act on what he learned. The leader should help everyone be as specific as possible in application so he can look back after a week and see the progress he has made in the application of Scripture to his life.

#### **J. Control the Participation of Those Who Talk Too Much or Too Little**

Most small groups will have a couple persons anxious to answer every question, the majority who will answer occasionally, and a couple persons who have to be really encouraged to participate. For those who always answer, the leader needs to say something like this: "Sasha, we can always count on you for an answer. Let us hear what Tanya thinks about \_\_\_\_\_." For those who rarely participate, the leader can ask them to read the text or answer an observation question with an easy to see answer in the text. As confidence builds, they can be encouraged to participate in easy interpretation and application questions.

#### **K. At the End of the Study, the Leader Can Summarize What the Group Has Learned and Expressed**

The leader should avoid adding new information the group did not consider. Adding new information not only sets up the leader as the "expert," it also shows a lack of trust in the leading of the Holy Spirit to reveal what He wanted the group to discover. It is better to affirm what the group has learned and move on.

### **QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION, REVIEW, AND APPLICATION**

- Why is discovery necessary for Christian growth? Why is preaching alone not enough?
- What would constitute a good discussion question?

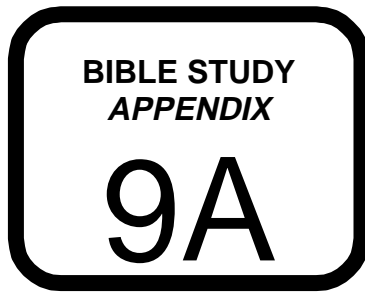
### **ACTION PLAN**

- In the last manual, you were instructed to prepare a brief inductive Bible study on one of the following passages:

Acts 13:4-12 (Paphos)	Acts 17:10-15 (Berea)
Acts 13:13-52 (Antioch)	Acts 17:16-34 (Athens)
Acts 14:1-7 (Iconium)	Acts 17:16-34 (Athens)
Acts 14:8-20 (Lystra and Derbe)	Acts 18:1-17 (Corinth)
Acts 16:11-40 (Philippi)	

In preparation for the next lesson, you should have this completed study with you, including your observation, interpretation, and application questions. In the next lesson (10,11), you will lead some of the other trainees through that study using the principles in this lesson. Take time to review that study, and think through how you will lead the discussion.

- If, for some reason, you do not have a study prepared, you may use one of the sample studies in Appendix 9A or 9B, but it is *strongly recommended* that you use your own study. Leading your own study will better help you to evaluate your question preparation and your proficiency in using the inductive Bible study method.



# Inductive Bible Study on Matthew 20:17-28

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*Note: This study is provided as a model of an inductive Bible study. If absolutely necessary, it may be used for the Workshop in Lesson 10,11. However, it is strongly recommended that this only serve as a guide, and that you do your own study on one of the passages assigned in the first manual.*

## INTRODUCTION

The Leadership lessons in this church planting course will be looking at the ministry of Jesus as our model for leadership. There are many kinds of 'leadership' in the world, but Jesus presented a very different understanding of what it means to lead others. As we will see in Matthew 20:17-28, even His disciples had a difficult time grasping the implications of this new kind of Christian leadership. We want to answer the question: "What is Christian Leadership?"

### I. PRAY

Begin the study by praying for God to remove other distractions from your mind, and allow you to focus on learning the truth of the passage so you can be a better Christian leader.

### II. READ MATTHEW 20:17-28

Read the passage carefully and thoughtfully. One person can read it all, or you can divide the reading among the members of the study group.

### III. OBSERVATION

Our first task is to discover what the passage says. Look closely at the verses and answer the following questions:

*From the context (Mt 19:27-20:16)*

- In **what** way might Jesus' teaching in Matthew 19:27-28 have sparked James' and John's desire to rule in the kingdom?
- **What** is the main point of the Matthew 20:1-15 parable, as summarized by Jesus in verse 16?

*From the passage (Mt 20:17-28)*

- **Where** were the disciples and Jesus are going, and **what** was going to happen to Him there?
- **What** favor does Mrs. Zebedee ask of Jesus?

- **How** did the other disciples react to her request, and **why**?
- **Who** decides who sits where in the kingdom, and **what** are the criteria for this seating?
- **How** do these criteria differ from the world system (the Gentiles)?

#### IV. INTERPRETATION

Now we are ready to look at the *meaning* of this passage. Think carefully about the following questions as you refer back to your observations:

- **How** would you summarize the attitudes of Mrs. Zebedee and the disciples as they went to Jerusalem? What did they anticipate it would be like there (think about the meaning of "right hand and left hand"). **What** does this imply about their reasons for following Jesus?
- **What** did Jesus mean by "the cup?" (Note: we have the benefit of hindsight!) **What** did it involve in Jesus' life, and **how** was it later fulfilled in the disciples' lives? Is it a specific kind of service, an act, an attitude, or something else?
- Is it OK for me to desire to be honored in God's kingdom? Was the problem that the disciples wanted to be honored, or that they wanted to be honored now rather than when Christ returns?

Summarize in a sentence or two the *main point* of these verses. State it in terms of a *biblical principle* if possible. Write it in the space below.

*The principle of the passage:*

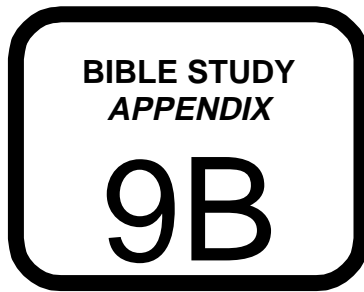
## V. APPLICATION

Now you need to think about how this principle can be applied in your own life and ministry today. Think carefully about the following questions:

- **What** are my motives for serving Christ as a church planter? **What** do I hope to get out of it, and **when**?
- If my desire is to please Christ, **how** should my leadership differ from that of others around me? What specifically should I be doing in order to lead as a servant and to give my life for those Christ ransomed?

## SUMMARY

As you have worked through this passage, you should have answered the question, "What is Christian Leadership?" You also thought about what that would mean for you personally in your life and ministry. Now is the time to begin to pray to God for help in living that kind of life. Specifically ask Him to help you in those areas where you now see that you have weaknesses or wrong motives.



# Inductive Bible Study on Luke 15:1-7

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*Note: This study is provided as a model of an inductive Bible study. If absolutely necessary, it may be used for the Workshop in Lesson 10,11. However, it is strongly recommended that this only serve as a guide, and that you do your own study on one of the passages assigned in the first training session.*

## INTRODUCTION

Have you ever lost something important? How did you feel? What did you do to try to find it? If you found it, how did you feel? In Luke 15, Jesus explained how He and His Father feel about God's "lost" children.

### I. PRAY

Begin the study by asking God to help you understand how these verses should affect your life, and your ministry of church planting.

### II. READ LUKE 15:1-7

Read the passage carefully and thoughtfully. One person can read it all, or you can divide the reading among the members of the study group.

### III. OBSERVATION

Look closely at the passage and try to discover what it says by answering the following questions:

*From the context (Lk 14:12-24)*

- **What** kind of people has Jesus been saying that we need to invite to come and associate with us and with the Lord (14:13, 23)?
- **How** might the illustration of worthless "salt" in verse 34 relate to those who are or are not inviting the lost to come to God?

*From the passage (Lk 15:1-7)*

- To **whom** was this parable addressed—the sinners or the religious Pharisees and teachers of the law (v. 3)? **What** do you know about this group?
- **What** was the complaint of the Pharisees and teachers of the law against Jesus?



- **How** many lost sheep are equal to **how many** sheep that are safe in the fold?
- **What** was the response of the shepherd to one lost sheep?
- **What** does Jesus say is the point of this parable (v. 7)?

#### IV. INTERPRETATION

Now we need to think about what this story of lost sheep *means*. This is somewhat easier than usual, since Jesus stated the theme in verse 7. The following questions can help you think through the principle that He was teaching:

- Remember to whom Jesus addressed this parable. **How** would the idea of "rejoicing over one who repents" relate specifically to them? **Why** do you think Jesus chose to use a parable rather than just state the truth?
- **Why** do you think they needed to hear this parable? **What** should have been different in their lives?

Summarize in a sentence or two the *main point* of these verses. State it in terms of a *biblical principle* if possible. Write it in the space below:

*The principle of the passage:*

#### V. APPLICATION

We now need to decide how to apply this teaching to our own lives. Think carefully through the following questions to help you do that:

- Do you really believe that one lost sinner trusting Christ is more important than a church full of, say, 99 believers living righteous, holy and faithful lives? If so, what implications would that have for our ministry?

- How do I respond when someone associates with sinful people in order to win them to Christ? Can we do that and remain "holy?" Is it possible to build close relationships with unbelievers in order to live out our testimony before them (1Co 5:9-12)?
- How do I react when a 'sinner' repents, but has not yet 'cleaned up his life' so that he is as holy as I am? Do I rejoice with him and help him or her to grow, or do I condemn the things that are still not right in his or her life?

## **SUMMARY**

Throughout the history of the world, as recorded in the Scriptures, God has been seeking lost men to repent and return to Him. Christ left the glories of heaven and became a man in order to pay the price of our redemption and make our reconciliation to Him possible. He has left us with the command to fulfill the Great Commission by taking the message of the Gospel to everyone. What will be my contribution? Is the Lord calling me to plant a new church where the lost are perishing in ignorance of the Gospel? What should be my response?

**BIBLE STUDY  
METHODS**

**LESSON**

**10,11**

# Workshop On Leading Inductive Bible Studies

## ☞ Lesson Purpose

The purpose of this lesson is to give the trainees "hands-on" supervised experience in leading an inductive Bible study.

## ☞ Main Points

- The focus should be on discovery.
- All the stages—**observation**, **interpretation**, and **application**—should be covered.

## ☞ Desired Outcomes

When the content of this lesson has been mastered, each participant should:

- Know how to lead an inductive Bible study.
- Know his or her strengths and weaknesses in leading the study.

## ☞ Appendix

10A Passages for Inductive Bible Studies

## ☞ Suggestions to Trainers

This 2-hour session is entirely devoted to allowing the trainees to practice leading inductive Bible studies, and evaluating each other as they do so. Your job as the trainer is to get the groups organized, and then to circulate between them to listen to the presentations, and make sure the trainees are doing a fair and thorough job of working through the checklist after each study. Encourage the trainees to be honest, but positive.

## WORKSHOP FORMAT

Each trainee should have prepared a brief inductive Bible study on a passage of his or her choosing. Ideally, trainees should take about 20 minutes to lead their study, followed by a 7-minute evaluation using the checklist included in this lesson. Since this is a 2-hour session, that means each group should have four people, so that each one can lead their study. Divide into as many groups of four as needed for the number of trainees. It might be a good idea to take a 5-minute break between the two hours.

As each trainee leads his study, he should remember that this is not a preaching session. The goal is **discovery**. The trainee should lead the group by asking questions that help the other trainees uncover the facts, meaning, and application for themselves. For this reason, the trainee who is leading should already have chosen a few helpful questions in each of the areas—**observation**, **interpretation**, and **application**. After each question is asked, allow time for finding the answer, and discussion. Encourage discussion, but limit the number of questions you ask so that you have time to move all the way through to application.

Remember to pray for enlightenment. This should not be just an exercise. The groups should see the passage clearly, and learn from it if the study is properly lead. This is a *real* study of the Scriptures, and each one should be encouraged from it. The difference from a 'normal' inductive Bible study is the 20-minute time limit. Usually, a personal inductive Bible study would take hours, or possibly days to adequately complete. A group study would normally require an hour, depending on the length of the passage chosen. 20-minutes is very brief, so you will not be able to cover all

This is not just an exercise. The groups should learn from the study.

that you have learned in your preparation. It will, however, give you a good idea of what is involved in such a study.

Even the trainee who prepared the study should gain a clearer understanding through the eyes of the other trainees. Don't be discouraged if the group arrives at an understanding that is different from the leader's original one. This is normal and natural. We never fully plumb the depths of the Word. There is always more to learn.

## THE CHECKLISTS

There are four checklists included below, one for each of the four trainees in your group. Do not fill out the checklist during the Bible study. Rather, participate whole-heartedly in the discussion of the passage. Then, after each trainee has completed his or her study, circle the answers to each question in the right column of the checklist for that trainee.

After you have completed the checklist for the first trainee, take the remainder of that 30-minute segment to share your evaluations with that person as a group while they are fresh in your mind. Be honest, but also remember that this is their first attempt, and therefore, be encouraging.

There are two major areas of concern. The first is whether or not the study actually followed the inductive method, and whether you learned something from it. The second area is how well the leader of the study was able to guide the group to discovery through the use of good questions and appropriate discussion dynamics. If you have a helpful comment that is not covered by the twelve questions on the checklist, add that information to the "comments" section on the bottom of the checklist.

Move on to the second trainee and Bible study only when the group has finished with the evaluation of the first one. However, try to keep to the 30-minute limit so that the fourth trainee will have the full 30 minutes for the final study.

### Checklist 1: Trainee Name \_\_\_\_\_

Evaluation Questions	Evaluation	
1. Did the study follow the inductive method—observation, interpretation & application?	Yes	No
2. Were the questions clear and understandable?	Yes	No
3. Did the questions help you to understand the passage better?	Yes	No
4. Did the leader allow the group to answer questions, rather than answer himself?	Yes	No
5. Did the leader feed questions the group asked back to the group?	Yes	No
6. Did the leader rephrase questions that were hard to understand?	Yes	No
7. Was the leader able to help all the members become involved in the discussion?	Yes	No
8. Was the leader able to keep anyone from dominating the discussion?	Yes	No
9. Did the leader summarize the things the group discovered in the study?	Yes	No
10. Did the leader allow the group and Scripture to correct any wrong answers?	Yes	No
11. Was the leader able to complete the whole study in the given time?	Yes	No
12. Did the leader open and close the study in prayer?	Yes	No
Comments:		

**Checklist 2: Trainee Name \_\_\_\_\_**

<b>Evaluation Questions</b>	<b>Evaluation</b>	
1. Did the study follow the inductive method—observation, interpretation & application?	Yes	No
2. Were the questions clear and understandable?	Yes	No
3. Did the questions help you to understand the passage better?	Yes	No
4. Did the leader allow the group to answer questions, rather than answer himself?	Yes	No
5. Did the leader feed questions the group asked back to the group?	Yes	No
6. Did the leader rephrase questions that were hard to understand?	Yes	No
7. Was the leader able to help all the members become involved in the discussion?	Yes	No
8. Was the leader able to keep anyone from dominating the discussion?	Yes	No
9. Did the leader summarize the things the group discovered in the study?	Yes	No
10. Did the leader allow the group and Scripture to correct any wrong answers?	Yes	No
11. Was the leader able to complete the whole study in the given time?	Yes	No
12. Did the leader open and close the study in prayer?	Yes	No
Comments:		

**Checklist 3: Trainee Name \_\_\_\_\_**

<b>Evaluation Questions</b>	<b>Evaluation</b>	
1. Did the study follow the inductive method—observation, interpretation & application?	Yes	No
2. Were the questions clear and understandable?	Yes	No
3. Did the questions help you to understand the passage better?	Yes	No
4. Did the leader allow the group to answer questions, rather than answer himself?	Yes	No
5. Did the leader feed questions the group asked back to the group?	Yes	No
6. Did the leader rephrase questions that were hard to understand?	Yes	No
7. Was the leader able to help all the members become involved in the discussion?	Yes	No
8. Was the leader able to keep anyone from dominating the discussion?	Yes	No
9. Did the leader summarize the things the group discovered in the study?	Yes	No
10. Did the leader allow the group and Scripture to correct any wrong answers?	Yes	No
11. Was the leader able to complete the whole study in the given time?	Yes	No
12. Did the leader open and close the study in prayer?	Yes	No
Comments:		

**Checklist 4: Trainee Name \_\_\_\_\_**

Evaluation Questions		Evaluation	
1.	Did the study follow the inductive method—observation, interpretation & application?	Yes	No
2.	Were the questions clear and understandable?	Yes	No
3.	Did the questions help you to understand the passage better?	Yes	No
4.	Did the leader allow the group to answer questions, rather than answer himself?	Yes	No
5.	Did the leader feed questions the group asked back to the group?	Yes	No
6.	Did the leader rephrase questions that were hard to understand?	Yes	No
7.	Was the leader able to help all the members become involved in the discussion?	Yes	No
8.	Was the leader able to keep anyone from dominating the discussion?	Yes	No
9.	Did the leader summarize the things the group discovered in the study?	Yes	No
10.	Did the leader allow the group and Scripture to correct any wrong answers?	Yes	No
11.	Was the leader able to complete the whole study in the given time?	Yes	No
12.	Did the leader open and close the study in prayer?	Yes	No
Comments:			

## SUMMARY

This has been an exercise to help give you a taste of the dynamics of an inductive Bible study. This should be the beginning rather than the end. Inductive Bible study is the *best* method for learning from the Scriptures. The process allows you to reach new levels of truth and understanding, with the help of the Holy Spirit. This method is valuable for:

- Personal study
- Sermon preparation
- Sunday School classes
- Small groups
- Cell groups
- Evangelistic studies with unbelievers
- Mid-week church services
- One-on-one discipleship
- And many other uses, limited only by your creativity

## QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION, REVIEW AND APPLICATION

- How were these studies different than the Bible studies you have attended in the past?
- Did this method help you personally to learn? Do you think it would be effective with those you teach or lead? Why or why not?

## ACTION PLAN

It is up to you to take the tools you now have, along with the evaluation by the other trainees of your ability to lead a study, and use them to enhance both your personal spiritual growth, and your ministry.

**BIBLE STUDY  
APPENDIX  
10A**

# Passages for Inductive Bible Studies

*The following passages can be used to develop inductive Bible studies about basic concepts of Christian life and faith. The trainee may use them with new believers, cell groups, one-on-one, etc.*

<b>The Authority of the Bible</b> Re 1:1-3 Lk 24:27-48 Ps 119:94-118 Ps 119:159-168 2Pe 1:19-21 1Pe 1:24-25 2Ti 3:14-17	<b>Evangelism</b> Mk 5:1-20 1Pe 3:15-16 2Co 3:1-3 Ac 22:1-21 Ac 4:1-20 Ac 18:24-28 Mk 16:9-20	<b>Forgiveness</b> Ge 45:4-15 Ps 103:2-18 Mt 6:12-15 Lk 15:11-32 Eph 4:31-32 Mk 11:24-26 Mt 18:21-35
<b>Prayer</b> Ps 55 Mt 26:36-44 Mt 6:5-13 Mt 5:44-48 Jas 5:13-18 Mk 11:20-26 Ro 8:26-28	<b>Giving</b> 2Co 8:1-5 2Co 9:6-11 Mk 10:17-23 1Jn 3:16-18 Mk 4:24-25 Mt 6:1-4 1Co 16:1-2	<b>New Life in Christ</b> 2Co 5:16-21 Jn 15:5-8 Gal 3:26-28 Ro 8:1-11 Php 3:7-11 Ro 6:3-11 Col 3:1-4
<b>Bible Study</b> De 17:18-20 Ps 1 Lk 4:1-13 Lk 4:14-21 Jos 1:7-9 Pr 2:1-5 Pr 4:20-22	<b>Temptation</b> Ro 6:1-14 Lk 4:1-13 He 2:17-18 1Co 10:13 Gal 6:1-11 Rev 3:7-11 Jas 1:12-15	<b>Self Discipline</b> Pr 6:6-11 1Pe 1:13-16 Jn 14:21 Ro 12:1-3 Col 3:15-17 Jas 1:19-25 Lk 6:47-49
<b>God's Plan for Living</b> Php 4:6-7 Pr 3:5-6 Pr 16 Ecc 2:1-26 Mt 4:18-23 Lk 22:39-42 Jas 4:1-10	<b>Repentance</b> Lk 5:29-32 Lk 13:1-9 2Pe 3:8-9 Isa 1:10-20 1Jn 1:8-10 Ac 26:20 Jnh 3:1-10	<b>Christian Fellowship</b> 1Th 5:11-15 Lk 22:24-27 Heb 10:24-25 Eph 1:15-23 Ro 12:3-16 Ac 12:5-19 Ac 2:38-47





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# EVANGELISM

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EVANGELISM

LESSON 4

# Evangelism and Church Planting

## RUNNING THE WHOLE RACE

### Lesson Purpose

The Purpose of this lesson is to demonstrate that evangelism should be done in a relational way in order to help the new believer naturally continue on into a discipling relationship.

### Main Points

- Evangelism is only the first leg of the Christian race—discipleship is the second.
- Natural webs of relationships and "gatekeepers" facilitate effective, relational evangelism.
- New Christians are perhaps the most valuable evangelists.

### Desired Outcomes

When the content of this lesson has been mastered, each participant should:

- Understand why relational evangelism facilitates assimilation of new converts into the church.

### Appendix

4A Evaluating Evangelism Strategies

### Suggestions to Trainers

Appendix 4A can be used as a discussion tool during this lesson.

## INTRODUCTION

It is impossible to plant a church without evangelism, but evangelism alone is not enough. Church planters need to use an appropriate evangelistic method that will lead to the establishment of growing churches—not just the salvation of individuals.

When we consider the vast amount of tools and methods available for evangelism and try to determine which to use, we must remind ourselves of our goal. As church planters, our goal is not just to expose people to the Gospel, nor is it even simply to help them to make a decision for Christ. Our goal is to make disciples who will come together to worship and grow with God's people.

## I. THE NEED FOR A NEW APPROACH

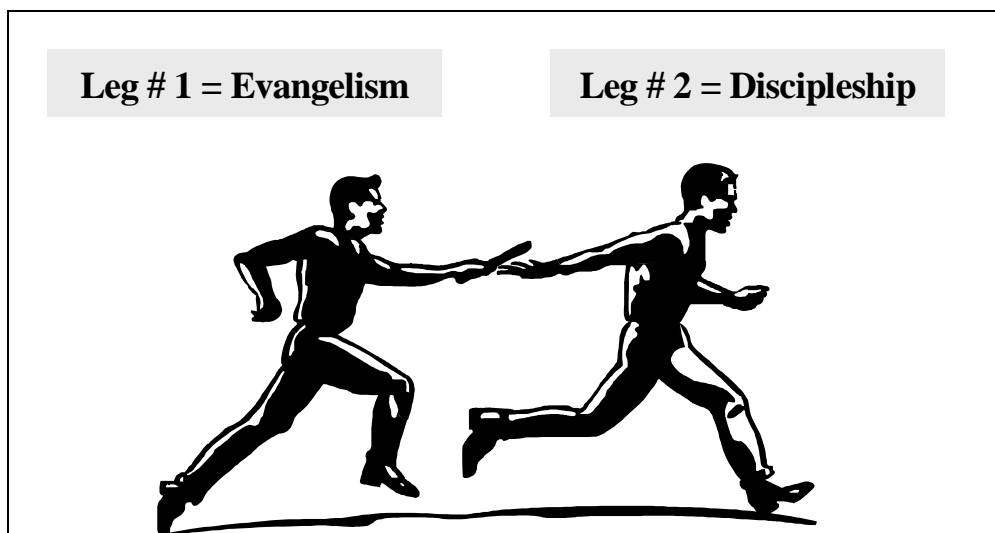
Many of the popular evangelism programs today are quite unlike the evangelism of the early church. The emphasis today is often on intense, structured, one-on-one situations. Many programs are strong in establishing the content of the Gospel and the mechanics of sharing it, but they do not emphasize the relational dynamics of coming to Christ, and thus are not geared toward assimilating people into a local church. The result is that people are often won to Christ and never assimilated into the church. One very large ministry in the CIS researched the results of evangelistic efforts and found that "5-10% remain in church after evangelism. 90 - 95% leave because they find no help and answers to their needs." Obviously, this is not desirable. Our mandate is not to make converts, but *disciples*, and disciples join in fellowship with the Body (Mt 28:19; Heb 10:25).

The church planter needs to use a method of evangelism that assimilates people into the church. He needs strategies that naturally lead to follow-up, and lead naturally to discipleship and growth in the church.

## II. THE RELAY RACE

There are many kinds of individual races, but the relay race is a team effort. The important characteristic of a relay race is that the first runner must successfully pass the baton on to the second runner in order to complete his task. If the first runner completes his section of the course in record time, but does not hand the baton to the next runner, he has failed. The process of evangelism may be compared to the first leg of a relay race, and discipleship may be compared to the second leg. After the evangelist has led a person to trust in Christ (evangelism), he must be discipled and helped to grow to maturity in Christ (discipled).

**Figure 4.1 Passing the Baton**



Both legs of race must be completed in order for the unbeliever to be saved and also assimilated into the local church. The first leg involves understanding the basic content (theological truths) of the Gospel that lead to a relationship with God. The second leg is more sociological or relational. Maturity is best gained through relationships with other members of the family of God. Unfortunately, well-meaning Christians often rush to present the content of the Gospel without taking time to develop a relationship with the lost person to whom they are witnessing. When the lost person repents, he has no significant relationship that will naturally carry him into a discipleship relationship, and therefore the process of making disciples is hindered.

**Figure 4.2 Two Legs of the Relay Race**

<b><i>First Leg</i></b>	<b><i>Second Leg</i></b>
Evangelism	Discipleship
Relationship to God	Relationship to the Body
Salvation	Sanctification
New Birth	Growth to Maturity

Most evangelistic tools take only the first leg into consideration. The Gospel is presented in such a way that it will be understood and received. Praise God for these evangelistic tools. However, as church planters, we must take both of these legs into consideration. Somehow, those we witness to must hear the Gospel and see how it impacts people.

We will have a head start into the second leg of the race if the lost see relationships among believers that communicate love, joy, etc. People should look at our lives and know that we are different. When non-believers begin to say, "I've never sensed love like this before," then evangelism is taking place the way in which it was intended (Jn 13:35).

It should not surprise us to learn that the agency which found only 5 - 10% of its fruit remaining in church also came to this conclusion: "In our opinion, the most successful answer to the follow-up is a structure of home groups in the church." Cell group ministry is a great place to focus on both legs of the race. The content of the Gospel can be made clear with opportunity for questions and feedback. In addition, cell groups are small and intimate, with opportunity for healthy relationships to grow and be seen.

### III. PRINCIPLES FOR EVANGELISM

The following concepts are good general evangelistic principles by any standards. They are listed here because they are of particular benefit to the church planting process. As we have said above, many people will make a personal decision for Christ but will not continue on in a discipling relationship. The church planter must be able to help the lost complete the entire race so they will be saved and become active participants in the Body of Christ.

#### A Use Natural Webs

Every person has a network of friends, relatives, co-workers, and others whom they know well and with whom they have regular contact. These natural relationships provide for the free flow of ideas (whereas discussions between strangers may be filled with misunderstandings and resistance). Often conversions "travel" through these networks, because the Gospel, like electricity, follows the path of least resistance.

Jesus was aware of these natural networks and had the ability to reach not just individuals, but networks as well. In Matthew 9:9-10 Jesus called Matthew and was soon at Matthew's house with the whole network of tax collectors gathered. After Jesus met Andrew the fisherman, there suddenly was a whole group of fishermen following Jesus (Jn 1:40-41). Jesus sat at the well with the Samaritan woman and afterward, she brought her entire village to see Jesus (Jn 4:28-30). When Jesus shared the Gospel with one person he often asked that person to share the Good News with those in his or her network (Lk 8:38-39). The book of Acts as well is filled with stories of whole families (Ac 11:14; 16:31) and whole villages (Ac 9:35) coming to Christ because of one person's conversion.

Most people do their best witnessing with those they know well. Some Christians, eager to evangelize, want to go "door-to-door" to people they do not know when they have not shared the Gospel with their family, best friends or associates. However, the "natural web" principle should be kept in mind. When people from the same network make a decision to follow Christ, it is more likely that they will continue on into the discipleship leg of the race.

#### B. Have New Believers Witness Immediately

What kind of people do you consider to be the most effective evangelists? Perhaps some will answer "pastors" or "theologians." There are no wrong answers here. Anyone can be effective as an evangelist when they are following the leading of the Holy Spirit. But we often fail to realize that **new believers are in some ways the most effective evangelists.** Why? Below two reasons are listed.

1. *Their faith is "fresh."*

Newfound faith is contagious. Even without deep theological understanding, the new convert will enthusiastically give evidence of the change that has taken place in the most dramatic way. Others can see the change right after his conversion better than they can over the course of his growth as a Christian.

2. *New believers still have non-Christian friends who can see the change.*

The Gospel travels through relationships. It has been said that once the average believer has been a Christian for two years or more, all his or her closest friends will also be Christians. Remember, evangelism is much more difficult between strangers. John 4:29 provides a good example of a brand new believer who is a very effective witness. When the sinful Samaritan woman met Christ, she had a very simple but profound testimony *"Come, see a man who told*

*me everything I ever did. Could this be the Christ?"* This woman could not answer difficult theological questions, but she knew what had happened to her. And who could argue with her? She told of what happened to her. That was all that she needed to know to draw others to Christ. The men of the city rushed out to meet Jesus. How effective would her witness have been if she had waited a year to start to tell her story?

A new believer is a powerful witness. As a church planter you may want to develop a plan so that each new convert will be able to witness to his family and friends. When it is not possible to use the plan ask new converts to go with you to visit their family and friends and begin to develop a relationship and share Christ with them as well.

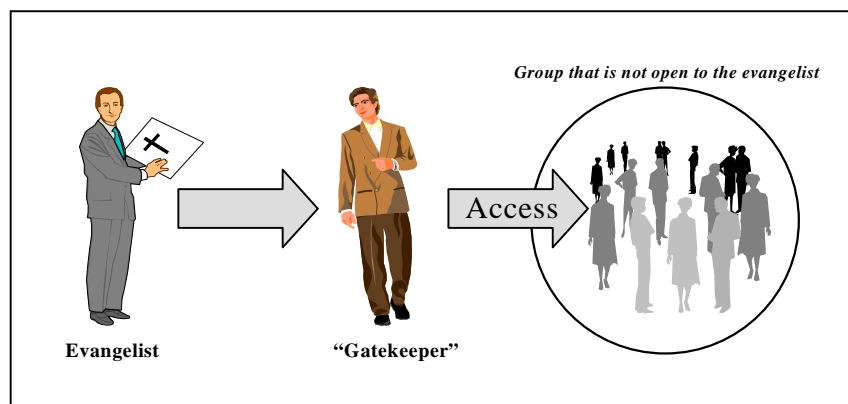
### C. Go For "Gatekeepers"

Every group of people includes a few who are more influential than others. When change takes place in a group, they are normally the ones who initiate the change or at least allow it to take place. When these "influencers" are won to Christ, others will likely follow. Sometimes we call people with this kind of influence "gatekeepers" because of their influence on the group and because they are the ones who allow you to have access to the rest of the group.

Who is a gatekeeper? A person who

- Has a good reputation among his peers
- Is open to a friendship with you.
- Is open to the Lord.

**Figure 4.3 Gatekeepers**



Paul, the great church planter, understood this reality. He specifically expected to win influential people. Understanding the great influence kings have (Pr 16:15; 19:12), he boldly targeted them! (Ac 9:15). He proclaimed the Gospel before Governor Felix, Festus and King Agrippa (Ac 23-26).

**Paul's normal church planting strategy was to teach in the synagogue and then in the home of a "gatekeeper."** For example, at Philippi the gatekeeper was Lydia (Ac 16:11-15), at Thessalonica it was Jason (Ac 17:1-9), and at Corinth it was Titus Justus (Ac 18:7). When Paul led someone to Christ others often followed.

*Other examples of "gatekeepers"*

- **The Philippian Jailer:** "Then they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all the others in his house. At that hour of the night the jailer took them and washed their wounds; then immediately he and all his family were baptized. The jailer brought them into his house and set a meal before them; he was filled with joy because he had come to believe in God - he and his whole family" (Ac 16:32-34).
- **Crispus:** "Crispus, the synagogue ruler, and his entire household believed in the Lord; and many of the Corinthians who heard him believed and were baptized" (Ac 18:8).

- **Stephanas:** "You know that the household of Stephanas were the first converts in Achaia, and they had devoted themselves to the service of the saints. I urge you brothers, to submit to such as these and to everyone who joins in the work..." (1Co 16:15-16).
- Though not quite as clear, see also: (2Ti 1:16, 4:19), **Nympha** (Col 4:15), **Cornelius** (Ac 10:7, 24), **Aquila and Priscilla** (1Co 16:19, Ro 16:3-5), **Gaius** (1Co 1:14; Ro 16:23).

In most cultures "gatekeepers" are male heads of households. If they come to Christ, it is likely that their family will follow. In any case, "gatekeepers" once won will bring others with them.

Sometimes "gatekeepers" will be like *big fish*. The big fish are normally in deep water, far from the shore. It may take more effort to go after these big fish, and they can be very resistant. They may fight the Gospel the whole way, but catching these big fish can be worth the effort!

#### D. Consider Cultural Barriers

People rarely cross cultural barriers to attend church. People may make a personal decision for Christ but be hesitant to attend church—to cross the second bridge—because of cultural or social barriers. People are social beings who, for whatever reason, tend to congregate with those like themselves.

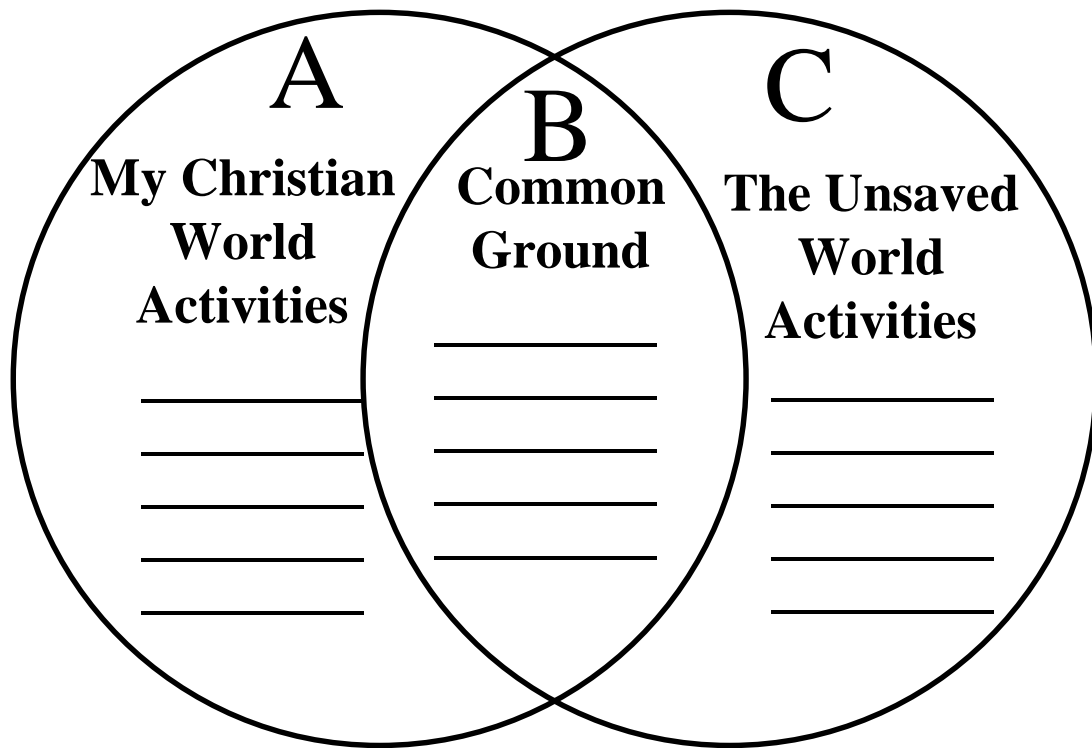
New converts are more likely to be integrated into the church if by doing so, they will not have to change cultures too much. Consider ways to set up your church so that it will reflect the social and cultural uniqueness of the people you are trying to win, without compromising theological truth. Paul clearly used this strategy: *"To the Jews, I became like a Jew, to win the Jews. To those under the law I became like one under the law... To the weak, I became weak, to win the weak"* (1Co 9:20-23). Paul was willing to adjust *his* culture in order to decrease the barriers between himself and *unbelievers*. Often, we do the opposite. When we require the lost to "become like us" we hinder the development of good discipling relationships with them. We become stumbling blocks in their paths rather than helping them run the race victoriously.

#### E. Look For 'Common Ground'

Sometimes a "common ground" approach is just what is needed to develop relationships and win people to Christ. By "common ground", we mean those activities that are common to both believers and non-believers alike. Common ground can be used as a means to develop relationships and communicate the Gospel.

Take several minutes to write down several common ground activities related to your Christian life. List these activities in the spaces provided below the letter "A" in the "Common Ground" diagram. Next, list the typical activities in the average day that are unacceptable to you as a Christian but are common to the unsaved in the group you are targeting. Write these answers in the circle labeled "C." Lastly, in section "B," list the activities that you are engaged in that are acceptable to you and would be acceptable activities for the unsaved people around you.

**Figure 4.4 Common Ground**



### **QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION, REVIEW AND APPLICATION**

- Think about two people you know who have made a decision to follow Christ, but who do not attend church. Why haven't they gotten involved in a body of believers? List the reasons as specifically as possible.
- Describe someone who would qualify as a "gatekeeper" in your target group. How can you reach him/her?
- What culturally appropriate forms might help attract people to your church?
- In what ways can you use the common ground you have identified as a means to communicate the Gospel?

### **ACTION PLAN**

Take several minutes to read the Evangelism Strategies described in Evangelism Appendix 4A. Evaluate these strategies based on the evangelistic principles in this lesson. Will these strategies successfully lead to new churches? How can each of these strategies be modified to ensure a healthy church plant?

### **SOURCES**

- Zunkel, C. Wayne. *Strategies for Growing Your Church*. Elgin, IL: David C. Cook Publishing Co., 1986.
- Jenson, Ron, and Jim Stevens. *Dynamics of Church Growth*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1981.
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EVANGELISM  
APPENDIX

4A

# Evaluating Evangelism Strategies

Take several minutes to read the following evangelistic strategies. Evaluate these strategies based on the evangelistic principles in this lesson. After reading each strategy, circle a number from 1 (low) to 5 (high) that you think best describes how it fulfills the criteria listed in the boxes. Will these strategies successfully lead to new churches? How can each of these strategies be modified to ensure a healthy church plant?

## I. EVANGELISM STRATEGY 1—EVANGELISTIC BIBLE STUDIES

Sasha and Tanya live in a city of 100,000 with no evangelical church. With a desire to plant a church, they start an evangelistic Bible study in their home. After one year, 15 people are faithfully attending and as far as they can tell 9 of them are believers. They realize that with 15 people the group is getting too big to feel intimate, so they start another group that meets on another night in the home of another couple. Sasha hopes that when they have enough people in these groups, they will rent a hall and begin to worship each Sunday as a church.

<b>Amount of personal contact:</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Meets felt needs of the lost:</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Uses natural relationship webs:</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Focuses on the receptive:</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Focuses on the "gatekeepers:</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Provides for follow-up discipleship:</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>

## II. EVANGELISM STRATEGY 2—EVANGELISTIC CRUSADE

Alexander has big plans to plant a church in a large city. Alexander is a recent graduate of a Bible college. While in Bible college Alexander made contact with an aggressive American mission group who has offered to guide him in the project. Together, Alexander and the Americans plan to launch things in June when 20 American college students will come to assist in evangelism. The plan is for the week with the Americans to be very busy. A hall will be rented and a crusade with music, testimonies, and a Gospel presentation will be held every evening. During the day the Americans will pair up with Russians and interpreters to cover the city, handing out fliers and going door to door to advertise the evening crusades. Alexander expects that as a result of this week of evangelism enough people will be saved to open his church immediately.

<b>Amount of personal contact:</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Meets felt needs of the lost:</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Uses natural relationship webs:</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Focuses on the receptive:</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Focuses on the "gatekeepers:</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Provides for follow-up discipleship:</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>

### III. EVANGELISM STRATEGY 3—CHRISTIAN BOOK TABLE

Andre and Luba have been Christians for a long time. With a desire to start a new church that will reach a new group of people they develop the following strategy. Noticing how many people in their region like to read, they collect as many Christian books as they can find and begin a book table with only Christian books in a nearby market area. Every day Andre and Luba set up their table with Christian books for sale at modest prices. Some free Gospel tracts are offered to anyone who stops to browse. They also have some Bible study worksheets which people take home and work on. It is set up so that people discuss the worksheets with Andre or Luba upon the completion of each one and before the next one is received. These worksheets are evangelistic and Andre and Luba pray that people will find Christ as a result of these lessons and they will eventually start a church.

<b>Amount of personal contact:</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Meets felt needs of the lost:</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Uses natural relationship webs:</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Focuses on the receptive:</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Focuses on the "gatekeepers:</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Provides for follow-up discipleship:</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>

### IV. EVANGELISM STRATEGY 4—CHRISTIAN VIDEOS

Vladimir is trying to plant a church in the capital city. In order to evangelize, Vladimir uses Christian videos. He invites people in his neighborhood and at the factory where he works to see these videos. Now, a group of young curious non-believers gather in his apartment every Tuesday evening. The meetings normally last an hour and a half. For 30 to 45 minutes the participants view a video followed by a discussion led by Vladimir using a discussion guide that goes with the video. By using this method, Vladimir hopes that enough people will come to Christ that he will be able to start a church.

<b>Amount of personal contact:</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Meets felt needs of the lost:</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Uses natural relationship webs:</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Focuses on the receptive:</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Focuses on the "gatekeepers:</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Provides for follow-up discipleship:</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>

EVANGELISM

LESSON 5

# Barriers to Effective Evangelism

## BRIDGES INSTEAD OF BARRIERS

### ☞ Lesson Purpose

The purpose of this lesson is to discuss common personal and spiritual barriers to evangelism and how to overcome them.

### ☞ Main Points

- External barriers to evangelism may be cultural, linguistic, religious, or spiritual.
- Internal barriers to evangelism include tradition, prejudice, fear or personal values.

### ☞ Desired Outcomes

When the content of this lesson has been mastered, each participant should

- Implement a plan to overcome external and internal barriers to evangelism.

### ☞ Appendices

5A "A Church in Every People: Plain Talk about A Difficult Subject"

5B Answering Common Objectives: Use Scripture as Your Authority

### ☞ Suggestions to Trainers

Allow people time to break into small groups to discuss the questions for consideration, review and application.

Rather than just reviewing the lesson notes, consider taking time to look at Jesus' conversation with the Samaritan woman at the well in John 4 as an example of overcoming barriers in communicating the Gospel. If this is not done as part of the lesson itself, it can be assigned as an action plan to be done between manuals.

Ask trainees to read and be prepared to discuss the article in Appendix 5A before the session.

## I. THE PROBLEM OF BARRIERS AND THE NEED FOR BRIDGES

For several decades, most believers living in this region were legally denied the privilege of openly sharing their faith in their communities. Churches encouraged religious ghettos—almost religious fortresses—to develop around them, and a sense of alienation, isolation, and distrust of those in the "secular" world was pervasive. Often the only legal place to share Christ was in the church building. These decades left an enduring mark on the mindset and traditions of those who love Christ. Barriers have been erected. These barriers must be identified and torn down.

Often, for example, the Church has misunderstood the place of the unsaved in the spiritual conflict. Knowing that the Devil could use the unsaved to corrupt believers, believers were warned to disassociate from their unsaved friends and neighbors. However, the lost are not the enemy. They are the hostages in a spiritual war. They are the targets of our spiritual efforts. They are just like we were without Christ—spiritually blind, spiritually dead, and spiritually bankrupt. They are not an enemy to be defeated. Rather, they are hostages to be liberated. They are doomed unless intentional, heroic efforts are undertaken by the church to bring them to faith.

In order to accomplish this task of liberation and reclamation, believers must build bridges to the non-Christian world around us. Often our Christian counter-cultures are so foreign and strange that the

unbelievers will not make an effort to join with us. If they are to be reached, we must reach out to them by building bridges of sincerity, mercy, compassion, truth, and love.

Let us understand this. We *will* be misunderstood. We will suffer for our efforts. We will become tired physically, emotionally, and spiritually. We must renew our resources by living balanced lives. But effort must be made to reach this generation and each generation with the Gospel. It is our task, our mandate, and our particular challenge. The next generation of believers cannot reach ours and we will not be here to reach theirs. It is time to tear down the barriers.

## II. UNDERSTANDING THE BARRIERS THAT HINDER EVANGELISM

The well-known American missiologist Ralph Winter has made some important observations about evangelism. Using Acts 1:8 as a foundation, he proposes that Jesus' words in the Great Commission not only give us reason to divide the world geographically (my city, my region, my country, and the world) but also to divide the world with regard to cultural groupings of people. In the passage Jesus refers to Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria and the ends of the world. Naturally for the disciples, it would be easiest for them to do evangelism in Jerusalem and Judea, where everyone spoke the same language and grew up in the same culture. For Peter or John, to preach and teach in Samaria would be more difficult. Not only were there some cultural differences, but there were huge prejudices having to do with the laws of worship that would have to be overcome. Finally, for a missionary or evangelist to go "to the ends of the earth" would require a great amount of preparation (language learning, etc.). This we understand easily. However, Ralph Winter also points out that if we look at the world from the point of view of cultural differences, *then "the ends of the earth" are not always hundreds of miles away, but in fact, may be in your very town or city.* There are whole groups of people in your city who live in a different culture or subculture. In fact, often Christians become so immersed in the lives of their congregations that they become a subculture and are no longer able to understand or relate to their own childhood friends, family members or neighbors.

Special kinds of ministry and evangelism may be needed in order to cross cultural barriers and effectively share the Gospel. Notice how Jesus spoke to the woman at the well in John 4. Also, notice the differences in preaching style and content which Paul used when speaking to Jews (Ac 9:20-22) as compared to when he was preaching to non-Jews (Ac 17:16-31). Both Jesus and Paul had to overcome cultural barriers in order to minister effectively to these people.

Take some time to read the article "*A Church in Every People: Plain Talk About A Difficult Subject*" by Donald McGavran (Appendix 5A). As you read, consider the extent to which McGavran is convinced that culture differences will hinder evangelism. Consider the context in which you are working. Determine in your own mind how well you know the culture of the people among whom you are trying to plant a church.

The most effective evangelism takes place when there are very few "barriers" to tear down. Evangelism is most effective when you are speaking with someone who is like you, who thinks like you, who likes to do the same things you do, who can relate to your joys, who can understand your troubles, and so forth.

But there are many cultures and subcultures of people in which there are few or no believers. These people need to hear the Gospel. We must be prepared to make extra effort to overcome the "barriers" that exist. Consider the barriers listed in the remainder of the lesson in light of your current area of ministry. Remember that even different age groups, occupations, and intellectual abilities can be the basis for the creation of a subculture. Regardless of the situation, we must overcome these barriers so that the Gospel can clearly be heard.

### III. EXTERNAL BARRIERS TO EFFECTIVE EVANGELISM

#### A. Cultural Barriers

Christian workers from other countries, continents, or even other regions of one large country often must learn to understand and adapt to cultural differences in order to minimize the gap between themselves and those they would reach with the Gospel. Paul wrote "I have become all things to all men so that by all possible means I might save some" (1Co 9:22). He was willing to put aside cultural distinctives that he might have preferred for the higher purpose of winning others to Christ. However, the cultural problem is not merely a missionary problem.

In each culture, the Church has established traditions that may have been noble and effective when they were originally implemented, but which over time have become archaic and cumbersome. These church cultural traditions may be evident in our music, our dress, and our architecture, to name just a few. If we are serious about reaching the lost with the Gospel, these traditions need to be re-examined and re-considered.

<b>Cultural</b>
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#### B. Linguistic Barriers

For those coming from a second culture, the most obvious barrier to effective presentation of the Gospel is an inability to speak the language. However, communication can also be a problem between Christians and non-Christians who speak the same language. A very peculiar vocabulary is often used in our fellowships. Many times we aren't even aware of it.

I recall an evangelistic outreach among Yugoslav peoples. When leaving one another, it was common practice in the church to say, "Gospod s tobom", which has the sense of "Go with the Lord." I used the phrase with a man who had been faithfully attending our meetings. His response was "No, I'm going with Milan!" He had no idea of my message or its intent. He knew the words, but they were empty, and both of us were a bit confused and embarrassed.

Our special greetings and spiritual vocabulary can trouble the uninitiated unbelievers among us. We need to find fresh ways of declaring that which is most important—the message that God loves lost humanity and has come to redeem men, women, and children.

<b>Cultural</b>	<b>Linguistic</b>
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#### C. Religious Barriers

We approach people of differing backgrounds. They may be nominally Catholic, Orthodox, agnostic or atheistic. They may have gotten involved with a cult or sect of some kind. They may place a whole different meaning on the words and practices we have come to take for granted. Words like "salvation," "faith," and "belief" may require explanations so that people can understand their meaning. It may be profitable for us to ask those we are communicating with to clarify their own understanding of the terms we are using with them.

Our practices, gestures, and even our posture may intimidate others as well. Some find it difficult to discuss spiritual things in a home. Some find it difficult to believe that a former storefront building can serve God's purposes for a small congregation. They may expect awesome buildings with icons and other artistic expressions of religious faith. They may be troubled by the simplicity of our forms of worship and our familiarity with God. It is our task to win the unsaved. We must find ways to build bridges to them.

<b>Cultural</b>	<b>Linguistic</b>	<b>Religious</b>
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#### D. Some Barriers Are Spiritual in Nature

This final barrier is qualitatively different from those previously mentioned. This critical barrier to effective evangelism is the one that separates those who are spiritually alive from the spiritually

dead. Only the Spirit of God can give life through the Gospel we bear. Only He can regenerate and redeem the lost. Ultimately, the weapons of prayer, God's Word, and our own testimonies are those that the Lord will use to defeat Satan and release the captives. We must recognize opposition we face as coming ultimately from Satan and stand against him for the sake of the Lord, and His church and the lost we long to win.

EXTERNAL BARRIERS			
Cultural	Linguistic	Religious	Spiritual

#### IV. INTERNAL BARRIERS TO EFFECTIVE EVANGELISM

##### A. The Barrier of Our Own Traditions

"It's never been done that way before." Perhaps it is time to do things in a new way, not because our old ways are wrong, but because they may no longer be effective. The old forms may no longer accomplish their intended function. The problem of wineskins, old and new, is one that must be addressed. We will not change our essential Gospel, we must not compromise our integrity, but we may change the way the Gospel is packaged to attract greater interest and to win a hearing.

Traditions	
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##### B. The Barrier of Our Own Prejudices

There are groups of people in each culture that are dismissed as insignificant or unworthy of consideration. Christians, too, must overcome prejudice. Our prejudices may be ethnic in nature (remember the Samaritan woman), or moral, or criminal (remember Zacchaeus). They may be special from birth or due to accident (remember the man born blind). We may spend our time and efforts with attractive and wealthy people and ignore the needy who would be more responsive to the Gospel of Christ. Recall the rebuke of Paul to the Corinthians (1Co 1:18-31) and the stern words of James (Jas 2:1-13). Ask the Lord to cleanse your hearts and to open your hearts and eyes to all who need the Savior.

Traditions	Prejudices	
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##### C. The Barrier of Our Own Fears

The ministry of evangelism is a ministry of faith. It requires courage to risk ourselves and our reputations for the sake of those who may not respond to our Gospel. We may feel inadequate for ministry, thinking that we don't know enough or are not skilled enough. Training can help, but ultimately, we must each choose to follow the Lord in faith and obedience to accomplish the task He has given us. He has given us the weapons of His Spirit, prayer and the Scriptures. More than that, He has promised His own presence with us. Even the Apostle Paul, who wrote, "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me," (Php 4:13) also wrote in 2 Corinthians 4:7 that our powerful Gospel message comes packaged in "jars of clay." It is obvious that the power is not in us but from God. Our faithfulness in the face of fear brings glory to God and people into His kingdom.

Traditions	Prejudices	Fears	
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##### D. The Barrier of Our Own Conflicting Values

We all have limitations in terms of our resources—energy, time, money, ability and gifts. We must each determine before God how to invest these resources as individuals and congregations to accomplish all that He calls us to do. But it must be increasingly clear that if new people are not coming into our fellowships through intentional outreach, church growth is not and will not take place. Each of us must determine prayerfully and in full accordance with our understanding of the Scriptures the place of purposeful evangelism in our lives, schedules and budgets. There will never be enough resources to accomplish all that we wish, so we must decisively choose to win the lost.

INTERNAL BARRIERS			
Traditions	Prejudices	Fears	Values

## V. A STRATEGY TO OVERCOME THE BARRIERS

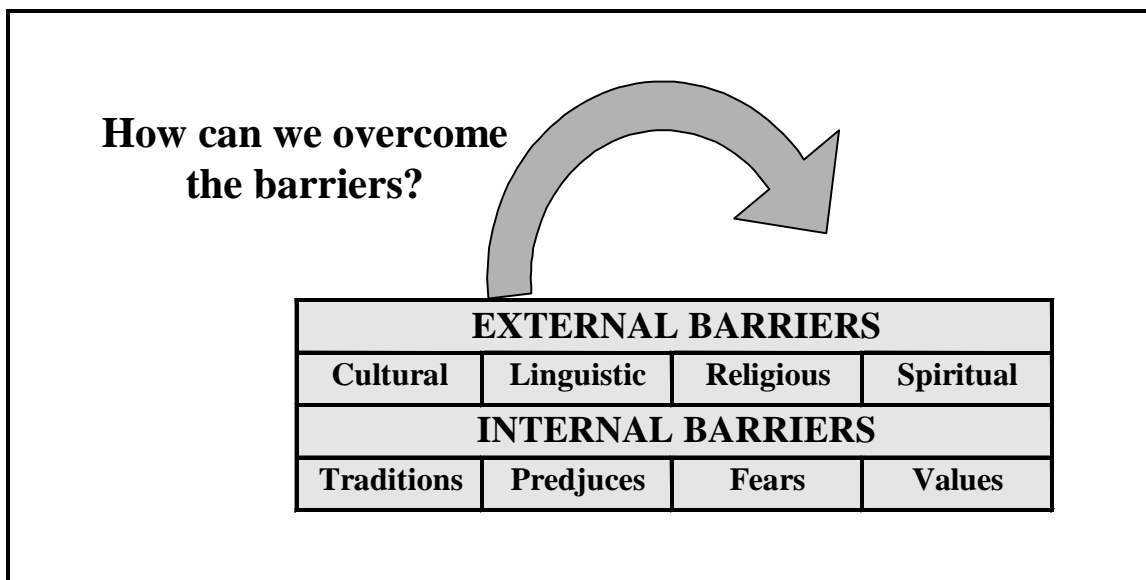
To overcome these external and internal barriers intentional effort will be required. The external barriers will require significant consideration and creativity to overcome. With regard to cultural and religious barriers, we will have to invest time in learning to recognize and understand the diverse backgrounds of our audiences. We must use this understanding as we learn to overcome linguistic barriers in order to communicate effectively with unbelievers. With regard to spiritual barriers, we must focus on prayer, asking the Spirit of God to unlock the hearts of those we would win for Christ. In some cases we will find ourselves "swimming against our own strong denominational currents" for the sake of the Gospel. Prayer and a bold stance may be required to correct long-standing barriers.

Internal barriers must also be confronted. In Romans 12:2, we read that we are not to be conformed to this world but we are to be transformed by the renewal of our minds. If we are to see our world changed, we must see our churches changed. If we would see our churches changed, we must see our hearts changed. If we would see our hearts changed, we must transform our minds by immersing ourselves in the cleansing Word of God.

The Spirit of God will use the Word of God to illumine our minds so that we may see things God's way. He will rebuke the values and prejudices that are not pleasing to Him. He will give us courage to make the changes necessary to accomplish His purposes in regard to evangelism. He will give us faith to overcome our fears as we focus on obedience to His written Word.

In Appendixes 5A and 5B, you will find Scriptures especially selected to aid in this process of preparing our hearts and minds to effectively reach people with Christ's Gospel.

**Figure 5.1 Overcoming the Barriers**



## QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION, REVIEW AND APPLICATION

- What can we do to reduce the frustration and confusion unbelievers feel when they visit our fellowships or our homes?
- What kinds of things make you feel uncomfortable or uneasy in unfamiliar situations?
- What barriers have you personally experienced as you considered reaching out with the Gospel? Have you overcome them? If yes, in what way have you overcome them?

- What groups are historically the victims of prejudice in your culture? What would the Lord have you do to address this prejudice?
- What practical changes could you make in coming weeks to overcome barriers and increase your intentional evangelism?

## **ACTION PLAN**

- Do an inductive Bible study of John, chapter 4. Identify the barriers that Jesus overcame to reveal Himself to the woman at the well.
- Read the article in Appendix 5A, "*A Church in Every People: Plain Talk About A Difficult Subject*", by Donald McGavran. Write a one-page response to the article. Do you agree/disagree with Donald McGavran? How does this article affect your thinking concerning evangelism and church planting strategies? Be prepared to discuss your response with your trainer or mentor.



EVANGELISM  
APPENDIX

5A

# "A Church In Every People: Plain Talk About A Difficult Subject"

BY DONALD A. MCGAVRAN

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## INTRODUCTION BY RALPH D. WINTER

*In many ways this is the most remarkable "letter" written by the most remarkable mission strategist of the Twentieth Century. It is extremely doubtful that any other person in history has tramped more places, inquired about the hard facts of the real growth of the Christian movement in more out of the way places-and thought it through more profoundly-than Donald A. McGavran. A third generation missionary to India, that is only where he began, although even in his nineties he touched base again in that vast sub-continent that was so dear to his heart.*

*But that is only where he did most of his work. His burning, wide-ranging concerns took him everywhere else and relentless, inevitably pushed his thinking into global prominence. This particular, brief document is about like a cautioning letter to the younger people who are coming after him, warning them against oversimplification. In this brief epistle, then, almost off the cuff, he throws out seven principles which embody more solid understanding of the essential factors in Christian mission than most missionaries could accumulate in a lifetime.*

### Donald McGavran's letter:

In the last eighteen years of the twentieth century, the goal of Christian mission should be to preach the Gospel and, by God's grace, to plant in every unchurched segment of mankind-what shall we say-"a church" or "a cluster of growing churches"? By the phrase, "segment of mankind" I mean an urbanization, development, caste, tribe, valley, plain, or minority population. I shall explain that the steadily maintained long-range goal should never be the first, but should always be second. The goal is not one small sealed-off conglomerate congregation in every people. Rather, the long-range goal (to be held consistently in view in the years or decades when it is not yet achieved) should be a cluster of growing congregations in every segment.

## THE ONE-BY-ONE METHOD

As we consider the phrase above, we should remember that it is usually easy to start one single congregation in a new unchurched people group. The missionary arrives. He and his family worship on Sunday. They are the first members of the congregation, He learns the language and preaches the Gospel. He lives like a Christian. He tells people about Christ and helps them in their troubles. He sells tracts or Gospels, or gives them away. Across the years, a few individual converts are won from that. Sometimes they come for very sound and spiritual reasons; sometimes from mixed motives. But here and there a woman, a man, a boy, a girl do decide to follow Jesus. A few employees of the mission become Christian. These may be masons hired to erect the buildings, helpers in the home, rescued persons or orphans. The history of mission in Africa is replete with churches started by buying slaves, freeing them and employing such of them as could not return to their kindred. Such as chose to could accept the Lord. A hundred and fifty years ago this was a common way of starting a church. With the outlawing of slavery, of course, it ceased to be used.

One single congregation arising in the way just described is almost always a conglomerate church-made up of members of several different segments of society. Some old, some young, orphans, rescued persons, helpers and ardent seekers. All seekers are carefully screened to make sure they really intend to receive Christ. In due time a church building is erected and, lo, "a church in that people." It is a conglomerate church. It is sealed off from all the people groups of that region. No segment of the population says, "That group of worshipers is us." They are quite right. It is not. It is ethnically quite a different social unit.

This very common way of beginning the process of evangelization is a slow way to disciple the peoples of the earth-note the plural, "the peoples of the earth." Let us observe closely what really happens as this congregation is gathered. Each convert, as he becomes a Christian, is seen by kin as one who leaves "us" and joins "them." He leaves "our gods" to worship "their gods." Consequently, his own relatives force him out. Sometimes he is severely ostracized, thrown out of the house and home; his wife is threatened. Hundreds of converts have been poisoned or killed. Sometimes, the ostracism is mild and consists merely in severe disapproval. His peoples consider him a traitor. A church which results from this process looks to the peoples of the region like an assemblage of traitors. It is a conglomerate congregation. It is made up of individuals who, one by one, have come out of several different societies, castes or tribes.

Now if anyone, in becoming a Christian, is forced out of, or comes out of a highly-structured segment of society, the Christian cause wins the individual but loses the family. The family, his people, his neighbors of that tribe are fiercely angry at him or her. They are the very men and women to whom he cannot talk. "You are not of us," they say to him. "You have abandoned us, you like them more than you like us. You now worship their gods not our gods." As a result, conglomerate congregations, made up of converts won in this fashion, grow very slowly. Indeed, one might truly affirm that, where congregations grow in this fashion, the conversion of the ethnic units (people groups) from which they come is made doubly difficult. "The Christians misled one of our people," the rest of the group will say. "We're going to make quite sure that they do not mislead any more of us."

One by one, is relatively easy to accomplish. Perhaps 90 out of 100 missionaries who intend church planting get only conglomerate congregations. I want to emphasize that. Perhaps 90 out of every 100 missionaries who intend church planting get only conglomerate congregations. Such missionaries preach the Gospel, tell of Jesus, sell tracts and Gospels and evangelize in many other ways. They welcome inquirers, but whom do they get? They get a man here, a woman there, a boy here, a girl there, who for various reasons are willing to become Christians and patiently to endure the mild or severe disapproval of their people.

If we understand how churches grow and do not grow on new ground, in untouched and unreached peoples, we must note that the process I have just described seems unreal to most missionaries. "What," they will exclaim, "could be a better way of entry into all the unreached peoples of that region than to win a few individuals from among them? Instead of resulting in the sealed-off church you describe, the process really gives us points of entry into every society from which a convert has come. That seems to us to be the real situation."

Those who reason in this fashion have known church growth in a largely Christian land, where men and women who follow Christ are not ostracized, are not regarded as traitors, but rather as those who have done the right thing. In that kind of society every convert usually can become a channel through which the Christian Faith flows to his relatives and friends. On that point there can be no debate. It was the point I emphasized when I titled my book, *The Bridges of God*.

But in tightly-structured societies, where Christianity is looked on as an invading religion, and individuals are excluded for serious fault, there to win converts from several different segments of society, far from building bridges to each of these, erects barriers difficult to cross.

## **THE PEOPLE-MOVEMENT APPROACH**

### **Seven Principles**

Now let us contrast the other way in which God is discipling the peoples of Planet Earth. My account is not theory but a sober recital of easily observable facts. As you look around the world you see that, while most missionaries succeed in planting only conglomerate churches by the "one by one out of the social group" method, here and there clusters of growing churches arise by the people-movement method. They arise by tribe-wise or caste-wise movements to Christ. This is in many ways a better system. In order to use it effectively, missionaries should operate on seven principles.

### **The First Principle**

First, they should be clear about the goal. The goal is not one single conglomerate church in a city or a region. They may get only that, but that must never be their goal. That must be a cluster of growing,

indigenous congregations, every member of which remains in close contact with his kindred. This cluster grows best if it is in one people, one caste, one tribe, one segment of society. For example, If you were evangelizing the taxi drivers of Taipei, then your goal would be to win not some taxi drivers, some university professors, some farmers and some fisherman, but to establish churches made up largely of taxi drivers, their wives and children and mechanics. As you win converts of that particular community, the congregation has a natural, built-in social cohesion. Everybody feels at home. Yes, the goal must be clear.

### **The Second Principle**

The second principle is that the national leader, or the missionary and his helpers, should concentrate on one people. If you are going to establish a cluster of growing congregations amongst, let us say, the Nair people of Kerala, which is the southwest tip of India, then you would need to place most of your missionaries and their helpers so that they can work among the Nairs. They should proclaim the Gospel to Nairs and say quite openly to them, "We are hoping that, within your caste, there soon will be thousands of followers of Jesus Christ, who will remain solidly in the Nair community." They will, of course, not worship the old gods; but then plenty of Nairs don't worship their old gods-plenty of Nairs are communist, and ridicule their old gods.

Nairs whom God calls, who choose to believe in Christ, are going to love their neighbors more than they did before, and walk in the light. They will be saved and beautiful people. They will remain Nairs while, at the same time they have become Christians. To repeat, concentrate on one people group. If you have three missionaries, don't have one evangelizing this group, another that, and a third 200 miles away evangelizing still another. That is a sure way to guarantee that any church started will be small, non-growing, one-by-one churches. The social dynamics of those sections of society will work solidly against the eruption of any great growing people movement to Christ.

### **The Third Principle**

The third principle is to encourage converts to remain thoroughly one with their own people in most matters. They should continue to eat what their people eat. They should not say, "My people are vegetarians but, now that I have become a Christian, I am going to eat meat." After they become Christians they should be more rigidly vegetarian than they were before. In the matter of clothing, they should continue to look precisely like their kinfolk. In the matter of marriage, most people are endogamous, they insist that "our people marry only our people." They look with great disfavor on our marrying other people. And yet when Christians come in one-by-one, they cannot marry their own people. None of them have become Christian. When only a few of a given people become Christians, when it comes time for them or their children to marry, they have to take husbands or wives from other segments of the population. So their own kin look at them and say, "Yes, become a Christian and mongrelize your children. You have left us and have joined them."

All converts should be encouraged to bear cheerfully the exclusion, the oppression, and the persecution that they are likely to encounter from their people. When anyone becomes a follower of a new way of life, he is likely to meet with some disfavor from his loved ones. Maybe it's mild; maybe it's severe. He should bear such disfavor patiently. He should say on all occasions:

"I am a better son than I was before; I am a better father than I was before; I am a better husband than I was before; and I love you more than I used to do. You can hate me, but I will not hate you. You can exclude me, but I will include you. You can force me out of our ancestral house; but I will live on its verandah. Or I will get a house just across the street. I am still one of you, I am more one of you than I ever was before."

Encourage converts to remain thoroughly one with their people in most matters. Please note that word "most." They cannot remain one with their people in idolatry, or drunkenness or obvious sin. If they belong to a segment of society that earns its living stealing, they must "steal no more." But, in most matters (how they talk, how they dress, how they eat, where they go, what kind of houses they live in), they can look very much like their people, and ought to make very effort to do so.

### **The Fourth Principle**

The fourth principle is to try to get group decisions for Christ. If only one person decides to follow Jesus, do not baptize him immediately. Say to him, "You and I will work together to lead another five or ten or, God willing, fifty of your people to accept Jesus Christ as Savior so that when you are baptized, you are baptized with them." Ostracism is very effective against one lone person. But ostracism is weak indeed when exercised against a group of a dozen. And when exercised against two hundred it has practically no force at all.

### **The Fifth Principle**

The fifth principle is this: Aim for scores of groups of people to become Christians in an even-flowing stream across the years. One of the common mistakes made by missionaries, eastern as well as western, all around the world is that when a few become Christians-perhaps 100, 200 or even 1,000-the missionaries spend all their time teaching them. They want to make them good Christians, and they say to themselves, "If these people become good Christians, then the Gospel will spread." So for years they concentrate on a few congregations. By the time, ten or twenty years later, that they begin evangelizing outside that group, the rest of the people no longer want to become Christian. That has happened again and again. This principle requires that, from the very beginning, the missionary keeps on reaching out to new groups. "But," you say, "is not this a sure way to get poor Christians who don't know the Bible? If we follow that principle we shall soon have a lot of 'raw' Christians. Soon we shall have a community of perhaps five thousand people who are very sketchily Christian."

Yes, that is certainly a danger. At this point, we must lean heavily upon the New Testament, remembering the brief weeks or months of instruction Paul gave to his new churches. We must trust the Holy Spirit, and believe that God has called those people out of darkness into His wonderful light. As between two evils, giving them too little Christian teaching and allowing them to become a sealed-off community that cannot reach its own people, the latter is much the greater danger. We must not allow new converts to become sealed off. We must continue to make sure that a constant stream of new converts comes into the ever-growing cluster of congregations.

### **The Sixth Principle**

Now the sixth point is this: The converts, five or five thousand, ought to say or at least feel:

"We Christians are the advance guard of our people, of our segment of society. We are showing our relatives and neighbors a better way of life. The way we are pioneering is good for us who have become Christians and will be very good for you thousands who have yet to believe. Please look on us not as traitors in any sense. We are better sons, brothers, and wives, better tribesmen and caste fellows, better members of our labor union, than we ever were before. We are showing ways in which, while remaining thoroughly of our own segment of society, we all can have a better life. Please look on us as the pioneers of our own people entering a wonderful Promised Land."

### **The Seventh Principle**

The last principle I stress is this: Constantly emphasize brotherhood. In Christ there is no Jew, no Greek, no bond, no free, no Barbarian, no Scythian. We are all one in Christ Jesus, but, at the same time, let us remember that Paul did not attack all imperfect social institutions. For example, he did not do away with slavery. Paul said to the slave, "Be a better slave," He said to the slave owner, "Be a better master."

Paul also said in that famous passage emphasizing unity, "There is no male or female." Nevertheless Christians, in their boarding schools and orphanages, continue to sleep boys and girls in separate dormitories!! In Christ, there is no sex distinctions. Boys and girls are equally precious in God's sight. Men from this tribe, and men from that are equally precious in God's sight. We are all equally sinners saved by grace. These things are true but, at the same time, there are certain social niceties which Christians at this time may observe.

As we continue to stress brotherhood, let us be sure that the most effective way to achieve brotherhood is to lead ever increasing numbers of men and women from every ethnos, every tribe, every segment of society into an obedient relationship to Christ. As we multiply Christians in every segment of society, the

possibility of genuine brotherhood, justice, goodness and righteousness will be enormously increased. Indeed, the best way to get justice, possibly the only way to get justice, is to have very large numbers in every segment of society become committed Christians.

## CONCLUSION

As we work for Christward movements in every people, let us not make the mistake of believing that "one-by-one out of the society into the church" is a bad way. One precious soul willing to endure severe ostracism in order to become a follower of Jesus-one precious soul coming all by himself-is a way that God has blessed and is blessing to the salvation of mankind. But it is a slow way. And it is a way which frequently seals off the convert's own people from any further hearing of the Gospel.

Sometimes one-by-one is the only possible method. When it is, let us praise God for it, and live with its limitations. Let us urge all those wonderful Christians who come bearing persecution and oppression, to pray for their own dear ones and to work constantly that more of their own people may believe and be saved.

One-by-one is one way that God is blessing to the increase of His Church. The people movement is another way. The great advances of the Church on new ground out of non-Christian religions have always come by people movements, never one-by-one. It is equally true that one-by-one-out-of-the-people is a very common beginning way. In the book, *Bridges of God*, which God used to launch the Church Growth Movement, I have used a simile, I say there that missions start proclaiming Christ on a desert-like plain. There life is hard, the number of Christians remains small. A large missionary presence is required. But, here and there, the missionaries or the converts find ways to break out of that arid plain and proceed up into the verdant mountains. There large numbers of people live, there real churches can be founded; there the Church grows strong; that is people-movement land.

I commend that simile to you. Let us accept what God gives. If it is one-by-one, let us accept that and lead those who believe in Jesus to trust in Him completely. But let us always pray that, after that beginning, we may proceed to higher ground, to more verdant pasture, to more fertile lands where great groups of men and women, all of the same segment of society, become Christians and thus open the way for Christward movements in each people on earth. Our goal should be Christward movements within each segment. There the dynamics of social cohesion will advance the Gospel and lead multitudes out of darkness into His wonderful life. Let us be sure that we do it by the most effective methods.

EVANGELISM  
APPENDIX

5B

# Answering Common Objections

## USE SCRIPTURE AS YOUR AUTHORITY

The people we meet come from lots of different backgrounds. The sincere questions they ask do have answers. You can help them to discover the answers in the Scriptures by growing in your own familiarity with what the Bible says about these often-asked questions.

**"If God is so powerful and loving, why does He allow all the evil in the world? Why doesn't He stop it?"**

The Bible says that God created the world perfect, and evil is the result of Satan's and man's disobedience and rebellion against Him. Sin, not God, causes evil and suffering. In fact, God has done everything necessary to overcome the problem of evil by sending Jesus Christ to suffer and die for our sins. But God respects our freedom of choice. We may choose to receive Christ and the new life He offers or to continue our rebellious way that produces evil.

**Memorize Romans 1:28**

**"Aren't Christians presumptuous to claim that Jesus Christ is the only way to heaven? What about sincere followers of other faiths?"**

The issue is not one of sincerity, but of truth. Teachings opposed to each other cannot both be right. No amount of sincerity can cause an untruth to become true. A person can be sincerely wrong. Neither is a Christian's opinion important. What is important is what Jesus Christ claimed.

**Memorize John 14:6**

**"What about those who've never heard of Christ? Will they be condemned to hell?"**

Jesus made it clear that no one would get to heaven except through Him. But Romans 2:12-15 says that no one will be condemned for the mere lack of knowledge about Him. He will be judged according to what he knew and did in regard to right and wrong. The fact is that no one in the world has perfectly kept his own moral standards, to say nothing of God's standards, of which he may or may not be aware.

**Memorize Romans 1:19,20**

**"Isn't the Bible just a collection of religious myths written by men? Isn't it full of errors?"**

Those who study the Bible know these accusations are false and flimsy, indicating a lack of personal investigation of the Scriptures. The writers of the Bible claim divine inspiration in receiving revelations from God and direction by the Holy Spirit in recording events that were significant to God's message to men. Dozens of predictions, made hundreds of years in advance, have been fulfilled in minute detail. Other prophecies await fulfillment. Such predictions could originate only with God.

**Memorize 2 Peter 1:16**

**"If Jesus Christ is really the answer, why are so many Christians hypocrites? Why don't they practice what they preach?"**

Not everyone who claims to be a Christian is one. Only those who have personally received Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord are born again. Every group or organization has some insincere members. We don't throw away all the change in our pockets just because one coin happens to be counterfeit. Even a true Christian does not claim to be perfect. He recognizes his need of constant help from Christ. If the doubter is looking for perfection he will find it only in Christ. If he is looking for reality he will find it in thousands of sincere Christians who are walking with Christ.

**Memorize Romans 14:12**

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**"Why do so many educated people reject the claims of Christ? Doesn't this prove that belief in Christ is incompatible with higher learning?"**

Faith in Jesus Christ and education are not incompatible. Many of the greatest scientists, past and present, were and are sincere believers in Jesus Christ. The issue Christ presents is moral, not intellectual. Therefore, the educated person rejects the Gospel for the same reason the uneducated man does. A common reason is unwillingness to submit to Christ's authority.

***Memorize 1 Corinthians 1:21***

**SOURCE:**

Navigators. *Personal Evangelism Scripture Memory Course*, Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, n.d.





EVANGELISM

LESSON 6,7

# The Process Of Conversion

## HELPING PEOPLE MOVE TOWARD FAITH IN CHRIST

### ☛ Lesson Purpose

The Purpose of this lesson is to discuss conversion as a process which we should anticipate and in which we cooperate.

### ☛ Main Points

- We must begin to share Christ not where we are most comfortable, but where our audience is most comfortable.
- There is only one Gospel, but we may use many methods to share it.

### ☛ Desired Outcomes

When the content of this lesson has been mastered, each participant should . . .

- Be familiar with Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs.
- Be familiar with the process of a person's movement toward faith in and commitment to Christ.
- Become familiar with four phases of evangelism and begin to identify people to whom we are ministering within these phases.
- Understand that we must begin to share Christ, not where we are most comfortable, but where our audience is most comfortable, in moving people toward faith.

### ☛ Appendices

6A Profile Of Persons You Wish To Evangelize

6B Three Principles For Strategic Evangelism

6C Examining Jesus' Approach To Individuals

### ☛ Suggestions to Trainers

This is a two-hour lesson. Before you begin your instruction, have trainees review some of the lessons they learned in their study of the parables of the soils, Matthew 13:3-9,18-23.

This lesson refers to concepts presented in Cell Group lesson 4, "Cell Group Evangelism." If the trainees have not yet gone through this lesson, it is recommended that the trainer review the first section of this lesson, "Two Types of Unbelievers", prior to teaching this lesson.

## INTRODUCTION

In our study of the sower in Matthew 13, we saw that the condition of the ground on which the Good Seed fell determined the outcome of the harvest. The seed which brought forth a good harvest was sown on good ground. Specifically, Jesus said, "The one who received the seed that fell on good soil is the man who hears the word and understands it" (v.23). Before beginning our evangelism we need to carefully examine the kind of ground on which the seed is to be sown. That is, we need to look carefully at the people we want to evangelize to try to determine what we can do to help them clearly understand the Gospel. (Notice in the parable that the people had hard hearts because they did not understand the message.) In this session we want to look at some tools for assessing peoples' needs and evaluating their attitude toward God as a first step in helping them understand and receive the Good News.

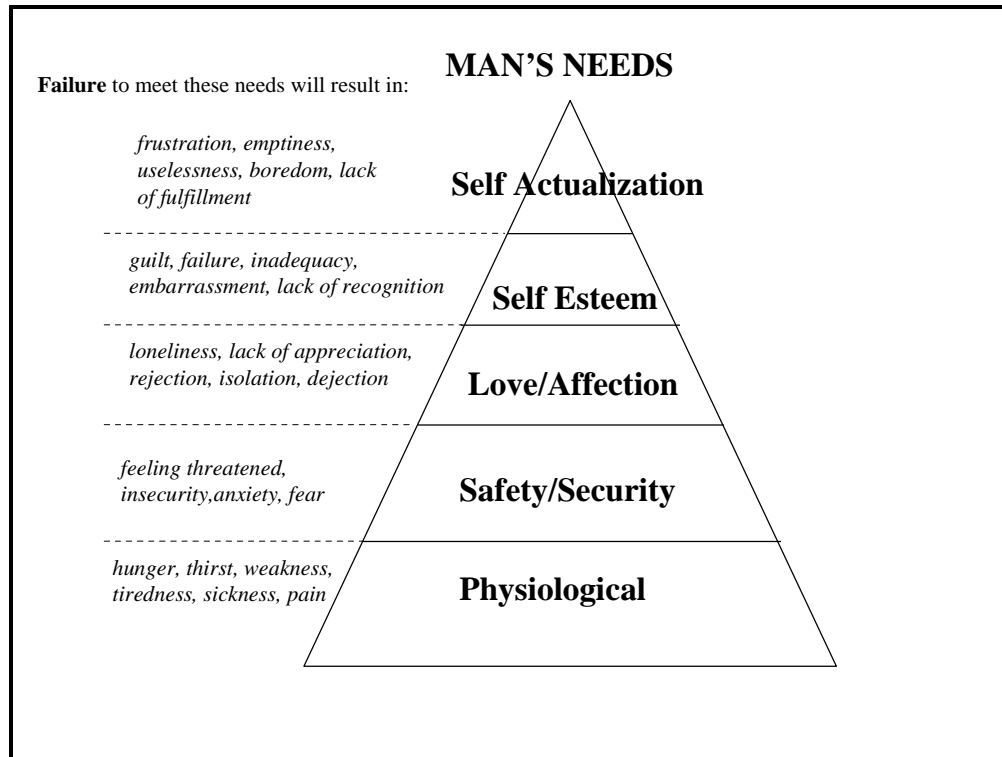
You may ask, "Why do we need to know *all* of people's needs when we already know that their *main* need is for God's saving grace?" The answer is simple. It helps us "meet them where they are." When we

understand people's most basic needs, we are better able to show God's love for them by helping to meet these needs.

## I. ASSESSING PEOPLE'S NEEDS

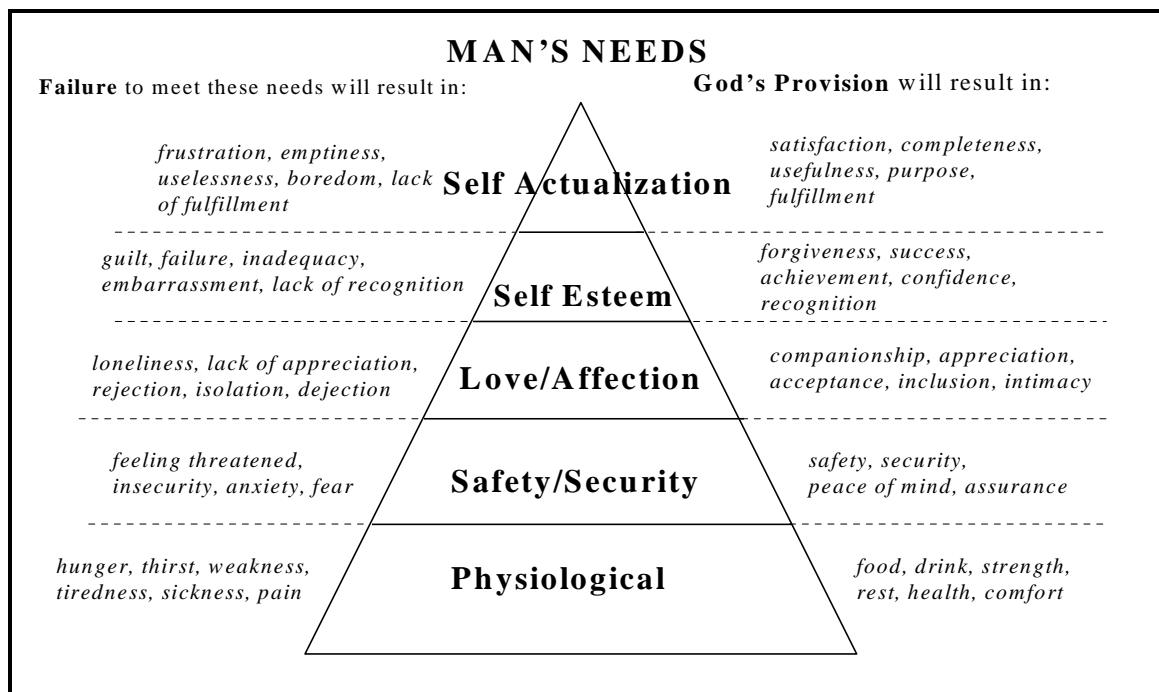
Psychologist Abraham Maslow developed an indicator of needs common to all mankind. His conclusion was that a person will not be motivated to attain a higher level of need until lower level needs have been met. For example, if a person is hungry, his primary concern will be for getting food, not for gaining recognition, which is a higher need. Figure 6.1 is a summary of Maslow's Hierarchy of Human Need, which shows the various needs along with the problems resulting from failure to meet those needs.

**Figure 6.1 Man's Needs: Adapted From Maslow's Hierarchy of Human Need**



After carefully considering man's needs and the results from failing to meet those needs (Figure 6.1), look at Figure 6.2 and see the ways in which God has made provision for all of man's needs.

**Figure 6.2 God's Provision For Man's Needs**



Jesus Christ is the answer to everyone's needs. But the way he provides for those needs to be met is through His Body, the CHURCH. If we do not understand a person's need, we will not know how to help meet that need. Where on this chart would you place the people whom you are evangelizing?

## II. EVALUATING WHERE PEOPLE ARE IN THEIR UNDERSTANDING OF THE GOSPEL

Understanding a person's needs is only the first step. In order for our evangelism to be effective, we must also know where the person is in his understanding of God: is he an atheist who does not even believe there is a god? Is he searching for God? Is he angry at God, etc.?

Cell Group lesson 4, "Cell Group Evangelism", discusses two types of unbelievers: "Type A" and "Type B." Type A unbelievers are interested to some degree in God, the Bible, and are open to God's direction for their lives. Type B unbelievers are those who are not interested in the Bible, who will not go to church, perhaps don't even believe in God, and may be openly opposed or even hostile to the Gospel message.

Figure 6.3 shows some steps that people take in their movement toward God. Study this figure carefully. Some Type B unbelievers may not even be on this chart yet, while others would only be at one of the levels in the "cultivation" step. Type A unbelievers, however, could be at any one of the levels in the steps prior to "harvesting."

This chart can be very useful to help you determine a person's spiritual condition, whether they are a Type A or Type B unbeliever. Think about the people that you are praying about, spending time with, and witnessing to. Where would you put them on this chart?

**Figure 6.3. Steps Toward Faith**

	RESPONSE STEPS
<b>CULTIVATION</b>	<p>-12 GOING HIS OR HER OWN WAY</p> <p>-11 AWARENESS OF THE PRESENCE OF THE MESSENGER</p> <p>-10 POSITIVE ATTITUDE TOWARD THE MESSENGER</p> <p>-9 AWARENESS OF DIFFERENCE IN THE MESSENGER'S LIFE</p> <p>-8 INITIAL AWARENESS OF THE BIBLE'S RELEVANCE FOR LIFE</p>
<b>SOWING</b>	<p>-7 POSITIVE ATTITUDE TOWARD THE BIBLE</p> <p>-6 AWARENESS OF THE BASICS OF THE GOSPEL</p> <p>-5 UNDERSTANDS THE GOSPEL'S MEANING AND IMPLICATIONS</p> <p>-4 POSITIVE ATTITUDE TOWARD THE GOSPEL</p>
<b>HARVESTING</b>	<p>-3 RECOGNITION OF PERSONAL NEED</p> <p>-2 DECISION TO ACT</p> <p>-1 REPENTANCE AND FAITH</p> <p><b>0 NEW CREATURE IN CHRIST!</b></p>
<b>GATHERING</b>	<p>+1 FAITH CONFIRMATION AND GROUNDING</p> <p>+2 ASSIMILATION INTO A CARING CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY</p> <p>+3 GROWING! MATURING IN CHRIST-LIKENESS</p> <p>+4 GOING! MOBILIZATION TO BE "LIVING PROOF" TO OTHERS</p>

As you become familiar with this diagram, ask yourself the following questions:

- Where do the people I'm working with fit into this diagram?
- At what stage can existing materials and tools for evangelism best be used?
- At which stages is there a critical lack of materials for use with the people with whom I'm working?

### III. UNDERSTANDING FOUR PHASES OF ACTIVITY RELATED TO WINNING PEOPLE TO CHRIST

We saw in the Parable of the Sower in Matthew 13 that Jesus used the figure of the sower to illustrate truth about the harvest, particularly about the sowing and harvesting stage. Although Jesus here did not specifically address the other activities involved in the whole process, the idea of farming is used frequently throughout Scripture (Mt 9:37; Lk 10:2; Jn 4:35; 1Co 3:5-9; Gal 6:9;). As we think about all that is involved in seeing a person come to Christ, it might be helpful to divided the evangelism task into four phases as shown in Figure 6.4.

**Figure 6.4 Four Phases Of Activity Related To Winning People To Christ**

Activity	Cultivating	Sowing	Harvesting	Gathering
<b>Explanation</b>	Speaks to the heart through caring relationships	Speaks to the mind through reasoning and communication	Speaks to the will, requesting a faith response in conversion	Speaks to the whole man concerning personal growth in Christ
<b>Emphasis</b>	Presence of the messenger	Proclamation of the Gospel truth	Persuasion to a decision	Participation and incorporation into a local fellowship
<b>Biblical Examples</b>	John 3 & John 4	John 4 and Acts 8	John 4 and Acts 16	Acts 2:40-47 and Acts 8
<b>Steps toward faith</b>	-12 to -8	-7 to -4	-3 to 0	+1 to +4

### IV. DETERMINING EVANGELISTIC STRATEGY

Following is an illustration of how you might determine your evangelistic strategy based on the information you learned above. The Worksheet in Appendix 6A is a helpful guide which you can use to develop profiles of the people you which to evangelize.

#### A. Basic Needs

Maria is a young woman from a divorced family. An only child, she was rejected by her father. Her mother was so busy providing for the family that she had little time to spend with her. She and her mother lived in a city far from her extended family. Now as an adult she feels unloved. You assess her need to be for love/affection. (See Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Figure 6.1).

#### B. Receptivity To The Gospel

In her steps toward faith (See Figure 6.3), Maria is at -12. Maria has had no religious upbringing, no contact with Christians. She does have a vague idea that the Church claims to be relevant to her, although she knows nothing about the claims of Jesus Christ.

#### C. Evaluation Of Your Evangelistic Strategy

Maria is not yet ready for the sowing of the seed. For you to give her a tract or a Bible would probably not be effective. What she needs is to be shown the love of Christ in a warm, accepting atmosphere, the cultivation stage in the chart in figure 6.4. You decide to invite her to a small group where there is a lot of caring for each other . Then you might include her in an evangelistic Bible study.

As you determine your strategy for reaching those people God has already placed on your heart, you might also begin to pray about reaching people who, if reached with the Gospel, would be strategic in reaching your target area with the Gospel (See Appendix 6B).

## **QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION, REVIEW AND APPLICATION**

Do you tend to approach each person using the same evangelistic method or tool? How can you increase your versatility?

## **ACTION PLAN**

- Work through Worksheet in Appendix 6C to aid your understanding from Scripture that people have differing needs and must be approached in different ways. This worksheet looks at different instances in the New Testament where Jesus was revealing Himself to different kinds of people.
- Using Worksheet in Appendix 6A as a guide, work with the other two people in your prayer triplet. List the names of each of the people you are praying for, assess where they are in the scale of needs, evaluate where they are in moving toward Christ (Steps Toward Faith). Determine what you should do to effectively reach them with the Gospel.
- Study Appendix 6B, Three Principles For Strategic Evangelism. Who are the influential "Gatekeepers" in your target area? What can you do to reach these people with the Gospel?

EVANGELISM  
APPENDIX

6A

# Profile of Persons You Wish To Evangelize

## WORKSHEET

---

The important information that we learned in the case study about Mary can be summarized with the help of the table below. Look closely at this example, and then use the blank samples on the next page to determine the needs and responsiveness of those for whom you are praying with your "Prayer Triplet" partners.

NAME	BASIC NEEDS (DESCRIBE) (FIGURE 6.1)	RESPONSIVENESS TO FAITH IN CHRIST (FIGURE 6.4)
Mary	<i>Love/Affection</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- an only child</li><li>- from a divorced family</li><li>- rejected by father</li><li>- mother too busy to show her affection</li></ul>	<i>-12</i> <p>Mary is going about her own way.</p> <p>Living in an Orthodox country, she knows that the traditional church exists but has no idea it has anything to say to her. She has never personally had contact with Christians and has no idea about the claims of Christ.</p>

**EVALUATION:** *At the "cultivation" stage. Needs a caring relationship before the sowing can be effective.*

**SAMPLE PROFILE SHEET TO USE FOR ACTION PLAN ASSIGNMENT**

<b>NAME</b>	<b>BASIC NEEDS (DESCRIBE) (FIGURE 6.1)</b>	<b>RESPONSIVENESS TO FAITH IN CHRIST (FIGURE 6.4)</b>

**EVALUATION:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

<b>NAME</b>	<b>BASIC NEEDS (DESCRIBE) (FIGURE 6.1)</b>	<b>RESPONSIVENESS TO FAITH IN CHRIST (FIGURE 6.4)</b>

**EVALUATION:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



EVANGELISM  
APPENDIX

6B

# Three Principles for Strategic Evangelism

---

Following are three strategic principles that will help us in reaching those with varying receptivity to the Gospel.

## I. STRATEGIC SOWING

Every church planter must deal with the question of priorities in ministry. Among these questions is the issue of where to concentrate our evangelistic efforts. Do we focus on those who appear receptive, or on those who are resistant. Although these groups may seem mutually exclusive, the apostles seemed to try to give balanced attention to both kinds of people.

### A. Those with greater understanding of truth may move toward Christ more quickly

As you read through the book of Acts, ask yourself questions like: Where did the apostle Paul go when he entered a city? Whom did he first approach? Why did he go to these people first? Paul's normal pattern was clearly to go to the Jews first. Why did Paul most often begin with the Jews?

I believe that Paul was convinced that these people had been prepared to receive the Gospel and could be brought into the church and mobilized for ministry at the earliest possible moment. The Jews already know the Old Testament, and knew many things about God. We must understand that Paul wanted to reach the greatest number with the Gospel message as soon as possible. The apostle understood that some are more responsive than others, more ready to hear and receive spiritual truth. The fact that he was not always received warmly by them doesn't mean that his strategy was incorrect. However, when the Jews in a particular city rejected the message and the Gentiles proved more receptive, Paul went to the Gentiles. We see this pattern of Jew-Gentile repeated consistently in most of the cities he visited.

Let's not forget that we are aiming at saturation church planting. The more people we can involve in this task, the better. And once people are no longer a harvest field, they become part of the harvest force. Share the good news with all who will hear, but target people who can quickly become part of God's ministry team.

### B. Those with greater influence, "the gate-keepers", may move toward Christ slowly, but their long-term impact for the Gospel may be greater

The best example is Paul himself. He had all the credentials to make a great impact for God. He had all the zeal. But it took time for him to realize—finally only through a direct encounter with the living Christ—that he needed to turn to Christ. Paul himself then desired to go to Rome and testify before Caesar—the most influential person in the world—even if it meant going as a prisoner in chains (Acts 25:11; 27:24). If God has given you a heart to reach an influential person in your community, persevere in that relationship. "Water it" liberally. You have something that person needs! Pray! Ask God to open doors of opportunity and then seek them out. Remember that Saul, the church's persecutor, became Paul, the apostle to the Gentiles.

## **II. STRATEGIC LIVING—MEET PEOPLE WHERE THEY ARE; NOT WHERE WE ARE COMFORTABLE**

### **A. Individual Consideration John 3, 4, 9**

As the Lord conversed with three specific individuals in these chapters, we find that he helped each discover his need in differing ways. With the well-taught Pharisee, Jesus helped him understand that he didn't understand the spiritual realm at all. With the Samaritan woman at the well, Jesus made her feel comfortable and reawakened her spiritual thirst for God. With the man born blind, Jesus met a physical need, creating a hunger for a personal relationship. One principle we can clearly see in these interactions is that Jesus didn't treat people as merely "souls with ears." He saw real people with real needs and offered a genuine relationship.

### **B. Incarnational Evangelism 1 Corinthians 9:19-23**

The wise fisherman observes the fish he wants to catch, learning the types of food he eats and the times he feeds, where and how deep he swims. He selects a lure or bait that is most similar to the fish's natural habitat and uses it to attract the fish. A wise fisherman doesn't put Hungarian goulash on the hook just because he likes it! As evangelists, we must understand the way the unbeliever thinks, learn the things he values, and bridge the gap between his needs as he understands them and his spiritual needs as the Spirit and the Word of God reveal them.

## **III. STRATEGIC UNDERSTANDING—SATISFIED PEOPLE DON'T GENERALLY SEEK CHANGE**

### **A. 1 Corinthians 1:18-31**

Those who are satisfied that they already know all the answers are difficult to win to Christ. This group includes the intellectuals, the wealthy, and those with worldly status. It is a fact that it often takes a personal crisis of some sort to cause them to listen to the message of the Gospel. We need to be aware of the opportunity for evangelism that such crises present. We also need to build a rapport with these people so that we know when they are facing troubles, and so that we will be able to respond with hope in a timely fashion.

### **B. Matthew 9:12**

The wise fisherman goes fishing when the fish are hungry, not when they've just fed. As evangelists, our task is to help people discover needs that need to be met and to create a sense of hunger for Christ. We must recognize that those who most easily recognize their needs will be most ready to consider Christ's solution, if they truly desire a solution. If people aren't hungry for the Gospel, ask God's Spirit to create that hunger in them.

### **Summary**

Remember that successful evangelism involves...

- taking the initiative, in the power and love of the Holy Spirit, to help a person move one step closer in the process of mini-decisions for Christ,
- being there to encourage and guide them in knowing how to make that decision,
- praying for them to come to the place of full repentance and faith in Christ and to experience the salvation in Christ by faith alone, and
- bringing them fully into the fellowship and ministry of the local church.

EVANGELISM  
APPENDIX

6C

# Examining Jesus' Approach To Individuals

## COMPARISON WORKSHEET

The Gospels are full of interesting conversations between Jesus and other individuals. We want to examine a few of them to see some differences and similarities in Jesus' approach. Work through each Scripture passage listed in the table and answer the questions.

Scripture:	John 3: 1-21	John 4:5-26	John 9:5-7,35-39	Mark 10:17-22
With whom is Jesus speaking?				
What do we know of this person from the passage?				
How does the conversation begin?				
At what verse does the direction of the conversation change?				
What does Jesus require?				
What does Christ offer?				
How does the individual respond?				

# *Omega Course:*

Practical Church Planter Training

## **Manual Three**

By

*The Alliance for Saturation Church Planting*

In cooperation with

Peter Deyneka Russian Ministries

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# PREFACE

## THE PURPOSE OF THIS MATERIAL

Church planters are often recruited and sent out with little or no training for the task that is before them. Church leaders who are overwhelmed with ministry difficulties often lack a clear vision of what God desires to accomplish through them. Both church planters and church leaders need training and vision, but Bible schools and seminaries are not realistic options for many.

This material is designed to provide not only vision for the church planter and church leader, but also the biblical foundation and practical ministry skills in order to see that vision become reality. It is not an educational "program." Rather, it provides necessary biblical and educational foundations, as well as practical ministry skills, which are required for church planting. Although the *Omega Course* was designed for Central/Eastern Europe and the Former Soviet Union, we've been encouraged by reports that it is already being found useful when adapted for use in other contexts.

This curriculum has been designed to accomplish two goals:

1. To provide the necessary training for churches to be planted.
2. To encourage mobilization in the whole Body of Christ toward a church planting movement.

Today we see church planting movements taking place in many countries throughout the world, including Brazil, Romania, the Philippines, Nigeria, and others. We believe that the local church is God's primary instrument for world evangelization, and that church planting based upon multiplication principles is the most effective means of working towards the completion of the Great Commission. New churches must be planted with a vision for multiplication and the ability to plant other new churches. When this happens, there is potential for a movement of churches which is able to sweep across a nation and transform the lives of people throughout the land.

A church planting movement needs people involved in all levels of the church planting task, from young believers who are excited about their new faith, to leaders of denominations. Church planters by themselves can never be the catalysts for a church planting movement. This material is applicable and has much benefit for all levels of church workers and church leaders who can directly and indirectly support the efforts of church planters as they strive to fulfill the ministry to which God has called them.

## CURRICULUM OVERVIEW

This manual is one of five manuals, each of which contains approximately 26 one-hour lessons. In order to accomplish the goals stated above, the curriculum covers a wide range of subjects that are necessary for the church planting task. These include SCP vision, cell group ministry, discipleship, Church, evangelism, inductive Bible study, leadership, prayer, spiritual character and more.

The curriculum was divided into five manuals in order to provide an ever-expanding approach to the learning process. As each participant completes a manual, he or she spends time before the next manual putting into practice the principles that have been learned. Therefore many of the later sessions build upon principles and skills which have been learned and practiced in earlier lessons.

In other words, the curriculum has been designed to be learned and used in parallel with the actual planting of churches. As the participant actively works towards starting a new church, he or she will need certain skills and knowledge, and will encounter various problems along the way. The skills and knowledge needed at the beginning of the church plant are provided in the first manuals, while the activities and principles needed at a later stage in a church plant are presented in the later manuals. Each manual has been designed to provide skills, answer questions, and discuss potential problems that relate to the corresponding phase of church planting in which the participant is actively working. After this Preface you will find a list of key development activities or "thresholds" that trainees are prepared for and expected to apply between training seminars.

The lessons are grouped by subject, and each of the five manuals includes lessons from some subjects. Some of the themes, such as "vision" and "church" are included in all five of the manuals. Others, such as "discipleship" occur later in the curriculum, when the participant is at the point in his or her ministry when

these themes are necessary. A curriculum overview containing a list of the lesson titles for each of the five manuals is included later in this section.

## **USING THE MATERIAL**

### **Advice for the Participant**

Much time, prayer and effort has been put into the preparation of all five of the manuals in this curriculum. Each manual is designed to address specific ministry skills and knowledge that are required during the process of starting a new church. Therefore it is highly recommended that you begin with the first manual, and not with one of the later manuals. In the same respect, each lesson has been carefully chosen and crafted to be useful, applicable and indispensable for the church planting task. It is to your benefit not to skip lessons.

Be aware that real learning takes place when you apply the concepts presented in these lessons to your personal life and ministry. Most lessons include an action plan at the end. These action plans are designed to help you apply the ideas in the lesson and should be completed before you begin working with the next manual. It can be extremely helpful to have a mentor to encourage and advise you as you apply yourself to church planting. A mentor can also serve your need for accountability as you apply the concepts being learned to your life and ministry. Having someone to come alongside you is not only effective pedagogy, but many church planters testify to the help this provides in their life and ministry. Therefore, we strongly encourage you to prayerfully seek some form of mentoring to enhance and strengthen your church planting ministry.

### **Advice for the Trainer**

This material can be used in a variety of settings such as a Bible school, seminary or a church-based seminar. However this is not primarily educational material. It is training material. Education focuses on knowledge and information. The intent of the material is not merely to impart knowledge, but to motivate toward action employing biblically sound ministry skills. This manual is for 'doers.'

Although the method you choose to teach the lessons for each manual will depend on your particular context, each manual can be taught in a weeklong seminar. From this ideal, many training locations have successfully used other arrangements that fit better with the flow of life and existing ministries. They have sometimes opted for two intensive weekends or regular weekly sessions. It is recommended that the action plans at the end of each lesson be emphasized so that they are completed before the next seminar. Four to six months is a reasonable time to expect between seminars. The advantage of this type of training method is that it combines principles learned in the seminar with hands-on practice between seminars.

During seminars it is not necessary to teach every point of every lesson since participants can read the material on their own. Sometimes having trainees read the lesson and interact on how it relates to their own experience is a good method. At other times, a lecture from someone who is an expert in the subject being covered may be the best way to impart the concepts. But **DO NOT DWELL ON THE LECTURE APPROACH**. Be creative as you try various methods to convey the principles and skills contained in the lessons. Other trainers have found variations such as discussion groups, workshops and role playing to be helpful and interesting.

You have a sacred trust. The Lord of the Church wishes to disciple the nations, and leaders are needed. You have the awesome potential of helping to equip many who could foster church planting movements and to facilitate others in ministries of church multiplication.

### **Further help**

Do not hesitate to contact us if we can be of further assistance to you in spreading the vision of saturation church planting or practically equipping church planters.

Jay Weaver, General Editor  
Budapest, Hungary, January 2000  
JayWeaver@compuserve.com

## ABOUT THE ALLIANCE

This curriculum has been prepared by *The Alliance for Saturation Church Planting* in cooperation with Project 250 of Peter Deyneka Russian Ministries. *The Alliance* is a partnership of churches and mission agencies committed to mobilizing believers to saturate each country in Central/Eastern Europe and the Former Soviet Union with evangelical churches. Saturation Church Planting is a strategy that seeks to establish local churches in every town, village and neighborhood so that those who accept Christ will have a local fellowship in which to grow in Christ and be equipped for ministry. *The Alliance* is built on the premise that joining forces will increase effectiveness, reduce duplication, and demonstrate unity within the body of Christ.

### WHAT WE BELIEVE:

- The local church is God's primary tool for evangelism and discipleship.
- Partnership with churches and mission organizations is crucial for the multiplication of local churches and the development of saturation church planting movements.
- Training leaders is essential to church planting and church growth.
- The Lausanne Covenant is the statement of faith for *The Alliance*.

### WHAT WE DO:

#### Church Planter Training and Mentoring

*The Alliance* provides skill-based training in seminar fashion with practical ministry assignments geared towards starting reproducing churches.

#### Information Gathering

Accurate information leads to good decisions in the church planting task. *The Alliance* can help with training and consultation for your information gathering needs in the areas of church planting and church growth.

#### Prayer Movement Consulting

A church planting movement starts with vision, which is discovered and refined through seeking God's heart in prayer. *The Alliance* can help you better understand the role of prayer movements in the church planting task, and how you can facilitate a prayer movement in your region.

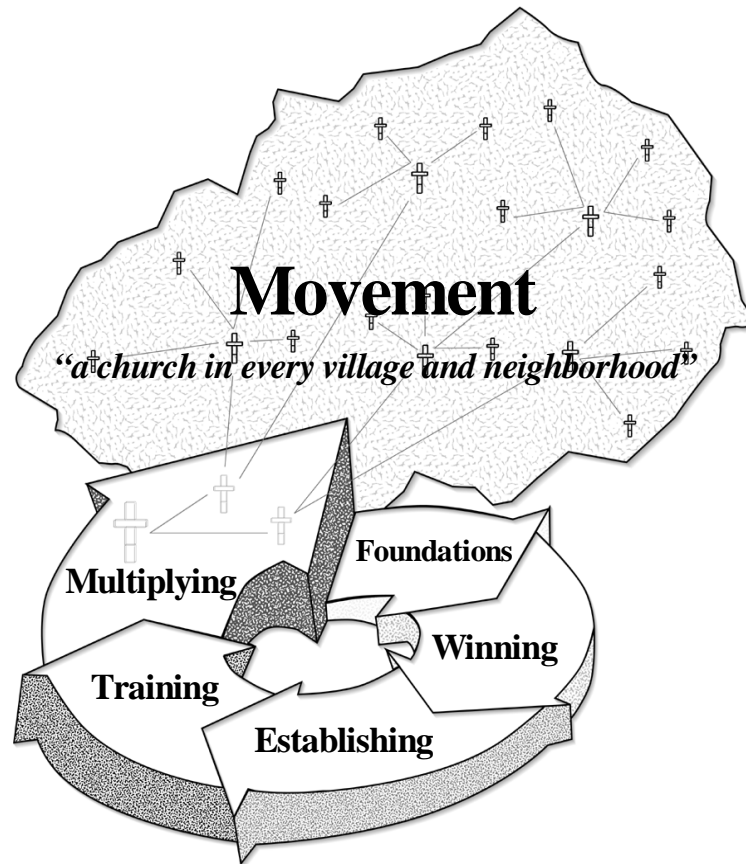
#### Vision Casting

What does God want for your country? He wants churches everywhere! *The Alliance* can help foster a vision for new churches with conceptual seminars on the principles of saturation church planting.

### FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:

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## THE CHURCH PLANTING CYCLE



Church planting is not a randomly connected series of events and activities; it is a goal-driven process. This process requires the coordination of activity, the combination of skills, a commonality of philosophy, and competence in leadership. Development in these critical areas is the goal of church planter training. The "Church Planting Cycle" is a diagram of the church planting process that visualizes, from a particular point of view, the interrelationship of the key principles and practices at work within that process. This represents a kind of 'roadmap' for the church planter, allowing one to always determine from where they've come and where they are headed.

# THRESHOLDS

## For the *Omega Course* Church Planting Curriculum

**Thresholds** are concrete ministry activities which have been incorporated into this curriculum. Each threshold can be thought of as an individual stepping stone within the larger process of starting new congregations. The thresholds provide concrete action points which help the trainee to practically apply the concepts contained in the *Omega Course*. They are both milestones that indicate progress, as well as signposts which help give further direction. Following is a list of thresholds and emphases in the *Omega Course*.

### **MANUAL ONE: Emphasis On SCP Vision, Purpose Of The Church, Inductive Bible Study, and Research**

#### **Specific action items:**

- Examining the purpose of the Church in light of the Great Commission
- Developing an overall ministry strategy based on "Z-thinking" vision
- Investigating "form and function" in the early Church and in today's Church
- Learning and practicing inductive Bible study
- Writing and sharing a personal testimony
- Initiating prayer support groups for evangelism and church planting
- Completing a comprehensive research project for the target area

### **MANUAL TWO: Emphasis On Evangelism and Cell Groups**

#### **Specific action items:**

- Sharing of findings from the research project with others in the target area
- Writing a church purpose statement
- Developing a philosophy of church planting ministry
- Developing a personal evangelism strategy, including one-on-one evangelism
- Beginning cell groups with an emphasis on evangelism
- Using inductive Bible study personally and in the cell groups



### **MANUAL THREE: Emphasis On Discipleship, Spiritual Warfare, Teams and Teamwork**

#### **Specific action items:**

- Identifying and training potential leaders for cell groups
- Spending time in prayer and fasting
- Evaluating the worldview of the church planter as compared to the biblical worldview
- Using scriptural truths to withstand spiritual attack in the life and ministry of the church planter
- Creating individual disciple making plans for the people involved in the church planting ministry
- Performing team development and evaluation activities
- Analyzing the spiritual gifts of the church planter and the church planting team

### **MANUAL FOUR: Emphasis On Leadership and Stewardship**

#### **Specific action items:**

- Evaluating the strengths and weaknesses of the church planter's leadership style, with an emphasis on methods of personal interaction with others
- Incorporating principles of servant leadership into the life and ministry of the church planter
- Tracking the use of time in the life and ministry of the church planter, setting priorities, making schedules
- Evaluating the financial giving of the church planter, as well as that of the church plant itself
- Reviewing the biblical roles of a husband and wife and the responsibilities that church planters have to their families
- Leading existing cell groups through the process of multiplication
- Preparing a strategic plan for working towards saturation in the church planting ministry

### **MANUAL FIVE: Emphasis On Multiplication, Mobilizing Others, and Promoting SCP Movements**

#### **Specific action items:**

- Initiating ministry cooperation with other evangelical groups in the target area
- Planning and implementing a supervisory structure for cell groups that will promote ongoing growth and multiplication
- Teaching people to pray for saturation church planting; mobilizing prayer at a city, regional, and national levels
- Developing and implementing a plan for the church planter to train and mentor new church planters
- Empowering and releasing new leaders for church planting ministry
- Promoting a vision in new churches for missionary involvement not only in their target area, but also to "the ends of the earth"

## CURRICULUM OVERVIEW

### MANUAL ONE Overview

Addresses primarily the **FOUNDATIONS** phase of the Church Planting Cycle

SCP Vision (VI)	The Church (CH)	Spiritual Character (SC)	Prayer (PY)	Bible Study Methods (BS)	Evangelism (EV)
<b>Lesson 1:</b> "Z" Thinking  <b>Lesson 2:</b> The Great Commission and Church Planting  <b>Lesson 3 (3A):</b> Church Planting Cycle 3A: Church Planting Models  <b>Lesson 4 (4A,4B):</b> Principles of Research 4A: Understanding Your Target Area 4B: Sample Questionnaires	<b>Lesson 1:</b> Biblical Foundations for the Church  <b>Lesson 2 (2A):</b> The Purpose Of The Church 2A: Great Commission Worksheet  <b>Lesson 3 (3A):</b> Form And Function 3A: Form & Function Applied  <b>Lesson 4:</b> Defining The Local Church	<b>Lesson 1 (1A):</b> Justification by Faith  <b>Lesson 2:</b> Living by the Gospel  <b>Lesson 3:</b> Christian Growth  <b>Lesson 4:</b> The Transforming Power of the Gospel  <b>Lesson 5:</b> Keeping a Spiritual Journal	<b>Lesson 1, 2:</b> Concert of Prayer: Praying for Revival  <b>Lesson 3 (3A):</b> How To Facilitate Prayer 3A: Prayer Triplets	<b>Lesson 1 (1A):</b> Intro to the Inductive Bible Study Method 1A: How We Got The Bible  <b>Lesson 2 (2A):</b> Observing God's Word 2A: The Language of the Bible  <b>Lesson 3:</b> Observation Workshop  <b>Lesson 4 (4A):</b> Interpreting God's Word 4A: Bible Charts  <b>Lesson 5:</b> Interpretation Workshop  <b>Lesson 6:</b> Applying God's Word  <b>Lesson 7 (7A):</b> Application Workshop 7A: Ephesus - an I.B.S.	<b>Lesson 1:</b> Introduction to Evangelism  <b>Lesson 2, 3:</b> Developing Your Personal Testimony
4	4	5	3	7	3

Numbers in brackets ( ) refer to appendices

Addresses primarily the **WINNING** phase of the Church Planting Cycle

## MANUAL TWO Overview

SCP Vision (VI)	The Church (CH)	Spiritual Character (SC)	Prayer (PY)	Leadership (LD)	Cell Groups (CG)	Bible Study Methods (BS)	Evangelism (EV)
<b>Lesson 5:</b> Biblical Foundations of Saturation Church Planting  <b>Lesson 6:</b> Research Workshop  <b>Lesson 7:</b> Mobilizing Resources through Research	<b>Lesson 5:</b> The Nature of the Church  <b>Lesson 6 (6A):</b> Corporate Functions of the Church 6A: <i>Baptism in the New Testament</i>  <b>Lesson 7:</b> Developing A Church Purpose Statement  <b>Lesson 8 (8A):</b> Philosophy of Church Planting Ministry 8A: <i>Developing a Philosophy of Church Planting Ministry</i>	<b>Lesson 6:</b> Living Like Sons Instead of Orphans  <b>Lesson 7 (7A):</b> Learning to be Sons 7A: <i>Orphans vs. Sons</i>	<b>Lesson 4:</b> Concert of Prayer: Worship and Meditation	<b>Lesson 1 (1A):</b> Biblical Principles of Leadership 1A: <i>Leadership Case Studies</i>  <b>Lesson 2 (2A):</b> Profile of a Leader 2A: <i>The Leader</i>	<b>Lesson 1:</b> Functions and Benefits of Cell Groups  <b>Lesson 2 (2A, 2B):</b> Principles of Cell Group Leadership 2A: <i>Cell Grp Ice Breakers</i> 2B: <i>Sample Activities</i>  <b>Lesson 3 (3A):</b> Starting a Cell Group 3A: <i>Planning Worksheet</i>  <b>Lesson 4 (4A):</b> Cell Group Evangelism 4A: <i>About "Oikos"</i>  <b>Lesson 5:</b> Cell Group Demonstration  <b>Lesson 6:</b> Philosophy of Cell Group Ministry	<b>Lesson 8 (8A):</b> Various Ways to Use Inductive Bible Studies 8A: <i>Biographical Study - Barnabas</i>  <b>Lesson 9 (9A, 9B):</b> Leading Inductive Bible Studies 9A: <i>Study of Mt 20:17-28</i> 9B: <i>Study of Lk 15: 1-7</i>  <b>Lesson 10,11 (10A):</b> Workshop Leading Inductive Bible Studies 10A: <i>Passages for IBS</i>	<b>Lesson 4 (4A):</b> Evangelism and Church Planting 4A: <i>Evaluating Evang Strategies</i>  <b>Lesson 5 (5A, 5B):</b> Barriers to effective Evangelism 5A: <i>"A Church in Every People"</i> 5B: <i>Answering Common Objections</i>  <b>Lesson 6, 7 (6A, 6B, 6C):</b> The Process of Conversion 6A: <i>Profile of persons to Evang</i> 6B: <i>Three Principles</i> 6C: <i>Examining Jesus' Approach</i>
3	4	2	1	2	6	4	4

Numbers in brackets ( ) refer to appendices

# MANUAL THREE Overview

Addresses primarily the **ESTABLISHING** phase of the Church Planting Cycle

SCP Vision (VI)	The Church (CH)	Spiritual Character (SC)	Prayer (PY)	Leadership (LD)	Cell Groups (CG)	Evangelism (EV)	Disciple Making (DI)	Spiritual Warfare (SW)
<b>Lesson 8:</b> The First Advance  <b>Lesson 9:</b> Elements of Church Planting Movements	<b>Lesson 9, 10:</b> The Church and Spiritual Gifts  <b>Lesson 11:</b> Social Dynamics of the Church	<b>Lesson 8,9:</b> The Law and The Gospel  <b>Lesson 10 (10A):</b> Repentance as a Way of Life 10A: The Sinner's Place	<b>Lesson 5:</b> Prayer and Fasting  <b>Lesson 6, 7:</b> Concert of Prayer: Praying to Spread the Gospel	<b>Lesson 3:</b> Spheres of Leadership  <b>Lesson 4:</b> Introduction to Team Work  <b>Lesson 5:</b> Team Development	<b>Lesson 7 (7A):</b> Cell Group Discussion Dynamics 7A: Discussion Questions  <b>Lesson 8:</b> Caring for People in a Cell Group  <b>Lesson 9:</b> Training New Cell Group Leaders	<b>Lesson 8:</b> Relational Evangelism	<b>Lesson 1:</b> Introduction to Disciple Making  <b>Lesson 2(2A):</b> Your Role in Making Disciples 2A: Character-istics of Christian Love  <b>Lesson 3(3A):</b> Know Your Goal, Know Your People 3A: Faith, Hope & Love  <b>Lesson 4(4A):</b> Helping Disciples Grow Spiritually 4A: Spir Grth Need Evaltn  <b>Lesson 5(5A):</b> Forms for Disciple Making 5A: Disciple Making Plan	<b>Lesson 1:</b> Understanding Worldview  <b>Lesson 2 (2A):</b> Dynamics of Spiritual Warfare 2A: Study of Eph. 4:17-5:21  <b>Lesson 3 (3A, 3B):</b> Spiritual Battles 3A: Bible Study 3B: Case Studies from Around the World
2	3	3	3	3	3	1	5	3

Numbers in brackets ( ) refer to appendices

Addresses primarily the **TRAINING** phase of the Church Planting Cycle

## MANUAL FOUR Overview

SCP Vision (VI)	The Church (CH)	Spiritual Character (SC)	Prayer (PY)	Leadership (LD)	Cell Groups (CG)	Disciple Making (DI)	Stewardship (ST)	The Family (FA)
<b>Lesson 10 (10A,10B):</b> Strategy Components for a Church Planting Movement <i>10A: Faith and Obedience Vs Fear and Unbelief</i> <i>10B: Things that Promote Natural Growth</i> <b>Lesson 11:</b> Signs of a Movement <b>Lesson 12:</b> Shepherding within a Movement	<b>Lesson 12:</b> Dynamics of the Emerging Church <b>Lesson 13:</b> Characteristics of Growing Churches <b>Lesson 14:</b> Church Government And Church Offices	<b>Lesson 11:</b> Love as the Foundation for Ministry <b>Lesson 12:</b> Understanding the Father's Heart <b>Lesson 13:</b> Grace is for the Humble	<b>Lesson 8,9:</b> Concert of Prayer: Praying Biblically	<b>Lesson 6 (6A):</b> Servant Leadership <i>6A: The Leaders Checklist</i> <b>Lesson 7:</b> Leadership Dynamics <b>Lesson 8:</b> Styles of Interaction <b>Lesson 9:</b> Leadership Needs <b>Lesson 10 (10A):</b> Training New Leaders <i>10A: Qualities to Encourage in a New Leader</i>	<b>Lesson 10:</b> Discussion of Cell Group Questions and Problems <b>Lesson 11:</b> Cell Group Multiplication	<b>Lesson 6:</b> Disciple Making Workshop	<b>Lesson 1:</b> Introduction to Stewardship <b>Lesson 2:</b> Financial Stewardship <b>Lesson 3:</b> Time Management <b>Lesson 4:</b> Strategic Planning Process <b>Lesson 5:</b> Strategic Planning Process Workshop	<b>Lesson 1:</b> Biblical Roles in the Family <b>Lesson 2:</b> Parenting
3	3	3	2	5	2	1	5	2

Numbers in brackets ( ) refer to appendices

Addresses primarily the **MULTIPLICATION & MOVEMENT** phases of the Church Planting Cycle

## MANUAL FIVE Overview

SCP Vision (VI)	The Church (CH)	Spiritual Character (SC)	Prayer (PY)	Leadership (LD)	Cell Groups (CG)	Preaching (PR)	The Family (FA)
<b>Lesson 13:</b> Vision and Telescoping <b>Lesson 14:</b> Mobilization <b>Lesson 15:</b> Next Steps <b>Lesson 16:</b> Training As Part Of A Church Planting Movement <b>Lesson 17:</b> Mobilizing Leaders Through National Initiatives	<b>Lesson 15:</b> Church Discipline <b>Lesson 16:</b> Corporate Worship In The Local Church <b>Lesson 17:</b> How To Lead Corporate Worship <b>Lesson 18:</b> The Local Church and the Bigger Body of Christ <b>Lesson 19:</b> The Historical Impact of the Church in _____ (History of the Church in country context)	<b>Lesson 14:</b> Reconciliation Ministry <b>Lesson 15:</b> Moral Integrity of Church Planters	<b>Lesson 10:</b> Facilitating Prayer for a Church Planting Movement <b>Lesson 11, 12:</b> Concert of Prayer: Thanking God for His Faithfulness	<b>Lesson 11:</b> Releasing Leaders <b>Lesson 12:</b> Movement Leadership 12A: <i>Movement Leaders</i>	<b>Lesson 12:</b> Cells That Saturate Through Local Churches <b>Lesson 13 (13A):</b> Supervising Cells 13A: <i>Final Step</i>	<b>Lesson 1:</b> Biblical Preaching I: Understanding the Message <b>Lesson 2:</b> Biblical Preaching II: Understanding the Audience <b>Lesson 3:</b> Biblical Preaching III: Understanding Yourself	<b>Lesson 3:</b> Ministry to the Family
5	5	2	3	2	2	3	1

Numbers in brackets ( ) refer to appendices

**TOTAL CURRICULUM HOURS: 127**



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# SCP VISION

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SCP VISION

LESSON 8

# The First Advance

## THE CHURCH PLANTING MOVEMENT IN ACTS

### ☛ Lesson Purpose

The purpose of this lesson is to help the trainee understand the biblical precedent for church planting movements by looking at the expansion of the Church as recorded in Acts.

### ☛ Main Points

- The spread of the first-century Church was rapid and powerful.
- Certain events and the application of particular ministry principles contributed to the successful spread of the Church.

### ☛ Desired Outcomes

When the content of this lesson has been mastered, each participant should . . .

- Know principles from the great advance of the Gospel in the New Testament that moved church planting teams toward a church planting movement.
- Participate in a church planting movement of growing churches which multiply by planting other growing and reproductive churches.
- Be able to set strategy for evangelizing a region through church planting.

### ☛ Suggestions to Trainers

Have a map of the Mediterranean world ready to show the region covered by Paul's ministry.

## INTRODUCTION

In the early days immediately following the ascension of Jesus, the gospel had had no impact on the world outside of Judea, Samaria and Galilee. At first, Christianity appeared small and powerless in comparison to the political powers of the day. Yet it rolled like an avalanche across the Roman empire so that within one generation worshipping communities were established everywhere from Jerusalem to Rome and beyond. Modern historians marvel, wondering how Christianity could have spread so widely in such a short time (Berkhof, p. 21). Was this just a haphazard expansion? Did the first missionaries blindly wander the world to spread the gospel? Not exactly. A careful study of Acts reveals that the expansion of the church resulted from Spirit-guided plans based on ministry principles that we can still use today.

During this lesson we will study the Scriptures, the best text book on church planting anywhere. We will look for the factors that contributed to the rapid expansion of the church believing that it is possible to extract ministry principles for advancing and saturating any region with the gospel.

A careful study of Acts reveals that the expansion of the church resulted from ministry principles that we can still use today.

## I. THE BIRTH OF THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH

The Day of Pentecost, when the New Testament church was born, played a major role in the rapid expansion of Christianity. Pentecost took place during a time of a major celebration when thousands of Jews and proselytes came to Jerusalem from all over the world. Luke records people from 13 different regions including Parthia, Media, Elam, Mesopotamia, Judea, Cappadocia, Pontus, Asia, Phrygia, Pamphylia, Egypt, Cyrene, Rome, Crete and Rome. Many of the Pentecostal pilgrims took their new faith back to their homelands but only after receiving instruction and experiencing church life that took

place after the Pentecost celebration (Ac 2:42-47). This initial training could explain how the church in Rome was well established before any of the apostles arrived there.

## II. PERSECUTION

In Acts 8 a great persecution broke out that caused the church to scatter (Ac 8:1; 11:19-21). This also influenced the spread of the Gospel. As the believers scattered they spread the gospel mostly to fellow Jews. At Antioch in Syria, however, many Greeks were targeted and won to Christ resulting in the establishment of the first church made up largely of Gentiles recorded in Scripture. This was considered so unusual that the leaders in the Jerusalem Church sent Barnabas to investigate the situation (Ac 11:22-24).

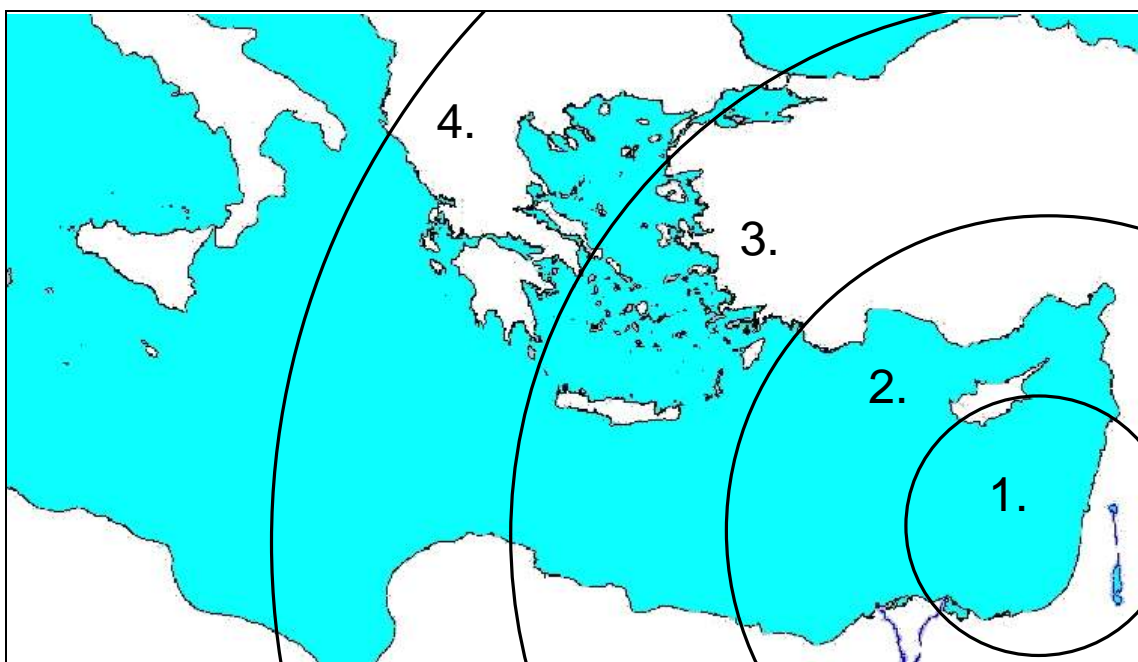
Barnabas was so impressed with the Gentile believers at Antioch that he spent at least a year ministering there. He even recruited Paul all the way from Tarsus to join him (Ac 11:25-26). With others from still other regions they made up a dynamic leadership team (Act 13:1). It was here in Antioch that the disciples were first called "Christians" (Ac 11:26).

## III. PAUL'S MISSIONARY JOURNEYS

*"So from Jerusalem all the way around to Illyricum, I have fully proclaimed the gospel of Christ"*  
St. Paul (Ro. 15:19).

Paul was many things: an apostle, a theologian and a teacher. But in all these things his role as a church planting missionary was clear. Others have received more converts than Paul, some have preached to larger audiences, but probably no one has been so successful in planting churches (Allen 1962:3). By examining Paul's missionary journeys we can learn the key to Paul's success.

**Figure 8.1 The Spread of the Gospel**



### A. First Journey (Acts 13-14)—Expanding into Cyprus and Galatia

Paul and Barnabas were sent off as missionaries first to the Island of Cyprus, Barnabas' homeland. They started by preaching in the synagogue in Salamis the largest city on the island. Later they went to the city of Paphos the administrative capital of the island. The conversion of Sergious Paulus (the proconsul) would have given them favor in the region (Ac 13:1-12).

Following the ministry on Cyprus they headed for Galatia in modern day Turkey. In Pisidian Antioch, an administrative capital of southern Galatia, Paul preached in a synagogue and saw many Gentile converts. Being the strategic city that Antioch in Pisidia was, the impact of Paul and Barnabas' ministry was not limited to the city as *"The word of the Lord spread throughout the whole region"* (Ac 13:49). In spite of this success the persecution incited by the Jews was so severe that Paul and Barnabas were forced to leave (Ac 13:14-52).

Paul and Barnabas traveled next to Iconium, an important commercial center also in Galatia. Many responded to their preaching in the synagogue, but they soon encountered a plot from both Gentiles and Jews (Ac 14:1-7). Having been driven away, they fled to Lystra, a military city with strong Roman elements. It appears that Paul passed by indigenous cities in the province like Misthia and Vasada (Allen 1962:13). As a Roman citizen, Paul felt more comfortable in the cities with a strong Roman presence. After the healing of the lame man in Lystra, the people proposed to worship Paul and Barnabas, confusing them with Zeus and Hermes. The Jews stirred up opposition and Paul was stoned. Undaunted, Paul and Barnabas escaped to Derbe (Ac 14:8-20).

In Derbe they preached the gospel and taught many. From Derbe, Paul could have easily gone back to Antioch via his home town, Tarsus. But he considered it more important to encourage the new believers and appoint leaders in the four churches he had planted in Pisidian Antioch, Iconium, Lystra and Derbe in spite of the danger he could again face (Ac 14:20-23).

#### **B. Second Journey (15:36-18:22)—*Expanding to Macedonia and Achaia***

As a result of a disagreement concerning John Mark's role on the team, Paul and Barnabas began to minister separately. Barnabas and John Mark returned to Cyprus. Silas was chosen to accompany Paul on his second missionary journey. They set out with the goal to "strengthen the churches" (Ac 15:36-41).

The new team returned to Derbe, and Lystra and most likely other Galatian cities (16:1-6). While in Lystra, Paul recruited Timothy to join them in the ministry. Paul wanted to go to Asia but the Spirit led him away. While in Troas Paul saw a vision of the Macedonian man (Ac 16:7-11). Luke joins them so the team has grown to include four (Paul, Silas, Timothy, Luke). And together they moved on to Philippi. Philippi was an important city on the "Egnatian Way," the Roman highway connecting Macedonia with Asia (16:12-40). In Philippi, Lydia is saved and her home becomes the center of operations. Silas and Paul were beaten and jailed after the delivery of a slave girl from demons resulted in official complaints by the slave owners. The jailer and his 'household' are saved (Ac 16:16-40).

Passing through Amphipolis and Apollonia Paul, Silas and Timothy arrive in Thessalonica, the district capital and chief port of Macedonia. Once again, they begin in a synagogue where Paul preached for three Sabbath days. There is a good response from both Jews and God fearing Gentiles. But jealousy on the part of some Jewish leaders leads to persecution (17:1-9). So Paul moves on to Berea where they are eager to hear. When the Thessalonian persecutors follow the missionaries to Berea, Paul is forced to escape leaving Timothy and Silas behind in Berea (17:1-15).

Paul waited for Timothy and Silas to catch up to him in the city of Athens the cultural and intellectual center of the world. While there he preached an excellent sermon in which he established common ground with his audience and then proclaimed the distinctives of the faith. A few were saved (17:15-34).

After this Paul settled in Corinth, the capital of Achaia, an important transportation and communication hub for the region (Ac 18:1-16). Paul is joined by Aquilla and Priscilla, fellow tentmakers from Rome. Now the team includes Paul, Silas, Timothy, Aquilla and Priscilla. Like so many other places, Paul's ministry in Corinth had a regional impact in the province of Achaia (2 Co. 1:1).

After 18 months Paul sailed to Antioch in Syria leaving behind Silas and Timothy to carry on the work in Corinth. On the way Paul stopped in Ephesus, a sea port in modern western Turkey. Paul was well received in the synagogue and the Jews invite him to stay. Having earlier been forbidden

by the Spirit to preach in Asia, He promises to return "if it is God's will." Paul leaves Aquilla and Priscilla there to carry on the work there (Ac 18:19-21).

### **C. Third Journey (Acts 18:23-21:15)—*Expanding into the province of Asia***

Paul began his third missionary journey by visiting the churches he planted in Galatia for the fourth recorded time (Ac 18:23). He then made his way through the interior to Ephesus (Ac 19:1). Ephesus was a seaport on a major caravan route with easy access to the Roman province of Asia, for which Paul had had a burden for a long time. Just 150 km to the east up the Lycus valley lay the cities of Laodicea, Colossae and Hierapolis. Ephesus was a stronghold for sorcery and idolatry. At that time it was one of three main cities of the eastern Mediterranean world (the other two important cities are Alexandria and Antioch in Syria). This was indeed a strategic place in which to minister.

As was his pattern, Paul preached in the synagogue and was rejected after three months. This rejection resulted in what was perhaps the climax of his church planting ministry, the great advance of the gospel in the province of Asia: *"...He took the disciples with him and had discussions daily in the lecture hall of Tyrannus. This went on for two years, so that all the Jews and Greeks who lived in the province of Asia heard the word of the Lord"* (Ac 19:9-10).

How is it that everyone in the province of Asia heard the "word of the Lord"? Other passages in the New Testament reveal that Churches sprung up in the cities of Colosse (Col 1:2), Laodicea (Col 4:16), Hierapolis (Col 4:13), Smyrna (Rev 2:8), Pergamum (Rev 2:12), Thyratira (Rev 2:18), Sardis (Rev 3:1), Philadelphia (Rev 3:7), and elsewhere (probably Magnesia, Troas, Militus, etc.). These churches in the province of Asia give evidence to a church planting movement and substantiate Paul's statement that all of Asia heard the word of the Lord. In addition, the books of Ephesians, Colossians, First and Second Timothy, Philemon, First, Second and Third John, Revelation, portions of Acts, are all about churches and church leaders in Asia that came about from the great advance of the gospel there.

After three years in Ephesus Paul decided to go back to Macedonia and Achaia to visit four the churches he had planted on his second journey in Philippi, Thessalonica, Berea and Corinth. He sent Timothy and Erastus ahead of him (Ac 19:21) and stayed in Ephesus a little longer. After a riot incited in Ephesus by those who depended on idolatry for their income, Paul left for Macedonia. Paul was traveling with Sopator (from Berea), Aristarchus and Secundus (from Thessalonica), Gaius (from Derbe) Timothy (from Lystra), Tychicus and Trophimus (Ac 20:3-6). Some of these were colleagues Paul had been training at the training center he had established in the hall of Tyrannus in Ephesus.

Paul encouraged the brothers in Macedonia and Achaia staying in Corinth for three months (Ac 20:1-3). On the way to Jerusalem Paul stopped in Miletus where he meets with the Ephesian elders to instruct them in their leadership (Ac 20:17-38).

## **IV. THE COUNCIL AT JERUSALEM (ACTS 15)**

In the middle of the events just described, right after the first journey, an important meeting was held in Jerusalem which had a great impact on the rapid spread of the Church among the Gentiles. The events leading up to the counsel include incidents of Jewish and Gentile animosity. The first evidence of conflict occurs when Gentile widows of Jerusalem are neglected (Ac 6). Stephen, one of those was chosen to solve the problem is then stoned. Tension is seen again in the personal experience of Peter. He was asked by God to break the Law previously given and eat "unclean food." Only after this did Peter witness the conversion of the first Gentile, Cornelius (Ac 10). The third event involves the Church at Antioch which included many Gentile converts. It seemed strange to the Jews in Jerusalem that Gentiles in Antioch would be following the Jewish Messiah. Thus, they investigated it for themselves sending Barnabas to inspect (Ac 11:19-24). The first missionary journey was the last piece on the stage for the events of Acts 15. Paul and Barnabas saw and sought Gentile converts in many cities of Galatia. Soon some Jewish Christians from Jerusalem were in Antioch, the center of the Gentile Christian movement, teaching that all Christians were required to observe the Law of Moses (Ac 15:1).

This led to the conference at Jerusalem. The essential issue was whether the Gentiles needed to observe the Law of Moses. Or put another way, was the Gospel even open to the Gentiles or were they

expected to convert to Judaism first? By God's guidance, the council made its decision without much trouble. Liberty was extended to the Gentiles so that they were not expected to observe the Law of Moses. *"It seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us not to burden you (Gentiles) with anything beyond the following requirements: You are to abstain from food sacrificed to idols, from blood, from the meat of strangled animals and from sexual immorality"* (Ac 15:28-29).

The events in Acts 15 have great missiological and theological truth. Church planting movements take place when the Gospel, in all its fullness, is embraced by the Church. When the Gospel is hidden or replaced by traditions, laws or man-made "forms," its power to transform lives is diminished. We tend to put much emphasis on the "forms." It was natural for the first Jewish converts to expect the Gentiles to express their faith with exactly the same "forms" that they were accustomed to. But God was doing a new thing! Had the Jerusalem Council made the wrong choice, Christianity would likely have remained a small branch of Judaism instead of spreading among "all the nations" as it was intended.

Church planting movements take place when the Gospel, in all its fullness, is embraced by the Church. When the gospel is hidden or replaced, its power is diminished.

## V. PRINCIPLES BEHIND STRATEGIC MISSIONARY ACTIVITY

The Scripture gives us detail on Paul's activity. We do not know as much about the other Apostles. However, tradition says that the Apostle Matthew planted churches in Mesopotamia, Thomas in India, Peter in Rome, and Mark in Egypt while Andrew took the gospel to Scythia north of the Black Sea (Shenk, p. 157 and Forster, p.40). In any event the church continued to expand steadily even after the Apostolic era. Note the following remarks:

- "Christ has planted a new race of us **Christians in every nation.**" Bardaisan, a Christian-nobleman of Edessa in northern Mesopotamia about the year AD 200.
- "But those whom you call 'third race' may well become first, since **there is no nation which has not Christians.**" Tertullian of Carthage around AD 200.
- "There are **churches now on the frontiers of the world**, and all the world shouts for joy to the God of Israel." Origen AD 240 (Foster 1972, p. 35).

How did this happen? Was it haphazard? A careful study of Acts reveals that the expansion of the church resulted from Spirit-guided plans based on ministry principles that we can still use today. Now that we have carefully studied Acts, the following are some of the principles.

### A. Submission to the Leading of the Holy Spirit

Much missionary activity is not only a result of biblical strategizing or good decision making, but of direct divine guidance. The Spirit sent Philip to the Ethiopian eunuch; the Lord told Peter to go to Cornelius' home; the Holy Spirit spoke to the leaders at Antioch telling them to send Barnabas and Paul as missionaries. The Spirit guided Paul to Macedonia instead of Asia (Ac 16:6ff). Jesus appeared to Paul in Corinth telling him to stay on there. The Holy Spirit and the prophet Agabus confirmed what Jesus said to Paul at his conversion, that "he must suffer for my name" (Ac 9:16). This prophecy led him on toward Jerusalem.

We cannot fully comprehend the ways of God, but we can be sure that there were reasons for all that is described above. Perhaps God forbid Paul to work in Asia during the second journey because the time was not right and because God knew that the most strategic place to reach Asia was from Ephesus and not from Bithynia and Mysia. It is interesting to note that when Paul went to Macedonia one of the first people he meets is Lydia who is from Thyritira a city in the province of Asia. Also note how God prepared the way for his later arrival in Ephesus by sending Priscilla, Aquila and Apollos there ahead of him.

Already involved in the work, Paul and others received guidance while "on the move." There is no biblical excuse for someone to remain inactive until apparently receiving a special call. Those involved in church planting must work from good planning and strategy but need to realize that God will intervene—even changing their plans—guiding them as they actively pursue their church planting objectives.

## **B. Moving Quickly**

Paul spent an average of only a few months in most of the cities where he planted churches. For example he spent only three weeks in Thessalonica. How could Paul plant churches so quickly? Perhaps Paul understood a great principle of church planting and knew when he needed to get out of the way. He knew that there was something about his presence as a great teacher that prevented the development of others. The little time Paul spent in each place forced others to realize that they could not depend upon him for everything. They had to find their own resources. Paul trained leaders and trusted the Holy Spirit to guide the new believers. As Roland Allen explains:

"It is the training of the first converts which sets the type for the future. If the first converts are taught to depend upon the missionary, if all work, evangelistic, educational, social is concentrated in his hands, the infant community learns to rest passively upon the man from whom they received their first insight into the gospel" (Allen 1962:81, 93).

Paul understood as well that he was called to be an Apostle. For Paul this meant being a "pioneer", a "foundation layer" (Ro 15:20; 1Co 3:6-8). Paul trusted others who were gifted as pastors to lead the churches he founded.

## **C. Facilitating Others in Ministry**

As we said Paul moved quickly, but there are notable exceptions to this practice. Paul spent 18 months in Corinth and three years in Ephesus. But in these cases, when Paul was not physically on the move, he worked in such a way that the Gospel was on the move.

Studying Paul's journeys reveals a gradual shift in emphasis during his ministry. During his first journey, he planted at least four churches and made a follow-up visit to each. His emphasis was on frontier evangelism and direct church planting. But during his last journey he does not seem to have the same objective. Instead of moving rapidly, he spent most of this journey in Ephesus. Ephesus was central enough so that from it he could easily get in touch with all the churches he had planted. It appears that he planted only one church (Ephesus) during this journey but he invested his travel time in visiting at least nine cities where he had planted churches before. His focus had changed from frontier/evangelism to discipleship/training. During this journey Paul had many disciples traveling with him (Ac 20:1-2). We also read about his teaching ministry from the Hall of Tyrannus which resulted in the evangelization of the province of Asia (Ac 19:9-10).

## **D. Preaching to Responsive People**

All the cities Paul visited seemed to have a sizable Jewish community with the exception of Philippi. Paul normally entered synagogues to preach his message. This is partly because he was Jewish himself, partly because the Messiah's coming has unique significance for Jewish people (Ro. 1:16), and partly because the people in the synagogues would be "pre-evangelized." They could understand and accept the Gospel, which had Jewish roots, with the least amount of cultural disruption.

While Paul started in the synagogue as an apostle to the Gentiles, his real target was the God-fearing Gentiles. God-fearers were Gentiles who believed in monotheism and would have converted to Judaism had it not been for the strict legal requirements, especially of circumcision. God-fearers attended the synagogue meetings and would have studied the Old Testament Scriptures. When the Gospel was proclaimed by a Pharisee, Paul, in a synagogue, and circumcision was not required, many God-fearers would feel that this was a logical faith for them. Paul's message had the monotheism that attracted them to the synagogue without the legalism that kept them from converting to Judaism.

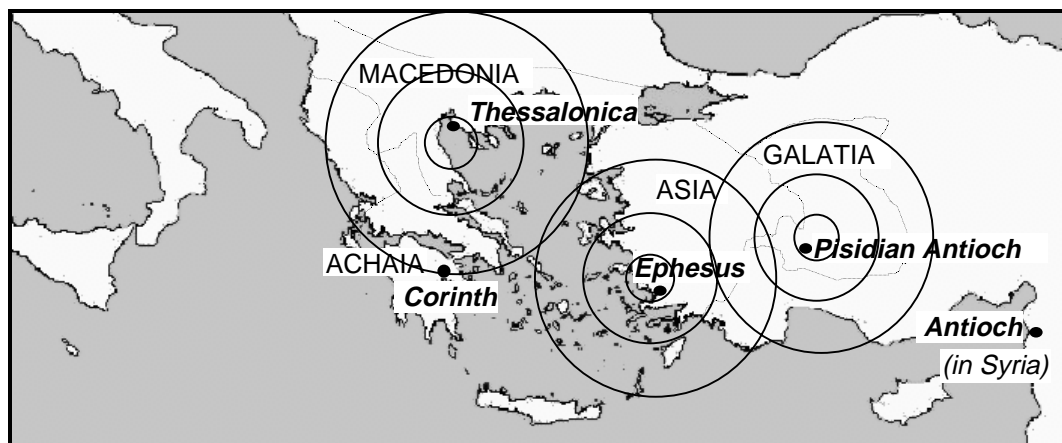
### E. Working from a strategic base for a regional movement

Paul attempted to evangelize whole regions, but not by preaching in every part. Rather, he established strategically located churches from which the Gospel would spread and permeate the whole region. (See Figure 8.2.).

Nearly all the centers in which Paul ministered were great centers of trade. They were usually on the most important highways of the day. In fact even today, as a theologian who traveled the region observed, all of the cities Paul worked in can be reached by train or by boat or by both. This testifies to the importance of these locations. Paul, by divine guidance, made the highway of commerce the vehicle for spreading the gospel from Jerusalem all the way to the capital city of Rome (Berkhof, p. 40).

By establishing strategically located churches the Gospel spread and permeated the whole region.

**Figure 8.2 Regional Church Planting movements**



1. *Galatia from Pisidian Antioch*

In strategically selecting Pisidian Antioch "The word of the Lord spread throughout the whole region (Galatia)" (Ac 13:49).

2. *Macedonia, Achaia, and everywhere from Thessalonica*

The Great Commission as recorded in Acts 1:8 was illustrated by the church in Thessalonica to whom Paul says, "The Lord's message rang out from you not only in Macedonia and Achaia your faith in God has become known everywhere" (1Th 1:8)

3. *The province of Asia from Ephesus*

As a result of Paul's teaching ministry in Ephesus "all the Jews and Greeks in the province of Asia heard the word of the Lord" (Ac 19:10).

### CONCLUSION

Was the expansion of the church given to chance? The expansion of the church resulted from Spirit guided plans based on ministry principles that we can still use today. In summary, Paul's plan was to evangelize responsive people in strategic centers, facilitating regional church planting movements (especially in Galatia, Macedonia, and Asia) under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. What church planters need above everything else is to get back to the missionary methods of the early church.

### QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION, REVIEW AND APPLICATION

- How was the Day of Pentecost in Acts 2 a great day for the spread of the Gospel?
- Why was the counsel in Jerusalem so important?



- How did persecution affect the spread of the gospel? Has persecution resulted in the expansion of the Church in recent generations?
- Based on your study of the New Testament, how many churches did Paul plant directly?
- Describe the shift in emphasis between the first and third journeys of Paul.
- How did research affect the growth of the church in the Book of Acts?

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SCP VISION

9

LESSON

# Elements Of Church Planting Movements

## ☛ Lesson Purpose

The purpose of this lesson is to present elements that promote a church planting movement. Church planters should see themselves as part of a church planting movement that is bigger than the concept of one congregation at a time.

## ☛ Main Points

- Church planting movements must be founded on the bedrock of God's Word.
- New ways of thinking about the Vision, the Church, and Leadership are the foundation for a church planting movement.
- The building blocks of prayer, research, mobilization, training, evangelism and vision-casting contribute to the success of church planting movements.
- God is the Architect of church planting movements.

## ☛ Desired Outcomes

When the content of this lesson has been mastered, each participant should . . .

- By faith be able to set strategy for evangelizing a region through church planting.
- Participate in a church planting movement of growing churches which multiply by planting other growing and reproductive churches.

## INTRODUCTION

The goal of an SCP movement is a witnessing fellowship of believers within geographic and cultural reach of every person so that every person will be able to hear the Gospel presented in a culturally relevant way on various occasions and see the life of Christ lived out in community.

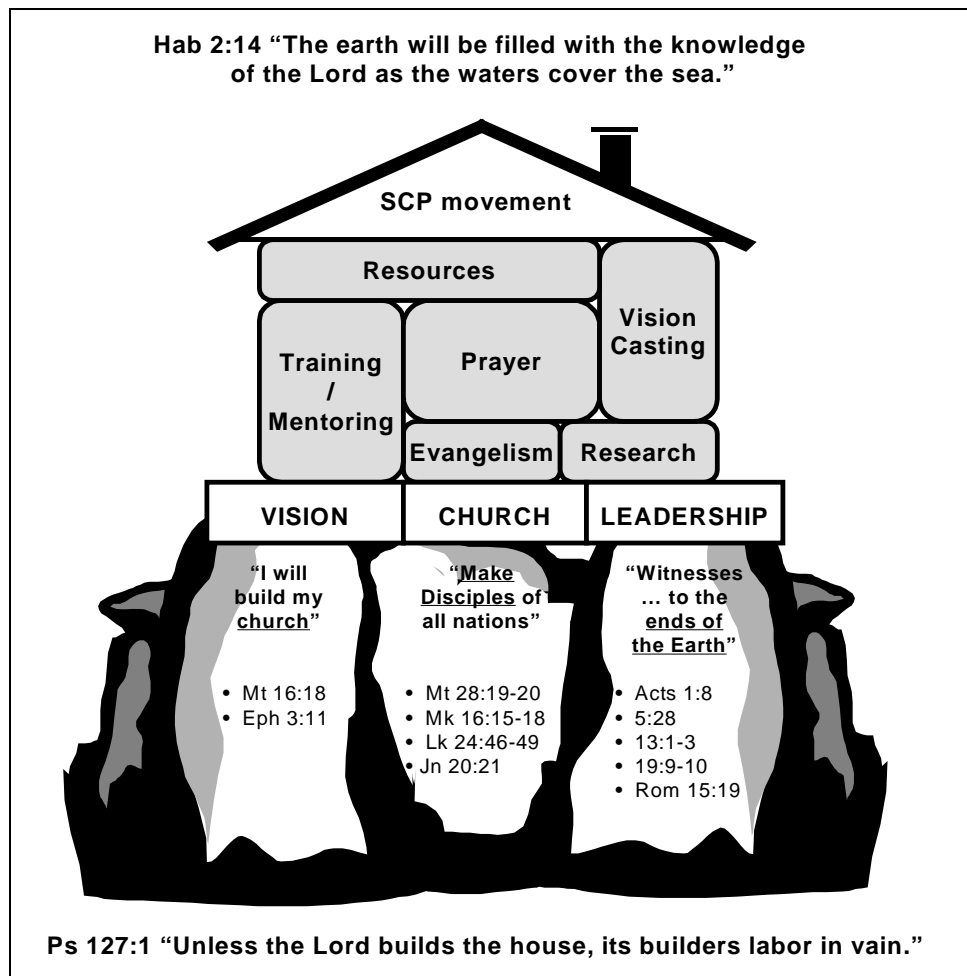
As you read this lesson, Saturation Church Planting movements are growing in dozens of nations around the world. Each movement has its unique aspects, depending on its culture; but at the core they all have a goal like the one stated above. They also all have in some way, shape or form, the elements described below.

If we think of Saturation Church Planting movements using a metaphor of a house (see Figure 9.1), **the bedrock is the Word of God**. Built onto that bedrock are three foundational paradigms that undergird successful church planting movements. On this foundation are the building blocks of prayer, research, evangelism, training/mentoring, resources and vision casting.

## I. FOUNDATIONAL PARADIGMS FOR A SATURATION CHURCH PLANTING MOVEMENT

The first paradigm is a VISION that is not limited to starting a few churches but one that sees the nation filled with multiplying churches fulfilling the Great Commission. The second paradigm is the CHURCH which consists of all of God's people, gifted and indwelt by the Holy Spirit, working together to fulfill the Great Commission. The third paradigm is LEADERSHIP that trains and releases God's people to do the work of the ministry. Because these are important, a separate track in this Church Planting Curriculum is devoted to each one.

## 9.1 Components of a Saturation Church Planting Movement



## II. BUILDING BLOCKS OF A SATURATION CHURCH PLANTING MOVEMENT

### A. Prayer: Declaring Dependence on God

Part of a great church planting movement is the building block of prayer, both spontaneous and organized. Prayer is necessary in both the church planting task and in keeping the church planting movement continuing in the proper direction.

#### 1. *Intercessory Prayer*

Prayer is needed on behalf of missionaries, church planters and pastors. These people are in critical spiritual positions and need the prayers of God's people. Paul states the importance of praying for political and other leaders as a priority in the prayer life of believers (1Ti 2:1-3). This dedication to prayer for people in authority is so that there may be positive conditions for the spread of the gospel.

#### 2. *Prayer for Unity*

Jesus prayed that his followers would be one (John 17:22-23). Paul encourages believers to pray in a spirit of unity with one another (1Ti 2:8). Perhaps nothing encourages unity like cooperate prayer. Prayer is often used by God to bring believers together, when they might be divided over other issues.

### 3. *Spiritual Warfare Prayer*

The expansion of the church is spiritual warfare. Satan does not want a church planting movement in your region and will mobilize demons against it. Powerful spiritual warfare against Satan, demonic rulers, authorities, powers of the dark world, and spiritual forces of evil requires solid Christian living and prayer (Eph 6:10-20).

## **B. Research: Seeing the Big Picture**

Research enables God's people to see how God is working by making clear the big picture of what God wants to do in their nation or people group. Research also provides the information that helps Christian workers make correct decisions about ministry efforts and strategy. More specifically, it helps agencies and churches know where churches need to be planted, and which methods of evangelism are successful and which are unsuccessful among various people groups.

Church planting movements often include research because people involved want to know where and how God is working. Sometimes research is one of the first things that takes place and results in motivating others, unleashing a movement.

*There are two specific places where research is done:*

### 1. *Specific Church Plant*

By revealing the worldview and felt needs of people living in the target area, research can help determine which evangelism and church planting strategies should be used. Research will also reveal available church planting resources which may be mobilized to help with the church planting effort.

### 2. *Region - Nation/Province/County/City*

Researching a whole nation or specific region can give a general picture of the status of Christianity within it. This information can then challenge church leaders with the need to mobilize churches for evangelism filling that region with churches.

What research needs to be done in your region?

## **C. Mobilizing Resources**

One of the most notable aspects of mobilization includes resources. As the Church grew in the New Testament, believers mobilized resources needed for its growth. The people of the Jerusalem Church gave sacrificially to assist others in need (Ac 4:32-37). Christians were exhorted to support other believers who had no other tangible means of support, such as godly widows (1Ti 5:9-16). The wealthy were encouraged to give more, to help those with less (1Ti 6:18-19).

At the heart of the issue of resources is the fundamental truth that God's own people provide the primary means for the work of the Gospel. The fulfillment of the Great Commission in a nation should be done primarily with the mobilized resources of the believers of that country. Their own tithes and offerings should be used to support their work. Nik Nedelchev is a national leader from Bulgaria. Nik has much experience in the mobilization of resources for the ministry of church planting. Nik writes:

"If the churches in Bulgaria are to continue to grow and multiply, the resources, both human and financial, must come primarily from Bulgaria... We welcome investment in Bulgaria by God's people from other countries. However, that investment should be made in the form of strategic partnerships with Bulgarian ministries. Those partnerships should have clear expectations and a specific time frame, avoiding the creation of long-term dependence."

#### **D. Training/Mentoring: Preparing others in ministry**

Training evangelists, cell group leaders, church planters, and pastors in a multiplication pattern promotes church planting movements. Each of the above workers needs a different kind of training, thus a variety of training approaches needs to be available to support a church planting movement.

Training evangelists, cell group leaders, church planters, and pastors in a multiplication pattern promotes church planting movements.

Acts 20, when Paul greeted the Ephesian elders, provides some of the best advice for training church leaders anywhere. Acts 20:20, 31, and 35 show that Paul “worked hard,” “night and day,” and “publicly and from house to house.” Church planting and training church planters takes hard work. Acts 20:20 and 27 show that he taught them constantly. He taught what was “helpful” for their task. Acts 20:33-34 shows that he lived in integrity. There were no questions about Paul’s personal motives. No one could raise any doubts about his financial dealings. Acts 20:35 shows that Paul taught and modeled giving and stewardship. Acts 20:31 and 36 show that Paul poured his emotions into his relationships with these leaders. They shed tears together. Ministry comes from relationships. The best training includes one-on-one mentoring and not just formal education.

The following principles relate to training leaders in the context of church planting movements.

##### **1. *Training Should Focus on Leadership***

The training which leaders receive should enable them to equip others for a movement that multiplies churches and spreads the Gospel throughout a region. Notice in Acts 20:15-38 that Paul reminds the leaders of Ephesus how he worked with them while training them for leadership. From Ephesus, Paul equipped believers to lead a spiritual movement that covered the whole region.

The book of Acts shows Paul describing how he trained leaders and telling Timothy how to choose them. First Timothy 3:1ff shows the things necessary for someone to be a leader. For example, character takes priority over charisma (1Ti 3:2-10). Paul’s teaching relationship with Timothy was that of a father and son (2Ti 2:1).

##### **2. *Training Should be Reproducible***

Church planting movements require training that can multiply (i.e. can be taught again to others). Paul’s training went on for four generations. It began with Paul passing on the teaching from his heart (2Ti 2:2). Timothy then taught reliable men who were “able to teach others also.” The teaching and training we pass on as we help people grow in Christ and prepare new leaders ought to be done so that they can reproduce it.

This four-generation model is a strategic way to plan training. This requires simplicity so that others can pass it on without expensive instruments, elite knowledge, or formal education. Reproducible training can be challenging because the material we teach needs to be not only simple but deep and of high quality so that it will result in strong churches that impact people’s lives and communities.

Training must include both words and example. When we teach and train, is what we teach able to be reproduced at four levels? Is it simple enough? Is it deep enough? Can it be passed on by example as well as words?

##### **3. *Training Should be Accessible***

It is the job of local churches to train workers to complete the Great Commission. When people think of training programs, they commonly think of seminaries and Bible colleges or some other residential program. This is regrettable, since some of the most effective training programs are non-residential and church-based. Assuming that church workers need to go away to a school to be trained can hinder a church planting movement. When, on the other hand, local churches take seriously their responsibility to train workers, then training is available to more people.

#### 4. *Training Should Grow From a Strategic Base*

On Paul's third missionary journey he spent most of his time in Ephesus (Ac 19:9-10). He chose the strategy of working from a strategic base to train leaders who could reach the whole region (See also Ac 20:18ff.). From Paul's training sessions, these leaders went out and reached the province of Asia with the word of the Lord. The Churches listed in Revelation chapters 2 and 3 are all in this region and may have been planted by people who learned from Paul during his time in Ephesus. In writing to the believers at Colossae (a city in the province of Asia), Paul even mentions the churches "who have not met me personally" (Col 2:1).

Have you found a strategic base for training church planters that will help your movement spread out throughout your region in the most effective manner?

#### E. **Evangelism: The fields are white**

God is at work in the world to bring people to Himself. He has given us the ministry of reconciliation (2Co 5:18). It is the responsibility of the Church to spread the Gospel to its community and beyond. For Saturation Church Planting movements to take place, the Gospel must be proclaimed everywhere.

Jesus showed His disciples that they did not "see" people as God saw them—already prepared (white) for a harvest (Mt 9:35-38). People really do want a relationship with God. Lost people live with a God-shaped vacuum in their souls, and are searching for something to fill this void. Evangelistic fruit is minimal not so much because people are not searching for God, but because they reject the forms and the expressions of faith that the traditional church uses. New forms and new expressions of timeless truths are needed to reach new generations.

Evangelism is the job not of specialists, but of every believer who has experienced God's love. For Saturation Church Planting to occur, as many believers as possible must be trained, mobilized, and challenged to share their faith in their home, work place, place of rest or recreation—everywhere.

#### F. **Vision Casting**

Church planting movements begin with vision. Vision brings clarification to the task, inspires cooperation among groups of believers, and motivates God's people to attempt greater things for Him. The vision, or 'Z,' is to see churches established everywhere so that every man women and child has a chance to hear and accept the Gospel.

Some regions lack movements because the Body of Christ lacks a vision for it. How can people strive toward that which they do not conceptualize? By contrast, in parts of the world where there are church planting movements, there is great vision.

Vision is stirred up through prayer, research and by asking "what does God want?" This is a very powerful question. Vision can be asked one on one, in groups or in special vision-casting seminars. Those who thoughtfully consider it come to realize that God wants all people to have a chance to hear the Gospel in their own language, and furthermore that God wants His Church to grow in such way that everyone has a chance to become a disciple of Jesus. This is the SCP vision which must be passed along to others in various vision-casting opportunities.

The goal is a witnessing fellowship of believers within reach of every person so that every one will be able to hear the Gospel presented and see the life of Christ lived out in community.

### III. **THE RESULT: CHURCH PLANTING MOVEMENTS**

The roof, or pinnacle of our building, is a church planting movement. The goal is a witnessing fellowship of believers within geographic and cultural reach of every person so that everyone will be able to hear the Gospel presented in a culturally relevant way on various occasions and see the life of Christ lived out in community. To see the Great Commission accomplished, it is necessary to have reproducible models at home and cross-culturally.

## A. Reproducible Church Planting

Planting churches that reproduce themselves is the best way to evangelize a region. Planting churches in an addition model will not result in a movement. One plus one plus one equals three. One times two times two equals four.

Hardly different at first, but comparing these patterns over the long haul makes a BIG difference. A multiplication model is the model Saturation Church Planting is committed to. This means that when a new church is planted, it should have a vision to reproduce even from its inception.

Saturation Church Planters look for the infinitely reproducible model. They want to plant a church that can easily be reproduced so that a movement can result. Saturation Church Planters are not finished once they have planted a church—they expect that church to reproduce and only then have they come close to accomplishing God's purpose.

## B. Cross-Cultural Church Planting

As churches multiply they normally reproduce 'after their own kind.' This means at some point pioneer and cross-cultural church planting may be necessary to reach new people groups in the region.

The revival in Asia reached across cultural barriers to both "Jew and Greek" (Ac 19:10). Ephesians 3:6 states that the Gospel's crossing cultures is the mystery that is fulfilled by the Church. The people of God are not a single ethnic group but come from the nations of the world (Rev 7:9-10). Cross-cultural church planting is one of the activities of the Church which fulfills this mystery.

## CONCLUSION: "THE LORD BUILDS THE HOUSE"

God is the Architect of church planting movements. Great spiritual movements depend on Him and His perfect timing. No one can force God to move. God is sovereign and He moves as He wills. In the book of Acts, we see this demonstrated in the life of Paul. Paul had a desire to reach Asia with the Gospel and was planning to go there until the Holy Spirit intervened. As he was going forward, God gave him a new direction. Later, in Acts 19, when God did open the door for Paul to work in the province of Asia, He demonstrated His power in unique and amazing ways (Acts 19:1-12). All of Asia heard the word of the Lord! Some of the signs of God's power (like healing through handkerchiefs) never happened in any other Scriptural accounts. It was obvious to the people in Asia that God was working with them in an unusual manner. The point is simply that in Ephesus at that time, God in His sovereignty chose to work in a unique way.

Creating a Saturation Church Planting movement is impossible if it is not God's timing. How can we know where and when He is working or desires to work?

To know God's will we must first know God. To know Him we must develop a relationship with Him in prayer. As we come together in prayer and perhaps fasting, He will show us His will. Perhaps the reason He is not working is because there is sin that has not been dealt with. Perhaps He will reveal that now is a time for seed sowing, or for watering with prayer the seed that has been sown. Perhaps He will show us a different approach that will be the key to unlocking the hearts of people. There may be many reasons why God is not moving in an area, but if God is placing a burden on your heart, continue to seek His face in prayer.

To know God's will we must first know God.
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## QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION, REVIEW AND APPLICATION

- What is your vision?
- Is a prayer movement part of your church planting plan?
- How do we work with the existing Body of Christ before church planting?
- Do you have a regional plan to plant churches in surrounding cities?
- Where is God especially working in your region?
- What elements of a church planting movement are present in your region?

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# THE CHURCH

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THE CHURCH

LESSON 9,10

# The Church and Spiritual Gifts

## GOD'S EMPOWERMENT FOR MINISTRY

### Lesson Purpose

The purpose of this lesson is to help church planting teams identify each other's spiritual gifts so that all may serve the Lord in the manner He gifted them.

### Main Points

- Spiritual gifts are given by the Holy Spirit to empower the body of Christ.
- Spiritual gifts are not the same as natural or learned talents and abilities.
- Spiritual gifts can be discovered through service and then developed.

### Desired Outcomes

When the content of this lesson has been mastered, each participant should

- Know how to identify his own and help others identify their own spiritual gifts.
- Be ready to make any changes necessary to work with others based on spiritual gifts.
- Participate in a church planting team effort where each member can be most effective according to the spiritual gift(s) God has given each one.

### Suggestions to Trainers

Note that this is a two-hour lesson. If a pause is necessary, it is possible to break between point III, "Abilities...Given by the Holy Spirit...", and point IV, "Observations from the list of Spiritual Gifts."

## I. WHY DO WE NEED SPIRITUAL GIFTS?

The church is a spiritual entity. We believe that in the supernatural kingdom of God, angels and demons exist. We also believe that man himself did not simply evolve, but was created with both physical and spiritual attributes. We are more than flesh, blood and chemicals. We desire to live a supernatural life, living in the Spirit rather than in the flesh. Paul stated:

"For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds (2Co 10:3-4).

The church must use this divine power. Essentially, there are two types available to us—*prayer* and *spiritual gifts*. Both access God's power on behalf of His people and His work. Both are necessary to accomplish ministry that is too difficult for human effort. The Lord never intended that we minister in our own strength. He intends to help us. Jesus instructed the disciples *not* to leave Jerusalem or begin their ministry until they had received power from the Holy Spirit (Ac 1:4-5).

The Lord has provided various kinds of gifts to His Body to enable it to work properly. One category of gifts includes types of **leaders** "to prepare God's people for works of service" (Eph 4:12). Another category of gifts involves special **abilities** for service which are given in varying combinations to each believer. What we know about each of these categories we learn from Scripture.

## II. LEADERS: GIVEN BY JESUS TO EQUIP THE BODY

This first category of gifts includes the **leaders** described in Ephesians 4:11-16. These are not positions or offices to which people are elected. These are simply people given by God to the Body of Christ to

equip each individual to do his or her part. These people are not specialists to do the work for us; their effectiveness is measured by our effectiveness as we do the work of the ministry.

The text lists apostles, prophets, evangelists, and pastor/teachers. Those with the apostolic role are those that are sent out to be foundational in beginning new ministry. Those with the prophetic role declare God's Word to the Body, while evangelists declare His Word to the lost. Pastor/teachers watch over and teach God's people. To understand a leader's role in the Body, consider the evangelist: he cannot just do evangelism; he must also equip other Christians to do evangelism.

### III. ABILITIES: GIVEN BY THE HOLY SPIRIT TO EMPOWER THE BODY

#### A. Definition

Another category of gifts is **abilities** given to believers by the Holy Spirit. Natural or learned abilities and talents should be used in God's service. However, the Spirit also gives believers abilities to contribute in a unique way to the building up of the Body of Christ. These are called **spiritual gifts**. Certain facts which stand out about these gifts are:

- Every believer has at least one (1Co 12:7; 1Pe 4:10).
- They are given at the Spirit's desire rather than our own desires (1Co 12:11).
- They are for the common good rather than individual benefit (1Co 12:7,12-27 Ro 12:4-5).
- The gift (or gifts) that we have is the Spirit's work (1Co 12:4). The ministries in which we use them are tied to Christ (1Co 12:5), and their effectiveness is God's work (1Co 12:6). Our responsibility is simply obedience.

#### B. Spiritual Gifts and the Body of Christ

God has distributed these gifts for the purpose of building up the Body.

##### 1. *The Importance of Each Member*

The illustration of the Body in 1 Corinthians 12 shows the need for each member to fulfill his role in the Body. Just as the physical body suffers when one member is sick, the Body of Christ hurts when one member fails to use his gift. Each believer has "good works" (Eph 2:10) to accomplish. These works cannot be accomplished in our human strength. We need the supernatural power of the Holy Spirit working through us to complete them.

##### 2. *The Function of "Gifted" Men*

God has given gifted men to the church to lead and train the believers. Each local church has individuals who are uniquely gifted in these areas. However, these are never intended to become an elite group that carries on the ministry of the church. Rather, Eph 4:11-13 makes clear that they are to prepare God's people so that those believers can carry on the work of the ministry. It is vital that each believer discover and use his gift in ministry.

##### 3. *Ministering the Grace of God*

When we use our gifts, we are actually ministering the grace of God (1Pe 4:10-11). God's grace and power flow through us to others as we serve. God wants to minister to people, and He has chosen to do it through us—and specifically through our spiritual gifts. He has already decided how He wants to use each of us, and has given us the corresponding gift. Our job is to use it, and bear fruit for Him.

#### C. Determination of One's Spiritual Gift(s)

Determining what our gifts are takes time and experience. If you do not know what your gifts are, you can learn by knowing what the gifts are in general, getting involved in the ministry of the Body, and evaluating what God is doing through you by means of your spiritual gifts and natural abilities. In a sense your gifts will become obvious to you and others as you minister.

There is no test for spiritual gifts in the Bible. They do not depend on natural or learned abilities. A doctor does not necessarily have the gift of mercy, nor a teacher the gift of teaching. Such should have training and experience in those professions, but this is not the same as spiritual gifting. Their gifts might actually be evangelism, administration or some other kind. Evaluating your profession is *not* the way to discover your spiritual gift(s).

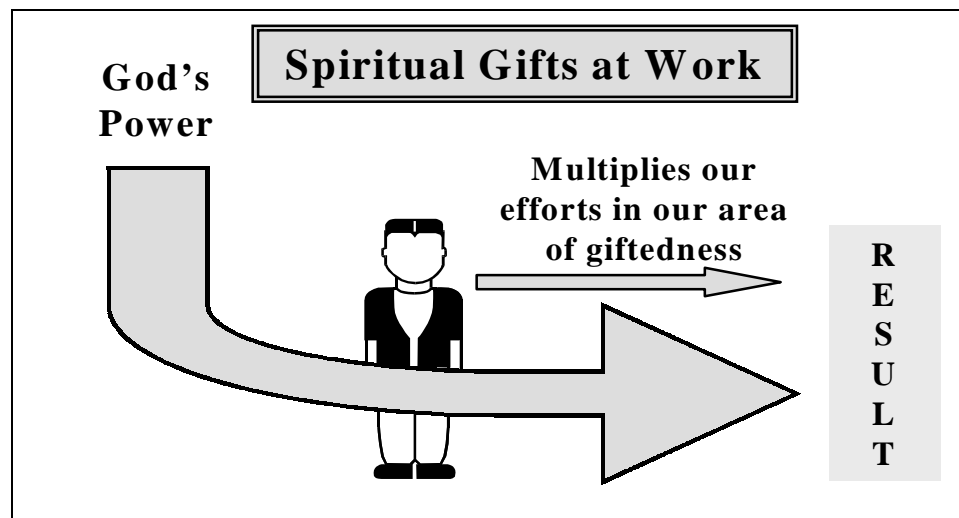
A gift is discovered by its effect when used. As we minister to others, God's grace, power and blessing flow through our gift to a degree that surpasses our human ability. The only way to discover our gift(s) is to be involved in various forms of ministry and watch to see what God uses. The process is essentially "trial and error." Since God's power will flow through us to others, it is important to listen to their counsel. We may not notice how the Lord is using us, but others will.

A gift is discovered by its effect when used.

There are many spiritual gifts listed in the New Testament (see Paragraph D below). Since each list includes different ones, it seems probable that no list is complete. There might be many other kinds of serving gifts. Also, it is clear that each believer has a gift. But it is not clear whether we each have only one. Some might have two or more. It is difficult to say. Because of this diversity, it is necessary that believers be involved in many diverse types of ministry.

Although natural or learned talents are not the same as spiritual gifts, training or talent can certainly increase the effectiveness of a gift. For instance, if a person has the gift of teaching, this means God wants to bless him in that ministry. But the gift is not a substitute for studying so that they have *something to say!* God is able to bless our *little*. He also desires to bless our *much*. Having a gift is no excuse for being lazy. This applies to any gift. Once we find out which gift(s) we have, we should do everything possible to develop them so that we increasingly become a better tool for service in the church.

Figure 9.1 God Multiplies Our Efforts



#### D. Description of Spiritual Gifts

The two major references on which our understanding is based are Romans 12 and 1 Corinthians 12-14. Knowing our natural temptation to let this subject be divisive, the Holy Spirit put the great chapter on love, 1 Corinthians 13, in the middle of His teaching on gifts. An alphabetical rather than prioritized list follows. Most Bible scholars believe that these lists are not exhaustive.

#### E. Two Warnings

First remember, as previously stated, that our knowledge of any one or all of these gifts is from the Bible. Second, the availability of some of these gifts today is a matter of disagreement in the Body of Christ. The controversy usually centers around whether or not some gifts are available to the Church today, since the NT was written. Some believe that, with the completion of God's written

revelation, some of the gifts, especially in miraculous form, have ceased. Others believe that what the Bible teaches concerning spiritual gifts for the NT Church is still applicable for the Church today. Serious, sincere, and studied scholars line up on both sides. So what are we to do? A simple solution is to measure and pattern our obedience and experience on a simple and full application of what the Bible says.

#### IV. INDUCTIVE BIBLE STUDY OF PASSAGES ON SPIRITUAL GIFTS

##### A. Observation

Below is a list of verses that talk about spiritual gifts. In column two write the general observations about all the gifts; in column three list the gifts. Some initial work has been done for you.

##### B. Interpretation

In column four write what each passage says about each gift.

Scripture	General Observations	Gifts	Interpretation
Ro 12:6-8	We have different gifts according to grace Use according to faith	Prophecy	
		Serving	
1Co 12:4-11	different...same each person has at least one gift		

Scripture	General Observations	Gifts	Interpretation
1Co 12:27-29			
Eph 4:11			

Now compare the lists. From your knowledge of Scripture, compose a working definition of each gift:

### **C. Application**

Compile a list of the gifts you think you have. Beside each, tell how you believe that God wants you to use the gift to minister to the Body:

## **V. HINDRANCES TO DISCOVERING GIFTS**

### **A. Personal reasons**

- Fearing some abuse or misuse by others.
- Lacking functional understanding of the supernatural working in the physical realm. This is a worldview problem.
- Harboring unresolved personal sin problem and/or lacking faith.
- Lacking commitment to serve and minister to others.
- Attempts to imitate others in the functional use of gifts.
- Striving too hard to "get the gifts" rather than seeking the Giver of the gift.
- Adopting a "waiting for the gift before I minister" attitude, rather than obediently proceeding to serve and minister to others, trusting that the Lord will accomplish His purpose through us. In fact, we may be totally unaware of the effectual use of our spiritual gift(s) as we seek to love and serve others.

### **B. Organizational problems**

- Doctrinal imbalance: some exclude certain ones; others over-emphasize some of the gifts.
- Over-emphasis on some gifts as a "mark of spirituality" rather than as ministry to others.
- No biblical teaching about the gifts nor a freedom to use.
- Presenting the gifts as an end in themselves, rather than as a tool of ministry.

## **VI. MOBILIZING THE CHURCH ACCORDING TO SPIRITUAL GIFTEDNESS**

One of the keys to success in maturity and growth in a church planting effort is finding ways to train all members to discover, develop and exercise their gifts in ministry activities. There is no limit to the growth of a church which releases people to minister in the power of the Holy Spirit, rather than restricting them to the filling of a position of ministry.

The church planter is not only to "do the ministry" but rather to train new believers to do the ministry.

### **A. How to Help Others Discover and Use Their Gifts**

The first thing we need to do to help others find their gift(s) is to encourage and to enable them to be involved in ministry. Only as they serve will we be able to see God use them effectively. It is important that we teach others about

- The need for the gifts
- The nature of the gifts
- The discovery of our gift(s)
- The responsibility to use our gift(s)

Then, in service, we need to observe the results of ministry to determine how the Lord is or is not blessing. If we see the presence of a gift, we need to encourage the believer to develop it and increase their ministry in that area (1Pe 4:10). If we do not see the presence of a gift, we need to be faithful to counsel the brother or sister about other areas of ministry to try, rather than allow them to be frustrated with lack of results.

It is also important to remember that all believers, *as part of the body of Christ*, have spiritual gift(s). The length of their Christian life is not relevant. Even new believers have a gift(s). Look at the results of the evangelistic efforts of the Samaritan woman (Jn 4:28-30). She had believed less than an hour when God used her to bring a huge crowd to Jesus. New believers should be encouraged to minister and discover their gift(s).

There is one note of caution concerning new believers in ministry. They *should minister*. But they should *not* hold an *office* (1Ti 3:6). Serving others is not the same as directing others. A leadership office requires maturity and proven faithfulness. But *all* Christians are to be involved in ministering to others and in evangelizing the lost.

#### **B. Training helpful to develop the gifts**

Though the spiritual gifts are gifts of grace from God, there is still a place for training and developing their use in ministry activities. The training is at the human skill level, while the gifting is in the spiritual empowering level. Both should come together in ministry activities.

### **VII. SPIRITUAL GIFTS AND CHURCH PLANTING**

In order to be effective in a church planting ministry, a church planter must be aware of his gift(s). As a result, he can focus on the ministry that God blesses in his life. There are many ways to plant a church. People can be drawn to the Lord through a church planter's teaching, evangelizing, compassion, or other gift. It is important that a church planter with a gift of evangelism spend his time with the lost rather than all his time preparing Bible studies. But a church planter with a gift of teaching should focus on the Bible studies. If he has the gift of mercy, he should be with the sick and the hurting.

Since no one has all the gifts, it is important that the church planter form a team with others who have gifts complementing his own. Only in this way will there be balance in the ministry. A church planter who does not have the gift of evangelism can plant a church, but he will find it very difficult unless he finds a teammate who has that gift. Whatever gifts the church planter lacks should be present in a team member. Otherwise, much of the work will depend on hard, human effort.

A team can provide complementing gifts.

God's plan is that the local church body work together with each member using his or her gift(s). However, in a new church plant, there may be only a handful of believers at the start. In this case, it is even more vital that the gifts of each believer be discovered, developed and used quickly and effectively.

Jesus has given specialized people to the Body to equip each person to do his or her part. Additionally, the Holy Spirit empowers each believer with special abilities to carry out his individual tasks, thereby making the whole Body work. Leaders are given to the Body for equipping each believer to do ministry.

### **ACTION PLAN**

- Do the inductive study in section IV.
- Define the needs that you believe God wants your group to meet. List the ministry opportunities that the Lord has opened before this group.
- Have a time of dedication to the Lord asking Him to empower and release the gifts needed to meet the needs you have identified. Do not focus on the gifts but on the Giver of the gifts.
- Allow each person to begin moving toward meeting the needs they feel led to meet. Keep the focus and emphasis on meeting the needs in loving ministry rather than on the gift.
- Train people according to the ministry gift they feel led to use in the meeting of the needs.
- Allow others to evaluate and advise for confirmation of the gifts you have been using.





THE CHURCH

11

LESSON

# Social Dynamics of the Church

## HOW OUR CULTURE AFFECTS OUR CHURCH

### ☞ Lesson Purpose

The purpose of this lesson is to explain how culture—both religious and social—has influenced the church throughout its history. It will also draw parallels between the church today in Central/Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union and the early apostolic church.

### ☞ Main Points

- Churches will be influenced by culture but must not cross the line into sin.
- Culture can be a positive, negative, or neutral influence in the church.
- The church must adapt its forms to the changing culture in order to be relevant.

### ☞ Desired Outcomes

When the content of this lesson has been mastered, each participant should...

- Be aware of the great influence of culture on the church in the past.
- Be convinced that church forms must change as culture and needs change.
- Evaluate his own church to see if it is adapting to win the lost or expecting the lost to change to match the church.

### ☞ Suggestions to Trainers

- In preparing to teach this lesson, briefly review the major points of your country's religious history. Consider preparing a short bibliography of your context.
- Consider making a transparency of Figure 11.1, or draw it on a board. Discuss whether the three cultures shown have the right to be different from each other—or should they always be the same if they are biblical.

## INTRODUCTION

Culture always plays an important role in determining how we think and act. We are formed by our culture, surrounded by it, and influenced by it. This often happens without our notice. Even when we meet someone from another culture that is very different from ours, we may decide that *he or she* is unusual, and we are “normal.”

Culture surrounds and influences the church.

Culture also influences the church. Churches in every country are different. Some differences result from doctrinal beliefs, but most differences result from culture. For instance, the church buildings in Africa would be very different from ones in Russia. The climate is different, and so is the culture. Music in a South American church would be very different from music in a Korean one. These differences arise from the culture and not from doctrine.

Furthermore, no country is a homogeneous cultural group. Every country includes people from various countries and cultural backgrounds. Culture may vary greatly even among native groups within a country. Differences in economic status, educational level, and age may cause radically different worldviews. Even the cultural differences between rural and urban areas can be significant.

Some of these cultural influences on the church are positive. They help the church relate to and win their countrymen. An example of this kind of influence might be the use of poetry. If this is an art form that is greatly appreciated in the culture it may be used effectively for expressing spiritual truths. Other cultural influences are neutral and not very significant; they simply reflect the way a particular church chooses to do something. An example of a neutral influence is the collection of the offering: should it be taken during the service itself, at the beginning, middle, or end or should a box be left at the back of the room in which people can put their offerings? Unfortunately, there are also negative cultural influences that may impact church life. These might include racism or syncretism that spills over into the church from the culture.

Cultural differences can be positive, negative or neutral.

## I. BIBLICAL PRINCIPLES

### A. Keeping the Balance

Adapting to the culture without conforming to sin in the culture can be difficult. This is an important issue for the church planter. As he works to organize a new church, he needs to make decisions about which forms and structures to use. There are two very significant passages about this issue in the New Testament.

#### 1. Acts 14:11-18

In this passage, Paul had just healed a crippled man in the city of Lystra. When the people saw the miracle, they proceeded to offer sacrifices to Paul and Silas. Their intentions were good, but Paul recognized that this would be idolatry and struggled to prevent this evil. Paul refused to participate in a cultural practice that was clearly contrary to Scripture.

#### 2. 1 Corinthians. 9:19-23

Paul clearly states that he is willing to become like a Jew, a Gentile, or anyone else in order to win them to Christ. He considered the salvation of the lost far more important than his own cultural preferences. However, he also states that there is a limit to the degree to which he can become like another culture. Paul is always under Christ's law (v. 21). He cannot accept sin, but he will yield the rest of his culture for the sake of the lost.

### B. Form and Function

The concept of form and function has already been discussed in previous lessons. They are the keys to finding balance in the church's approach to culture. It is important to remember the meaning of these terms.

#### 1. Function – **What** We Must Do

The things which the church is commanded to do are the *functions*. The main functions include teaching, preaching, evangelizing, baptizing, worshipping, praying and observing the Lord's Table. There are many other functions, such as encouraging one another, loving one another, singing hymns and spiritual songs, and giving to the Lord and to the needy. The church must do these things.

#### 2. Form – **How** We Choose to Do the Functions

The *forms* of the church are the *ways* in which the church carries out its *functions*. The church has great liberty in this area as long as they do not choose a form that is prohibited by Scripture. For example, the church is commanded to pray. How, where, when and how often the church prays is not stated. The position one assumes (standing, kneeling, sitting, etc.) differs from culture to culture. There is liberty in these decisions. If, however, the church decided to pray to Buddha, that would be a sin. We do not have *that* much freedom.

We have freedom to choose how we worship and minister, as long as we do not cross the line into sin which is expressly forbidden in the Bible.

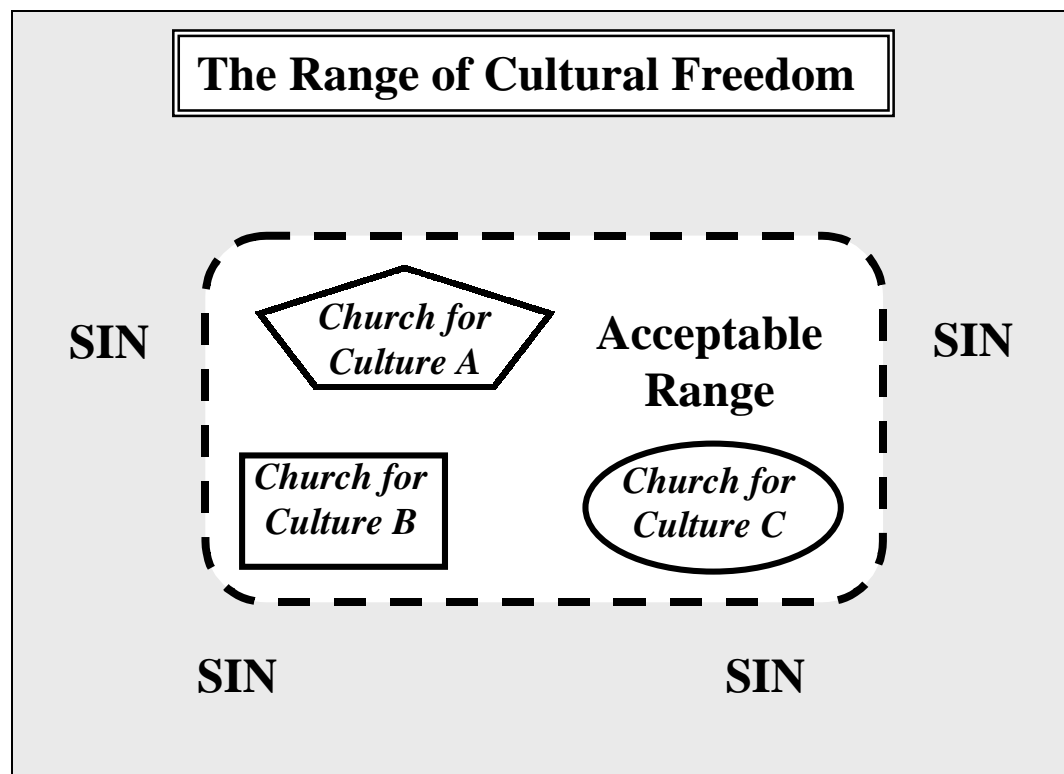
Distinguishing form and function is the first step in developing a church that is appropriate for each cultural group. We must understand that we have freedom to choose how we worship and minister

as long as we do not cross the line into sin, which is expressly forbidden in the Bible. The forms can and will be different for each culture. This is good and normal as long as sin is avoided.

Figure 11.1 helps explain how our range of freedom allows diversity in our worship and Christian life.

Note in the figure that the three different shapes in the center represent church forms appropriate for diverse cultures. Any point within the white center is acceptable to the Lord. However, different cultures prefer different forms within this acceptable area. Cultures A, B and C may each choose a different way of doing their biblical functions. This is good and normal. The gray area represents sin. Each cultural form is equally valid, as long as it does not cross the dashed line into the area of sin that the Bible forbids.

**Figure 11.1 Range of Freedom for Church Culture and the Christian Life**



## II. THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH AND CULTURE

The influence of culture is clearly seen in the story of the New Testament church. It began as a basically Jewish group and then quickly spread to the Gentiles. Eventually, the church in the Gentile regions far surpassed the church in Jerusalem in size and importance. And in AD 70, the Roman destruction of the city of Jerusalem decisively ended the importance of that church.

As we read through the book of Acts and the epistles, we see that forms of worship, church structures and organization developed *as they were needed*, and often in response to cultural issues. This was a continuing process as new challenges and new cultures confronted the growing church.

Forms of worship, church structures and organization developed *as they were needed*—often in response to cultural issues.

### A. The Jerusalem Church

The Jerusalem church was a tremendous example of a thriving local church. It still serves as a model for a loving, caring, sharing body. It had one major weakness. The congregation only

fulfilled the first part of Christ's command to be witnesses in "Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." We must imitate the love of these believers for one another, but not their lack of concern for the rest of the world.

The early church in Jerusalem was essentially composed of Jews who were greatly influenced by their Jewish culture. The apostles constantly had to decide how to mesh their Jewish traditions and forms of worship with their new Christian faith.

#### 1. *Prayer in the Temple*

The disciples continued to meet, pray and worship in the Jewish temple even after their conversion (Ac 2:46; 3:1). They were already used to this style of worship, and it was comfortable for them to continue it. As the number of believers grew into the thousands, there was no other place large enough to meet. There was no thought of building a "church" building. The believers *were* the church. This part of their Jewish religious culture was acceptable. However, they no longer participated in the sacrifices. They understood that Christ, the Lamb of God, had already fulfilled the sacrificial function (Heb 7:27). They rightly rejected that custom, despite its deep roots in their culture.

#### 2. *The House Churches*

In addition to the temple meetings, the believers met together from house to house (Ac 2:46). This pattern began even before Pentecost. The disciples were constantly together as they waited for the Holy Spirit (Ac 1:12-14), and for three years previously they had been together daily with Jesus. This custom therefore arose not from their Jewish culture, but from their experience with Christ.

#### 3. *Evangelism*

The culture of the Jews had a negative effect on evangelism. They had trouble believing that God would save the Gentile "dogs" despite Christ's acceptance of all people (Jn 4). The Lord corrected this weakness by sending persecution to drive them out of Jerusalem to witness to the world. He also spoke to both Peter and Paul through dramatic visions in order to persuade them to go to the Gentiles (Ac 9,10).

The Jewish cultural view of the Gentiles had a negative affect on the evangelism of the world.

#### 4. *Development of Deacons*

The foundational church offices were the apostles and the prophets (Eph 2:20). The next office appears to be that of deacon, although it is not specifically called such in Acts 6:1-7. The occasion for the development of this office was a cultural problem. It appeared that the church took better care of the "real" Jewish widows who spoke Hebrew than they did of the ones who spoke Greek.

This decision of the apostles was to have the congregation select seven men to care for this task. Since all have Greek names, it appears that the church made their decision based on culture. They decided that the Greek-speaking widows were as important as the Hebrew-speaking ones. They also decided that Greek-speaking men could best minister to their own cultural group. But they appointed them in a public fashion that demonstrated they were not a "second-class" culture within the church.

### **B. The Church Among the Gentiles**

With the persecution of Acts 8:1-3, the disciples finally spread the gospel to Samaria and the "uttermost part of the earth." Many of the Gentiles readily believed the message, especially when they saw the miracles performed by the apostles. God also chose the Apostle Paul to specifically minister to this group (Ac 9:15). As a result of his ministry, the church exploded in growth despite severe opposition.

Even the churches in the Gentile areas of Asia Minor included a significant number of Jews. Paul's normal method of winning a new city was to go to the Jews first and to the Gentiles only when the Jews rejected the message of the Gospel. Paul knew that the Jews were God's chosen people and

that they already had a basic knowledge of God and of the Old Testament. Sometimes he found devout Jewish men or women who enabled him to quickly form the nucleus of a new church. But they also brought with them both secular and religious cultural traits that often hindered outreach to the Gentiles.

A common theme in the New Testament is how to integrate these Jewish believers into the body of Christ. Christ has broken down the division and formed one new body—the church—from both the Gentiles and the Jews (Eph 2:14-16). However, they did not always get along. Usually conflict arose when the Jewish Christians insisted on passing their religious culture on to the Gentile Christians. The epistles consistently rebuke such an attitude.

Conflict often arose in the early church when the Jewish Christians insisted on passing their religious culture on to the Gentile Christians.

### 1. *The Jerusalem Council*

Acts 15:1-21 records the landmark decision concerning how much Jewish religious culture should be brought into the church. The Jewish believers insisted that circumcision was necessary for salvation. There were two major decisions made by the council.

#### A. Circumcision

Circumcision was one of the most sacred rites of Judaism. However, the council rejected it. They were not willing to place any extra burden on those being saved (Ac 15:10-11,19). Salvation by grace through faith eliminated the need to perform any religious work. The book of Galatians is essentially written to address this same issue. The movement to force new believers to submit to Jewish traditions and religious culture was decisively rejected.

#### B. Eating of Meat

While specifically rejecting circumcision, the council did make another concession (Ac 15:19-21). They asked the Gentile believers to refrain from the following:

- Food polluted by idols
- Sexual immorality
- Meat of strangled animals and blood

Verse 21 gives the reason for this. There were unbelieving Jews in every city, whom the church desired to win to the Lord. Sexual immorality, meat offered to idols and meat with blood in it was so culturally offensive to them that it would hinder reaching them for Christ.

Sexual immorality is specifically prohibited in the Bible as sin. Its prohibition is understandable. But what about the eating of bloody or sacrificed meat? Paul later added an important discussion on this subject. In 1 Corinthians 8 he relates the following principles:

- Idols are nothing
- The food we eat does not affect our relationship to God

He also condemns abstaining from foods in 1 Timothy 4:3-5. Clearly, eating food is not a sin. And yet he decides not to eat meat that has been sacrificed to idols in order to avoid offending the “weaker brother.” Paul is referring to young Christians who are still weak in their faith and do not yet understand their new freedom in Christ. Paul gives up such meat in order not to be an offense to the weak believer. This closely matches the situation in Acts 15. We therefore see that the disciples were to make cultural concessions to two groups:

Believers must adjust their religious forms to be less offensive to the culture of unbelievers and “weak” Christians.

- The unsaved Jews
- The “weak” Christians

The important teaching is that *believers must adjust their religious forms to be less offensive to the culture of unbelievers and "weak" Christians*. This then becomes the context for Paul's statement about becoming "all things to all men" in order to win them (1Co 9:19-23).

## 2. *Missions in Antioch*

God mightily used the Antioch church as a base from which to send out Paul and Barnabas, and later Silas, to evangelize the Gentile world. We know little of the internal life of that church as compared to the Jerusalem church, about which much is written. The new component that the Lord shows us through Antioch is the necessity of taking the Gospel to all peoples. The religious culture of the Jewish believers prevented them from accomplishing this task. They could not, and would not, make the changes necessary in their forms of worship that were necessary to reach the Gentile nations. God set them aside and used the Antioch church instead. It is a heart-breaking end to the wonderful beginning of the Jerusalem church in Acts 2.

The structure of the church changed, grew, and was refined as needed.

## 3. *Development of Church Offices*

As the church spread throughout Asia, and the Mediterranean area, new offices were added to the church structure. We see elders added in 1 Timothy 3:1-11 and Titus 1:5. Deacons continue, but their requirements, like those of the elders, are given in greater detail in 1 Timothy 3:1-13 and Titus 1:5-9. In these books we also see possible reference to deaconesses and a reference to a specific support list for church widows, complete with a list of requirements for them. It is clear that the structure of the church changed, grew, and was refined as needed in the changing times and needs. And church ministry was adjusted according to the specific cultural needs and traits of each group (Tit 1:12-14).

Church ministry was adjusted according to the specific cultural needs and traits of each group

## 4. *The Roman Persecution*

Beginning in Acts 8, the early church was severely persecuted by the Romans. The suffering and death of the Christians during this period is well known, as is their faith and love. Most of the New Testament was written during this time, and calls to remain faithful are common. In general, believers did remain true to the faith and serve as a great example to us. Forbidden to meet publicly, they met in homes, forests, and caves. But pressing on in faithfulness was difficult. They continued to struggle with leaving their cultural forms and customs. As the persecution became more severe, it was a strong temptation for Jewish believers to return to Judaism and the safety of its official status. The fact that they could not make a clean break with the past and their old forms of worship later served as a snare for them. The book of Hebrews is written to this group to demonstrate the foolishness of exchanging the power for Christ for these old forms.

# III. FROM THE NEW TESTAMENT UNTIL NOW

Much time has passed from the New Testament days until our modern era, and the Christian Church has also changed. Some of this change has been positive and some has been negative. Much of it has been influenced by culture rather than by doctrine.

## A. *The Development of the State Church*

The devotion of the saints was eventually victorious—even the Emperor Constantine believed, and Christianity was named the state religion. That act changed the religious picture of the world. Instead of a small group of serious believers meeting in homes at great risk, huge state church buildings appeared with the prestige that attracted even unbelievers to their power, beauty and wealth. There were always true believers—a "remnant." But as the political power and visibility of the

As the political power and visibility of the church increased, *forms* of worship became increasingly more important than their *functions*.

church increased, its spirituality declined. Forms of worship became increasingly more important than their functions.

## B. The East-West Split

Eventually the Catholic and Orthodox Churches split. The issue was partly doctrinal (the “filioque” clause), but also was largely influenced by cultural differences between the East and the West, and by a struggle for power among the leaders of the two groups. Both the eastern and western churches relied heavily on forms rather than functions. *How* they went through the motions of worship meant more to them than *what* they believed. There emerged two very different forms of Christian worship—one in the East and one in the West. Notice this appreciation of form when emissaries reported in 987 AD to Vladimir, Grand Duke of Kiev, on the Orthodox faith in Constantinople:

The Protestant Church slowly adopted many of the same forms that the Orthodox and Catholics used.

*“The Greeks led us to the edifices where they worship their God, and we know not whether we were in heaven or on earth. For on earth there is no such splendor or such beauty, and we are at a loss how to describe it. We only know that God dwells there among men, and their service is fairer than the ceremonies of other nations. For we cannot forget that beauty. Every man, after tasting something sweet, is afterward unwilling to accept that which is bitter, and therefore we cannot dwell longer here.”*  
*The Primary Chronicle*

## C. The Protestant Reformation

The root of the Protestant Reformation was the desire of the reformers to correct this unwarranted emphasis on forms. They desired to return to the true functions of the church. The reformers preached that salvation was through faith in Christ—and faith alone. The forms of church were not as important as the functions. **What we believe** is far more important than **how we worship**. Both the Orthodox and Catholic Churches rejected this argument. Wars were fought over the issue. Countries were invaded. Infidels were slaughtered. Christian state churches persecuted the other Christian churches. Explorers raced to claim newly discovered continents for the “true” religion. There were abuses on all sides. In an extreme case in Russia, Orthodox fought Orthodox in the Old Believers Schism over the issue of how many fingers to use when one crossed oneself. They died for this form even though both sides agreed on the doctrine of the Trinity—the function! Amid this animosity, the Protestant Church nevertheless slowly adopted many of the same forms—large ornate buildings, professional priesthood and rigid forms of service—that the Orthodox and Catholics used.

The degree to which churches have been affected by their culture and past depends in large part on the choices church leaders have made concerning form and function.

## IV. CONTEMPORARY CULTURE AND THE CHURCH

The churches in Central/Eastern Europe and the Former Soviet Union today struggle with the results of cultural, political and religious history. Each local church has its unique congregation and setting. It is impossible to paint a general picture that applies to all. The degree to which each church has been affected depends in large part on the choices church leaders have made concerning form and function. These choices may have been made consciously or unconsciously, but they were certainly made. Some of them are positive. Others may hinder the contemporary church from reaching the lost.

**Two clear principles arose from the study of the New Testament church:**

- 1. The forms of the church must change according to need or cultural change.**
- 2. The church must be willing to change its forms so as not to hinder unbelievers or weak Christians—although avoiding sin.**



Unfortunately, these principles are often completely reversed. Rather than follow the clear example of the Bible, we take one or both of the following actions:

#### **A. We Refuse to Change**

Many churches *refuse* to change. They may be totally unaware of the amount of “cultural baggage” they have collected over 2000 years of church history. If aware, they justify it as an ancient tradition. Forms have supplanted function. They follow the course of the Jewish Christians and cling to their traditions. As a result, they are unable to reach and relate to their culture.

#### **B. We Expect the Unbelievers to Conform to Our Church Culture**

This is so common as to be accepted without question. However, it is clearly opposed to Scripture. In the Bible the *believer* is supposed to become all things to all men. We are to live lives that identify with the unbelievers and make it easy for them to relate to us and listen to our message. We are to attract them to the Savior. Some things in a culture are sin. They must be rejected. But often they simply conflict with the church’s culture. When this is the case, the church must change. Even Christ totally changed his culture and became a man in order to reach sinners—yet without sin (Php 2:7; Heb 4:15).

In the same way churches often expect “weak” believers to quickly give up things for which they are not ready. But the scriptural pattern is for the strong believers to sacrifice their rights in order to keep from placing too difficult a burden on the weak believers. How often have church members acted as the “weak” brother and demanded that the new Christians give up their culture?

It is true that the stronger brother should teach the weaker one. But this is to take place over time. The first stage is for the stronger brother to yield his rights and suffer the shortcomings of the weaker brother until he grows and matures.

### **V. SUMMARY**

The challenge for the church today is to know when to confront sin in the culture around it and when to change and adapt to the culture in order to win the lost. These must always be kept in balance. This is a difficult issue for the church in Central/Eastern Europe and the Former Soviet Union. There are centuries of tradition and history weighing on them. In many ways the issue resembles the problem of the Jewish Christians in the early church. They were devoted to the Lord. They prayed fervently. They loved one another. But they had a difficult time setting aside their 2000-year Jewish history in order to fulfill the Great Commission. Let us change before another persecution would scatter the brethren.

The challenge for the church today is to know when to confront sin in the culture around it and when to change and adapt to the culture in order to win the lost.

Some churches today will choose to change and win the lost, but many will not. For this reason, the planting of new churches is even more important, and the task of the church planter is an urgent one. The cultural dynamics of new churches are much more like the Antioch church. New believers come without the religious cultural “baggage” of older Christians. They can relate to their world and their culture easily. Their potential is unlimited. Without concrete forms they are free to adapt their worship and life in order to reach the lost.

The danger is that new believers also know little of holiness or doctrine. The Antioch church overcame that shortcoming with good teachers (Ac 13:1). As they taught the people about both grace and holiness, God used them to reach the known world of that day. May we be as faithful today.

### **QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION, REVIEW AND APPLICATION**

- What are some of the major cultural traits of your country or area? Where did they come from? Are they from history, religion, politics, climate, lifestyle or something else?
- How can a believer distinguish between something that is sin and something which contradicts his religious culture?

## **ACTION PLAN**

- Review the lessons on form and function in light of this lesson. List the forms and the functions of your church.
- Evaluate your list above in light of what you now know about the historical cultural influences on the Christian Church.
- List the traits of the other historical branch(es) of Christianity in your country, such as Orthodoxy, Catholicism or Lutheranism. Critically and prayerfully evaluate which of these traits have been assimilated by your church. Categorize them as positive or negative.

## **SOURCES**

*Russian Primary Chronicle: Laurentian Text*, Samuel H. Cross. N.p., n.d.



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# SPIRITUAL CHARACTER

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SPIRITUAL  
CHARACTER

LESSON 8,9

# The Law and the Gospel

## LIFE IN THE SPIRIT

### ☛ Lesson Purpose

The purpose of this lesson is to expose what is all too common in our day: Christians who are law-keepers, but who do not grow to love God and others. We will discuss the root of this problem; reliance upon the law to become holy without a growing faith in the Gospel of Jesus Christ. And we will learn how true change is produced in us and in others.

### ☛ Main Points

- God's purpose for the law is to show us our sinfulness, his holiness and our need for Christ.
- The law cannot make us holy.
- Holiness is a heart matter.
- Life in the Spirit and faith in the Gospel liberates us from the law.

### ☛ Desired Outcomes

When the content of this lesson has been mastered, each participant should . . .

- Understand that the purpose of God's law is to show us our sinfulness in contrast to God's holiness, and lead us to see our need for Jesus Christ every day.
- Discover that a growing faith in the Gospel takes us from law-keeping to a genuine love for God and others.
- Learn to serve God in the new way of the Spirit and not in the old way of the written code.

### ☛ Suggestions to Trainers

This is a two-hour lesson. Most of the ideas in this lesson come from Romans 7:1-13, Galatians 3:1-5 and 3:19-26. In preparation to teach this session, be sure to be knowledgeable of these passages.

## INTRODUCTION

The relationship between the law and the Gospel is one of the most important discussions for church leaders. Several times throughout the history of the church, this issue has taken central stage in debate. The first such debate is recorded in Acts 15 and in the subsequent epistles of Romans and Galatians. The issue: would the church emphasize the observance of the law as the primary way of serving God? Simply stated the answer was No! (Ac 15:19-21). Another such debate was in the 16th century when a German monk named Martin Luther, in the midst of a law-based religious system, rediscovered the doctrine of justification by faith. Luther went on to preach salvation as a free gift apart from good works and the Protestant reformation was ushered in.

Following both of these events, great movements of God took place. In Acts and during the Protestant reformation, the kingdom of God exploded, people came to Christ, churches were planted, and whole regions were transformed. Why is it that we do not see God working in these powerful ways today? What is necessary to experience the transforming power of Jesus Christ? Perhaps part of the answer has to do with the fact that we tend to misuse the *law* while failing to release the *Gospel* in our ministries.

We tend to misuse the *law* while failing to release the *Gospel* in our ministries.

In this lesson, we will first examine the intended purpose for God's law. Second, we need to discuss limitations of the law and its inability to produce holiness in us. And third, we will see a new way of living,

which the New Testament introduces to us. Our need is to learn to live by faith in the Gospel and power of the Spirit.

## **I. GOD'S PURPOSE FOR THE LAW**

### **A. The Law Shows Us God's Holiness**

God gave us His law so that the curtain which veiled His glory might be pulled back and so that we might behold what our human heart cannot comprehend, the awesome holiness of God. This is the aim of His law. It does not take long for someone who reads the Bible to realize how severe God's law is. The law is severe because God's holiness is severe. We see this in every aspect of the law, in the holy life it calls us to, in its uncompromising spirit, and in its tough penalties for failure. Consider the penalties for disobeying God's law. We see these in Exodus 21:15-17, 22:20 and Deuteronomy 22:20-22. Adultery required both persons to be stoned to death. If a son cursed his parents in a fit of rage, he was to be put to death. It is scary to think how many of us would be dead if these penalties were applied to us.

Should we then avoid God's law so that we will not suffer exposure to His holiness? No, not at all. If we never really come to know God in His true holiness, we will suffer grievously. As difficult as this is, knowing God in His holiness is essential for us to understand our true need for Jesus Christ and His redemption. Without an ever-growing knowledge of God's holiness, we will walk in pride, we will be merciless in our relationships with others, and we will walk in self-confidence and unbelief.

So the law is necessary, first for the unbeliever, to reveal God's awesome holiness in order to lead him to Christ. The law is also necessary for the believer, to show him what holiness looks like, as well as to show him where he goes wrong and needs to repent. We might say that the law is the tangible expression of the character of God. To imitate His character, we need the law's concrete pictures.

### **B. The Law Shows Us Our Sin**

A second purpose of the law is to show us our sin. In Romans 7:7 we are told how the law worked in the Apostle Paul's life. Through the commandment "You shall not covet," Paul learned that coveting was sin. Paul then tells us in verses 8 and 9 that after he learned this, the commandment acted like a mirror reflecting all the times he would covet other things, and he saw how truly sinful his heart was. "Through the commandment, sin produced in me coveting of every kind," he says. In the end, as Paul saw how "alive" sin was in him, he also became aware of how condemned he was before God as the words of the Mosaic Covenant rang out, "Cursed is everyone who does not uphold the words of this law by carrying them out" (Dt 27:26). Through the law, he learned that he was cursed; he was a "dead" man.

The principle that we must understand here is that the law is like a diagnostic machine. If you suspected you had tuberculosis, you would go to a hospital and an X-ray machine would examine your chest. If the machine indicated that you had tuberculosis, would you go back to the hospital so the machine would give you the treatment that you needed to cure it? No, because while the X-ray machine is an excellent machine to diagnose the problem, it is completely ineffective to help you with the cure for tuberculosis. This is the way the law works. Its purpose is to show us our sin, but it has no power to produce true holiness in us.

### **C. The Law Shows Us Our Need For Christ**

If God is holy, as the law demonstrates, and we are sinners, as the law shows us, then what are we to do? We need a savior! A third purpose of the law is to show us our need for Christ.

The law was given to us by God to "lead us to Christ" (Gal 3:24). Do we understand what this means? We come to see our need for Christ as we see the holiness of God, as well as our inability to keep the requirements of the law. After we have turned to Christ, do we think that the law is supposed to stop functioning in this way? Is the law supposed to stop pointing us to Christ after we

become Christians? No, the law is ever before us to show us that we need Christ, Who alone fulfills the ideals of the law and makes us worthy to be the children of God.

Consider the following statement made by an experienced pastor. He explains: *I must confess that for many years, I did not understand how the law should keep pointing me to Christ once I became a Christian. This attitude was obvious in the way I conducted my personal life and ministry. I thought that after I got rid of my initial sins, that I was keeping God's law. You can see that I had little need for grace and the Gospel since I thought I was keeping God's law. I could not understand why others had not progressed as I had in obeying the law. And I was frustrated, because people in the first church I pastored never seemed to really change. But, sadly, I was blind to the fact that I wasn't truly changing either, because I had put my confidence in something that really had no power at all to change me. All along, I had thought that I was keeping the law, while the whole time I had become a Pharisee! I kept the law to some degree, but at the same time I had become very demanding.*

Is your ministry characterized by a "demanding" or "legalistic" love?

## II. LIMITATIONS OF THE LAW

As we have seen, the law has its place. The Bible clearly teaches that the law of God is good. Romans 7:12 says, "So then, the Law is holy, and the commandment is holy and righteous and good." However, while the law is itself righteous and good, it is incomplete as a basis on which to grow in a way that pleases God (Ro 8:3, Gal 3:21). As we will see, the law is not, nor was it ever intended to make men holy or to be the primary basis through which we relate to God (Gal 3:1-25). The law has another function. It cannot make us holy because of the following limitations:

### A. The Law Does Not Deal With The Heart

Holiness is primarily a heart issue (Dt 6:4,5; Mt 22:37-38). When the heart is changed, everything is changed. Holiness that is based on rigorous observance of the law usually grows out of the misperception that Christian maturity and holiness are a matter of behavior. This was the error of the Pharisees (Mt 23:23-28). They tried to attain holiness through rigorous observance of the law. Jesus was certainly not impressed!

Holiness is primarily a heart issue. When the heart is changed, everything is changed.

Take the example of the rich young ruler (Lk 18:18-23). He was a "good man" who followed the law. But his unwillingness to sell his possessions revealed this man's heart. For that reason, Jesus rejected him. Though he had kept the law, he was not a spiritual or holy man. A holy man would have obeyed Jesus at this point.

How do we think a Christian grows? Often we focus our attention on a list of things to do, such as read the Bible, perform good deeds, meet with the church, share our faith with unbelievers, and pray. These certainly are commands and a means of growing in our faith. But we err when we think these activities will produce holiness within us. We focus our attention on our duty to do these things, thinking that by simply doing them we become holy. We fail to deal with the issues in our heart and the reality of Christ's work within us as the basis of living by faith.

By focusing on the law as a measure of holiness, we have lost sight of the radical heart change that the new covenant is supposed to bring to the believer.

In many churches, we see conformity to regulations, but a lack of holy desire in the rest of life. Sometimes there is a rigid keeping of rules, but a lack of love for others. Outwardly, there may be growth to conform to a form of "holiness," but inwardly there may be a critical and unmerciful attitude. This is not "Christlikeness." What is often produced in our lives is "obedience" without love, and "holy activity" without faith.

The focus of the New Testament is on radical change from the inside (Ro 12:2; 2Co 5:17). By emphasizing the law as a measure of holiness, we have lost sight of the radical heart change that the new covenant is supposed to bring to the believer. Yet as we look at the church today, we don't see this transformation. Many Christians around the world do not have a heart for God. One of the



primary reasons for this is that we have turned to relying upon the law as the foundation for life and ministry and, as a result, the church shares the same weaknesses of Old Testament Israel (Ro 9:31-32).

## **B. The Law Produces Guilt**

If you accept the law as your primary way of relating to God, then with it comes a "curse." The "curse" is that the law is "all or nothing." If you are going to live according to the law, then you must obey ALL OF IT—ALL OF THE TIME (Gal 3:10). But no one can keep the law; because as God's holiness is beyond measure, His law is beyond our keeping. A constant focus on the law then produces a conscious sense of guilt, because you never keep the law well enough. Instead of making progress, you are condemned by the law. It takes away your joy, causing you to see your failure and doubt the work of Christ, the power of the Spirit, and your adoption by our heavenly Father.

When church leaders focus on the demands of the law without grace, they weigh people down with demands that no one can keep. Instead of pointing people to the answer found in the Gospel, these leaders, like the Pharisees, often create new laws to help people keep God's law. By doing this, they simply heap on a greater load, a load that no one can bear.

In Dostoyevsky's book *Crime and Punishment*, Dostoyevsky describes a scene when the main character, Raskulnikov, was driving down a country road. On his journey, Raskulnikov met another driver along the way whose wagon had become stuck in the mud. The driver began to whip his horse, trying to force it to pull the wagon out of the mud. The horse was unable because it had become too weak from trying. But the driver continued to beat the horse, thinking that the whip would give it more incentive to pull the wagon out. The driver ended up beating the horse to death.

Because God's holiness is beyond measure, his law is beyond our keeping.

This is what we do week after week, as we tell people about the demands of the law without relating to them the Gospel and the way in which faith in the Gospel gives us freedom, joy and power in our service to God. By using guilt as a motivator, we produce "obedience" without love, and "holy activity" without faith.

## **C. The Law Produces Pride**

There are some who do better than others at keeping the law. These people tend to be those with good personal organizational habits and self-discipline. Often, these people are exalted as models of the Christian life, not because of their hearts of love but because of their outward obedience to the rules.

Perhaps you are one of the ones who does better than most. Do you feel more spiritual because of your hard work at keeping the law? If you do, beware. Law-keeping and good works, especially with the result of hard work and discipline, often comes with an ugly by-product; boasting and pride (Eph 2:8-9, Php 3:4ff). The person who keeps the law through his own effort usually develops a sense of pride over his accomplishment (Ro 2:23). Pride is the last characteristic a godly person should have (Php 2:1-11; Ro 12:3).

If Abraham was right with God because of his works, then he had something to boast about (Ro 4:2). But as it turned out, he was justified by faith and therefore had nothing to boast about. On the contrary, he could do nothing but respond to God with a heart of gratitude for God's goodness to him. In the same way, the spiritual person is not proud of his spiritual standing as if he got there through his own hard work. Instead, we boast in what the Lord has done for us (1Co 1:29-31; Gal 6:14).

## **III. LIVING BY THE LAW**

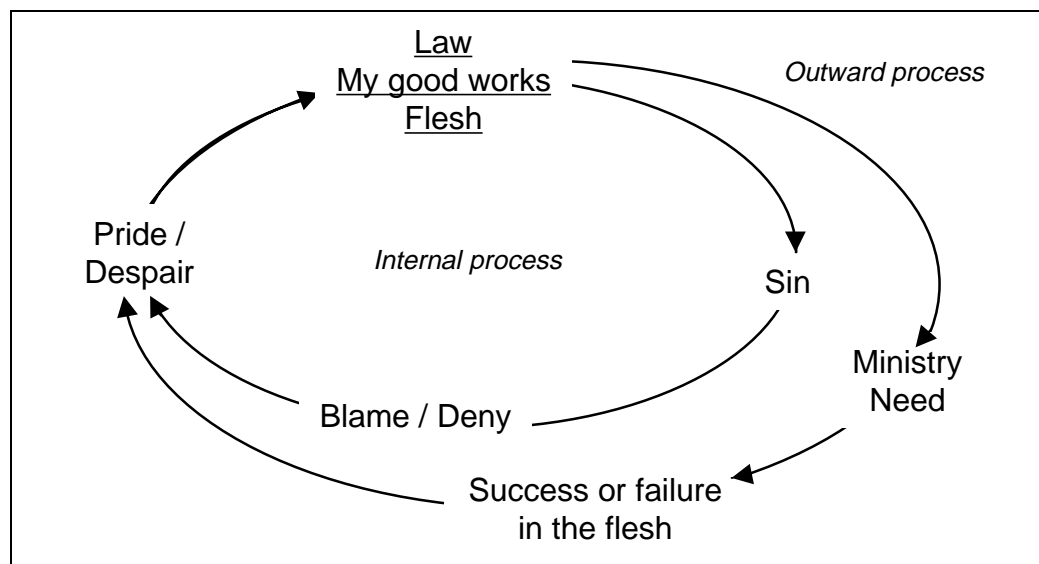
Living according to the law—legalism—could be described as living as if man must obey certain rules and regulations to win favor and rewards from God. Following the law is important. Certainly a holy or

spiritual person observes and honors the law. But observing the law legalistically, in order to gain a reward or special favor, is another matter.

Unfortunately, many people misunderstand the role of God's law and legalistically relate to God. This is seen in churches where there is a constant focus upon the demands of the law because of the widespread perception that the law makes us holy. New rules are made to keep us on track. Programs and gimmicks are designed to maintain some semblance of outward holiness. All this is done in hopes that observing these laws and regulations will bring our fleshly indulgences under control and create holiness.

Life according to the law could be described by the diagram below (figure 8.1). If our lives are based on the law then, when we become aware of sin in our lives, we often respond with defensiveness. We blame others or deny the sin. This will lead to either pride or depression, depending on how we go on dealing with our sin. If we beat our sin by our own effort—then the natural result is pride. If the sin beats us, then we tend to despair. But in either case, there is no joy. (See Paul's question to the Galatians, "*What has happened to all your joy?*" (Gal 4:15)). Outwardly, when we engage in ministry to others, if it is motivated by the law then our own efforts are on the line. The results once again are pride in successful ministry or despair because of failure.

**Figure 8.1 Living By The Law—As An Orphan**



#### IV. THE SPIRIT LIBERATES US FROM THE LAW

Christ's work on the cross changed everything between heaven and earth. Through His death and resurrection, He has conquered the law and given us the indwelling Holy Spirit, something far more powerful by which to live.

In Matthew 5:17 Jesus, having been accused of showing disrespect for the Old Testament Law, makes the following remark: "*Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them.*" Some may use this verse to suggest that the Old Testament law is still in force in the way it was in Old Testament times. However, the Greek word designated "fulfill" is the word "*plerao*<sup>1</sup>," which means, "to fulfill" as in "to complete."

Note the use of "*plerao*" in the following passages:

- "When he had finished (*plerao*) all his discourse..." (Lk 7:1)
- "After all this had happened (*plerao*)..." (Ac 19:21)

<sup>1</sup> πληρωω

- “When two years had passed (*plerao*)...” (Ac 24:27)

In other words Matthew 5:17 might easily be translated “*Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law and the Prophets; I did not come to abolish it but to bring it to completion.*” Indeed, bringing an end to the law is exactly what Jesus did, as several other NT passages indicate.

- “But now, by dying to what once bound us, we have been released from the law so that we serve in the new way of the Spirit, and not in the old way of the written code” (Ro 7:6)
- “Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us...” (Gal 3:13a)
- “So the law was put in charge to lead us to Christ that we might be justified by faith. Now that faith has come, we are no longer under the supervision of the law” (Gal 3:24-25)

As these verses indicate, Christ has conquered the law, releasing us from its condemnation. He has fulfilled the law through His perfect obedience. As we have put our faith in Christ, the law no longer condemns us! We no longer fall under its curse when we fail to obey it as we should. We have Christ's complete forgiveness and perfect righteousness, and our faith in Him fulfills the law's demands of us.

## V. LIFE IN THE SPIRIT AND FAITH IN THE GOSPEL

If the law is not our primary way of relating to God, what is? Now that Christ has set us free from the law, how do we grow in holiness? If the law does not have the power we thought, what will keep people from living like non-believers? Many Christians have lived so long in the flesh and under the law that it is difficult for them to comprehend any other way to grow. However, there is a new way to live our Christian lives and we must learn to live in this new way in order to know the true power to obey and serve in the Kingdom's advance.

Instead of legalism, the New Testament teaches that God deals with us by His grace. To understand how this can be, we need to review the common biblical analogy in which God is a father and we are His children. Any child who has loving parents can relate to the concept of grace. A loved child does not earn his way into his parents' favor; he is loved because he exists. When a child disobeys or disappoints his parents, he may be punished, but he does not have to earn his way back into his parents favor (like the Prodigal Son). No matter what he does, he remains the son and is always loved without conditions.

As God's children, we can relate to our Father by way of the **liberating power of the Gospel, through the indwelling Holy Spirit**. These we received when we were adopted as His children (Eph 1:13; Gal 4:6; Ro 8:14). Life in the spirit and faith in the Gospel ought to transform our personal spiritual lives as well as our ministry to others.

### A. Personal Spiritual Growth In The Spirit

1. *The Spirit provides a new way to obey and grow in personal holiness.*

We need to obey, but how? This very question was once asked of Jesus: “What must we do to do the works that God requires?” Jesus' answer is simple: “Believe in the one He has sent” (Jn 6:28-29). Our faith is critical to our growth in holiness.

**Table 8.2 New Way vs. Old Way**

<b><u>New way of the Spirit</u></b> <b><i>Serving 'through faith in the Gospel'</i></b>	<b><u>Old way of the written code</u></b> <b><i>serving 'under the law'</i></b>
Out of love for God in view of what Christ has done for me.	Out of fear, trying to obey God well enough to be accepted.
With an awareness of my own failure; I put my confidence in the Holy Spirit	Out of self-confidence, my own effort
From my heart	From a slavish obligation
Out of a freedom from condemnation and failure	Out of a deep concern to succeed or be condemned
Out of a gratitude for God's grace	Out of a superior attitude because I am a "keeper of the law"

The Apostle Paul sheds more light on this new way to grow in holiness. In Romans 7:1-13 he describes service "in the new way of the Spirit, and not in the old way of the written code" (Ro 7:6). What is the difference between these two kinds of living? Let's look at them contrasted:

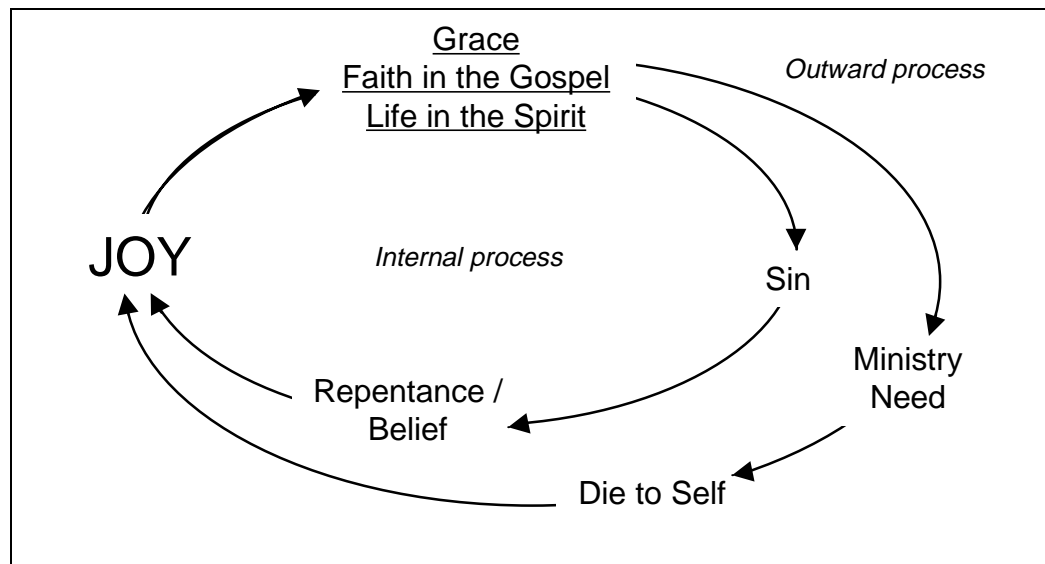
In Romans 8:1-4, we see once again the contrast between the law and the Spirit, and we are clearly told the limitations of the law. *"For what the law was powerless to do in that it was weakened by the sinful nature, God did by sending His own Son..."* (Ro 8:3). The law could not produce holiness within us because our flesh is powerless to produce holiness within us. The law is weak because we are weak.

We now live as adventurers with the Spirit. The rest of Romans 8 more fully explains this. Because we have been given righteousness and the Spirit, we are no longer frightened and alone like orphans or slaves (v. 15-17). Because of the certainty of God's love, nothing is lethal any longer. The Spirit helps us when we are weak, and He guides each day. We have the confidence to look at life as an adventure, rather than a life-long task of rule keeping. We move from one adventure to another; Christ is the conquering King and the Spirit is helping us as we go. Sometimes the Spirit will lead us into opportunities for ministry, and there will be times the Spirit will show us our sin. But in this new way of thinking, nothing is so threatening that we cannot trust the Spirit to lead us through it.

It is through faith in the Gospel that we receive the Spirit, enabling us to serve in this new way. Consider Paul's words to the Galatians: *"Did you receive the Spirit by observing the law, or by believing what you heard? Does God give you his Spirit and work miracles among you because you observe the law, or because you believe what you heard?"* (Gal. 3:2-3,5)

The diagram figure 8.3 illustrates life in the Spirit. When we become aware of sin in our lives, if we are motivated by the Spirit, we repent and believe in God's forgiveness. This of course leads to joy. Outwardly we respond to ministry needs by self-sacrifice and again joy is the result.

**Figure 8.3 Life In The Spirit—As A Son**



2. *The Spirit shows us our sin.*

As we know, the law shows us our sin, and so does the Spirit (John 16:8).

As illustrated by the circle, if we respond to the Spirit's work as a child and own it, repent of it, and move on, then we move from repentant sorrow into renewed joy. The mark of true repentance is not continued sorrow but a renewed joy for God's grace and the greatness of Christ whose blood washes us clean. The Spirit's work is to keep bringing us back to the Gospel.

How do we know if we are walking in the Spirit? One way to know is to notice how we respond to our sin. Do we establish rules and try harder using our flesh? If so, we are living according to the law. Do we repent acknowledging our weakness as well as God's power to change us? If so, then we are walking by the Spirit.

**B. The Spirit Leads Us Into Ministry**

If we are walking in the Spirit, then life is an adventure; it is an opportunity to die to self and take on whatever the Spirit has for us. At the end of it, we also have joy. However, if we are living under the law and in the flesh, then we will find the opportunities for ministry are little more than pressure. They are filled with fear of failure. And when we respond to these opportunities, they leave us with either pride or depression, depending on how the opportunities for ministry turned out.

The Spirit gives us a new approach to ministry. Serving out of faith affects our personal growth in holiness, as well as the way we minister to people. How should we seek change in others? How should we work so that others will grow into holiness? Pastor Johnny Long, missionary in Kenya, writes how we usually approach this:

*"The law supplants the Gospel in our homes and we are left with only one way to change ourselves and others—by making and enforcing rules! Instead of relying on the Holy Spirit, we rely on guilt, duty, and raw willpower to make change happen. Our self-reliance actually quenches and grieves the Holy Spirit so that things get worse, not better! In this "brave new world" where law is king, I come to believe that my rules, my teaching, my enforcement of God's laws will reform the terribly imperfect people I am forced to live with. I want them to shape up so that they'll be acceptable to me and to God (in that order)." (From Sonship For Africa manual, lesson—"Law vs. Gospel In Home and Family Relationships" by John Wade Long, Jr.)*

As we seek change (for the better) in the lives of those to whom we minister, there are three important questions we must ask ourselves:

1. *What is the GOAL of ministry to others?*

Into WHAT do I hope to see them change? Using only the law to minister to others may result in outward conformity as opposed to heartfelt obedience. Take, for example, the little boy whose mother wanted him to sit down in a chair because he had disobeyed, and she wanted to give him some parental advice. "Young man, you sit down!" she commanded. He kept standing. "Sit down!" she insisted. He remained standing. "Vladimir, if you don't sit down, I am going to take a stick and whip you!" she finally threatened. Vlad sat down, but staring at his mother, he said, "I may be sitting down on the outside, but I'm standing up on the inside." Although his action was right, his heart was still disobedient.

2. *What MINISTRY STYLE will I use to reach this goal?*

HOW do I think these changes will take place? God did not design the law to change man's heart. Rather, it is a tutor to drive him in powerless desperation to Jesus Christ who can change him as he walks in the Spirit by believing the Gospel. Our flesh rejects the idea of our weakness and that only the Gospel can change people, so we try to change behavior by making and enforcing rules, and handing out punishments. The great danger here is that this exercise of the law can change people's behavior, but again, the heart is seldom changed.

3. *How can I personally MODEL the change I am seeking?*

What role does MY being changed have in motivating others to change? The type of leadership we exercise toward others in our church planting will say more about our spiritual maturity than anything we teach. Are we servants who lead by our example, so that people say, "That is what I want to become," or do we try to force people to change as we place demands upon them? (1Pe 5:3).

Our model for ministry is the way in which God our Father ministers to us, by grace. Thus our ministry should be characterized by grace. If our life and ministry does not move beyond the law to focus upon the liberating power of the Gospel, through the indwelling Holy Spirit, then we will become useless signposts. While we might point people in the direction they should go, we will fail to lead them to the vital source that enables them to make the journey.

## CONCLUSION

Do you see the radical difference between the Law and the Gospel? Do you see the difference between serving in the "new way of the Spirit, and not in the old way of the written code?" Certainly, the law of God has its place. It helps us to understand the holiness of God, to see our own true sinfulness. But the law was also given to lead us to Jesus Christ. This does not stop when we become Christians but is the ongoing function of the law in the believer's life. It is only as our eyes turn to Jesus, in faith, that we grow to know the love that compels us to walk in the newness of the Spirit.

If we are ever to see church planting movements, the Gospel, and not the Law, must have its rightful place at the center.

If we are ever to see church planting movements, the Gospel, and not the Law, must have its rightful place at the center. "For the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life." May God give us eyes to see *our* true need for the Gospel of Jesus Christ and a heart to believe that all of our needs are met in Him.

## QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION, REVIEW AND APPLICATION

- Do your preaching and counsel to others usually focus upon the law, because you think that it empowers people to change?
- What are the purposes of the law and the Gospel in the Christian life?
- Why is the law powerless to produce holiness within us?
- How does faith in the Gospel enable us to live in newness of the Spirit?
- What is legalism? Do you think that it is a denial of the Gospel's power and putting trust in the law? Why or why not?

- What does it mean that we are “not under law” in Galatians 5:18, though we are still called to obey God’s commandments?

## **ACTION PLAN**

- Review Table 8.2, “New Way vs. Old Way.” Prayerfully and honestly evaluate your own obedience to God. Do your actions show that you serve through faith in the Gospel or do you serve under the law?
- On a separate sheet of paper, answer the following questions:
  1. What is the goal of my ministry to others?
  2. What ministry style will I use to reach this goal?
  3. How can I personally model the change I am seeking in others? What changes do I need to make in my own life and ministry?

## **SOURCES**

Long, John Wade, Jr. “Lesson 14: Law vs. The Gospel in Family Relationships,” in *Sonship for Africa, Version 1*. Oreland, PA: World Harvest Mission, 1999.

SPIRITUAL  
CHARACTER

LESSON 10

# Repentance As a Way Of Life

## ☛ Lesson Purpose

The purpose of this lesson is to help the trainee understand how a life focused on the Gospel leads us to a lifestyle of repentance and faith. The Gospel should create faith in our hearts so that we will be truly honest about our sin, able to release it in repentance before God and experience the joy of God's great grace and mercy.

## ☛ Main Points

- True repentance involves being honest about our sin instead of making excuses about it or denying it.
- True repentance does not involve penance since penance shows a lack of trust in God's forgiveness.
- Sincere and humble believers ought to repent whenever the Holy Spirit reveals sin.

## ☛ Desired Outcomes

When the content of this lesson has been mastered, each participant should ...

- Understand that a life focused upon God's grace should lead to an honest dealing with sin and a joyful, continual, and complete surrender to the Lord.
- Grow to have a lifestyle that is increasing in the knowledge of God, repenting more deeply of sin, and discovering the true riches of God's grace found in Jesus Christ.
- Become one of the chief repenters in his congregation and a minister of grace as he himself experiences the great grace of God.

## ☛ Appendix

10A "The Sinner's Place" by Stanley Voke

## ☛ Suggestions to Trainers

Use personal examples and stories to show how repentance has impacted and deepened your own spiritual life and how God honors those who are repentant.

## INTRODUCTION

We have been learning about our adoption by God and how this should affect our thinking and functioning like sons instead of orphans. Our adoption, which has brought us into a new relationship with God, should then lead us to focus upon the Gospel and not simply the law. From this we learn not only what we are supposed to do as Christians, but we also experience the motivation and power to truly grow in holiness. We also talked about life in the Spirit and how this produces a far greater holiness than if we bound our life to the law, because the Spirit changes our hearts and not simply our behavior.

Heart changes require first the breaking of the old heart. This happens in the repentance that we experience at salvation. And what we discover is that God continues this work in our sanctification by breaking our hearts in order to make them new. As Proverbs 6:23 says, "Corrections of discipline are the way to life." Here we discover God's way to life-reproof, which corrects the wayward heart, responded to in humility. This is not only the way which introduces us to the life God offers us in Christ, but it is the way of life continually leading us back to the grace of God which again and again renews our hearts.



It is this way of life that we now consider. If we could capture the central idea of this lesson, we might say, "Repentance is the way of life."

## **I. CHARACTERISTICS OF TRUE REPENTANCE**

Now for us to get a picture of what true repentance is and the fruit that it produces in our life, turn to Psalm 51. Here we find one of the most graphic descriptions of genuine repentance. This is David's psalm of confession, as his own heart has become broken over his sin. From this psalm we are taught the traits of true repentance, the reason why repentance must be a way of life, and also the blessings of this life of repentance.

### **A. Acknowledge Your Sin**

The first trait of true repentance is a humble acknowledgment of our sin. David confesses in verse 3, "For I know my transgressions, and my sin is always before me." One of the great diseases of sin is that it blinds and deceives the heart. David lived under this deception for nearly a year, until Nathan the prophet confronted him with his sin through a story. But the moment that Nathan reproved David, David responded by humbly confessing, "I have sinned."

#### **Example**

Once a pastor had a temper that would periodically flare up even during meetings with fellow church leaders. When this pastor admitted to a friend that he was praying that God would give him self-control, the friend wisely stated: "Brother, you are praying about the wrong thing—your problem is not a lack of self-control, your problem is with anger. If God gave you self-control you would not be any better because you would only use it to hide the sin which is anger."

This pastor had problems facing his sin and in such a condition could never truly repent and change. In Psalm 32, David recounts the time when he was aware of his sin, but refused to acknowledge it (v 3), and here we see the key difference between awareness of sin and repentance of sin. He refused to acknowledge that what he did was wrong. Sometimes, we simply don't see our sin, but often times we know we have sinned, but our heart refuses to admit that what we have done is truly wrong. We often make excuses, such as, "The person deserved what I did to him." or, "I couldn't help it, I lost control of myself." Through these excuses, we escape from honestly facing our sin and acknowledging our wrongdoing. But the repentant heart sees and admits the sin that has been committed. It owns up to the sin, and acknowledges that what we have done is truly wrong.

### **B. Realize The "Sinfulness Of Sin"**

The second trait of a repentant heart is that it realizes what sin truly is. David confesses in Psalm 51:4, "Against you, you only, have I sinned, and done what is evil in your sight..." Obviously, David had sinned against other people, but a repentant heart realizes that our greatest offense and our greatest guilt rest before God, because the essence of all sin is placing ourselves above God. Sin is like throwing God down to the ground and seating ourselves upon His throne. A truly repentant heart grieves over such an arrogant attitude.

#### **Example**

At a Christian youth camp, a teenage boy and girl were caught in an immoral situation. They were both terribly embarrassed and when they were taken to the office of the camp to be sent home, the girl began to cry uncontrollably. After about ten minutes of listening to this sobbing the counselor asked her, "Why are you crying like this? Is it because you were caught and you are afraid of what your parents will say? Or is it because you realize that what you have done is against God and you are sorry for how you have offended Him?" Immediately, the girl stopped crying, because she realized that she hadn't even thought about her wrong before God.

For the truly repentant heart, great remorse comes from the realization of what sin truly is. We realize the sinfulness of sin. We have dishonored God and exalted ourselves above Him. This is the greatest shame to the one who knows that God is his Creator. It is also a great shame to those

who know the incredible love of Christ. Though He is our Creator, He humbled Himself by dying on the cross to rescue unworthy creatures like us. Knowing God's incredible love, the repentant person is crushed by the realization that he has violated and abused this amazing love.

This kind of remorse leads us to confess to God along with David, "you are proved right when you speak and justified when you judge." Whatever God's judgment will be upon my sin, He is blameless and I am worthy of the judgment. A sense that we deserve God's just judgment comes from a repentant heart that knows what its sin truly is.

So true repentance sees and acknowledges the sin. It also understands the sinfulness of sin, as it is committed against God.

### C. Be Brokenhearted Over Sin

In true repentance, the heart is broken and contrite. There is a brokenness over sin. Psalm 51:17 says, "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, You will not despise." Here we are told that God does not delight in the outward expressions, which can become cheap imitations that don't reflect the true attitudes of the heart. In Israel's day, an animal sacrifice was often being made while the heart was never truly repentant, and God was repulsed by this outward show (Isa 1:10-15).

God does not delight in the outward expressions, which can become cheap imitations that don't reflect the true attitudes of the heart.

A broken and contrite heart is one that has been crushed and brought low. It does not soar on high, being filled with pride. It takes the low place, the sinner's place, as it grieves over pride, which had no basis, and rebellion which wrongfully usurped the supreme Creator. He alone is over all things. It is a heart that is subdued and made tender by the grief of our failure to love the greatest Lover of our soul.

### D. The Dangers Of Apathy And Penance

All of us know how we struggle with the issues of the heart. Sin deceives us so that we easily become phonies, and our outward expressions are often empty containers lacking the true desires of our heart. Let us be aware that while it is easy for us, on the one hand, to not sense the true "sinfulness" of sin. On the other hand, it is easy to turn our repentance into a penance by which we try to pay the penalty of our sin through our own suffering. Both are just as repulsive in the eyes of God, because both are full of arrogant presumption. To be apathetic about sin is to belittle our sin and to think more highly of ourselves than we ought. But to try to make ourselves worthy of God's forgiveness through our penance is to fail to humbly acknowledge our true need for God's grace and a Savior who alone paid the terrible penalty of our sin and who provides the only righteousness acceptable in the eyes of a perfectly holy God.

...to try to make ourselves worthy of God's forgiveness through our penance is to fail to humbly acknowledge our true need for God's grace.

The great danger for the "religious" person is to despise the apathy, but not the penance, because he doesn't see the arrogant presumption of penance. He thinks that he is expressing his unworthiness, but his deceived heart in reality is expressing arrogance in the worst degree. He is assuming that his suffering for sin will make him acceptable to God. Here again he is making little of his sin, little of the holiness of God, and little of Christ's sacrifice on the cross, while he is making much of himself.

Someone might say, "Well, I am a Protestant. I don't do penance for my sin." Do you really think so? How long do you weep over your sin and beat yourself inside for the wrong you have done? For hours or days? Do you sometimes feel that God cannot truly forgive you, because your sin is too terrible? Do you sometimes try to do something to make up for your sin so that you think that God now accepts you? These are forms of penance and are not true repentance, and if your repentance doesn't produce the "fruit of repentance," maybe it is because you are not repenting, but simply doing penance.

In true repentance, the heart is broken and it is humbled (brought low). But if our sorrow leads us to become preoccupied with our sin and our unworthiness, then our repentance is turning into penance. A wise Christian used to advise people, "For every one look you take at sin, take ten looks at Christ." This is good advice for us as well, that our repentance may not become a practice of penance which leads to a lifestyle of misery and self-suffering for our sin.

True repentance is a way of life because it creates within us a renewed heart for God as we see our sin and acknowledge it. True repentance is a way of life because our heart is broken and humbled and made to love God again. But true repentance has its counterfeits, as does everything else in this world. Therefore, we must let God's Word once again instruct us, that we might not fall into the snares of something that looks like repentance, but does not bear the fruit of true repentance.

## II. TRUE REPENTANCE AS A WAY OF LIFE

To live a life characterized by repentance the following concepts should be understood:

### A. The Father is Waiting to Forgive Us

Most people will not be honest enough to acknowledge their sin unless they are certain that they will be able to bear the punishment. Children may hide important information from their parents out of fear of punishment. We can be the same way with God and others when we are guilty!

We have nothing to fear when we repent of our sin. We cannot bear the punishment for our sin. Jesus Christ already has! So that "there is now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus" (Ro 8:1). We can be honest about our sin since we know that God is waiting to forgive us (1Jn 1:9, Heb 4:16).

God invites us to the deep wells of His grace, that we might not be afraid to sincerely draw near to Him in all His holiness. God knows that honesty and transparency grow best in the soil of unchanging love, and this is what He offers to us. So God has established a new covenant.

Christ has fulfilled the law that grace may be given in full. God has created a new heart in us, so that sin no longer rules. Instead sin becomes an old, despised master as we grow to love God.

God knows that honesty and transparency grow best in the soil of unchanging love, and this is what He offers to us.

### B. Repentance is an Honest Admission of our Real Problem

The idea that repentance is a way of life seems strange to some Christians, because it is easy to think that we are no longer, as Luther put it, "real, great, hard-boiled" sinners. Notice David's admission as he comes to have a repentant heart: "Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin my mother conceived me" (Ps 51:5). Certainly, this is an important statement, which speaks of the seed of sin that is inherited from each generation since Adam and Eve committed the first sin. But David is not concerned with giving us a theological statement on original sin here. Rather, this is an honest admission of his real problem, and it would do us well to take to heart his sober confession.

A lifestyle of repentance is an important part of our Christian walk, because our problem with sin is very real and very deep. Even after the Apostle Paul had become a Christian and had known the Lord for more than 20 years, he admitted his struggle with sin. In Romans 7:15 he says, "I do not understand what I do. For what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do." Sin is not just isolated behavior patterns of wrongdoing. Rather, it is a part of our fallen nature and an integral part of our natural attitudes, beliefs and behavior deeply rooted in our alienation from God. This captures the real problem that we have with sin, and therefore our need for ongoing, deep-down, heart-breaking repentance. If we are to experience deep, ongoing renewal in our spiritual life, we must also soberly admit our real problem with sin.

Sin is not just isolated behavior patterns of wrongdoing. Rather, it is ... an integral part of our natural attitudes, beliefs and behavior deeply rooted in our alienation from God.

### **C. God is Committed To Working In Us**

Only when we understand our real problem with sin will we be encouraged with the next verse in Psalm 51: "Surely you desire truth in the inner parts; you teach me wisdom in the inmost place" (v. 6).

God had created in David a heart that knew the truth again, as David's heart was broken over his sin. He says in Psalm 32:2 "Blessed is the man ... in whose spirit there is no deceit." God had taken away the deceit of sin in David's heart, and his repentance was the fruit of God's work.

Be encouraged that in spite of our real problem with sin, God is at work to produce truth and wisdom within us. Our times of deep repentance are really the work of God creating truth in our inner being and wisdom in our spirit. Therefore, we should open up our hearts for God to freely do this work within us. We need His help. If we are sincere about walking in the truth, then we can pray as David did: "Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there be any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting" (Psalm 139:23-24). It is not easy to really want our hearts to be broken, but it is through this brokenness that we walk in truth and wisdom.

### **III. BLESSINGS OF TRUE REPENTANCE**

The truths in these lessons focus upon our new relationship with God based upon His grace, and a life of freedom and power. Usually when we think about grace and freedom, we get nervous about the fruit which all of this "liberation" might produce. Does teaching grace encourage sloppy Christian living? The answer is 'no,' it does not encourage sloppy Christian living. On the contrary, teaching grace results in people so in love with the Father that they want to obey His every command.

The Bible teaches the blessings of a repentant heart. David asks that God would respond according to His loving-kindness in restoring what he had before he had sinned. David anticipates that he would experience God's grace again (v1), that he would be clean from his sin (v2), that he would have joy (vv. 8, 12), that his sin would be erased so that God does not see it anymore (v9), that he would have a right spirit (v10, 12) and that he would have the Holy Spirit (v11).

We can be certain that God will do this for us, that these are the blessings of repentance promised to us, because we are told in 2 Corinthians 1:20, "For no matter how many promises God has made, they are 'Yes' in Christ." All the promises by God are "yes" to us who are in Christ. In all the ways in which David asks God to respond to his repentance, we find promises or principles which assure us that this is truly how God will respond to our repentance.

In the end, in verse 17, David expresses the final and greatest of these blessings when he says as a statement of fact, God "will not despise a broken and contrite heart." We may question His pleasure in us at times, but God will never turn away from a heart that is broken over its sin. This is always the way back to God, and we will always find a welcome when our heart is broken over our sin. He delights in this kind of heart and will draw this heart near to Himself.

The nearness of God is the great reward of a life of repentance. Jesus tells the repentant Christian in the Laodicean church I will "come in and eat with him and he with Me" (Rev 3:14-20). This speaks of the intimacy that we will know as our hearts continue to be broken over sin and we enter into a deeper fellowship with God. This happens as we make repentance a way of life.

### **CONCLUSION**

In this lesson we have been talking about David the king of Israel. The fact that David was a king did not mean he was exempt from repenting. On the contrary, his leadership position meant he needed to model true repentance to all Israel. Wise pastors and church planters teach their congregations to repent. In fact, leaders should be among the first to admit their struggles with sin. Furthermore, they ought to be willing to repent of their sin to offenders. When the leader can do this, a congregation or fellow ministry associates can be more intimate with God as well.

## **QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION, REVIEW AND APPLICATION**

- What is true repentance?
- What are the dangers of the heart after we see our sin?
- What is the difference between repentance and penance? Define both.
- How can I recognize when my repentance has turned into penance?
- List the blessings of repentance requested by David in Psalm 51:1-2, 7-17. Write the Scripture reference that states the promise or principle that makes these blessings sure to us who are in Christ.
- Do you feel that God rejects you when you have repented of your sin? Why do you sense this rejection?
- Do you think that you should be the “chief” repent in your church? Why or why not?

## **ACTION PLAN**

Read “The Sinner's Place” by Stanley Voke (See Appendix 10A).



# The Sinner's Place

## BY STANLEY VOKE

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***"Nothing in my hand I bring, Simply to Thy Cross I cling."***

The hardest thing for anyone is to take the sinner's place. So hard in fact that many never take it at all, while others, having once been brought there, do not care to come there again. None are by nature fond of the sinner's place. Yet if we do not come there, we cannot really know Christ or taste the sweetness of God's forgiving grace. If we avoid it, we might as well say "we have no sin" and so deceive ourselves.

### **TAKING THE SINNER'S PLACE**

The sinner's place is where we accept without excuse that we are sinners. We may admit only one sin such as jealousy or pride; we may be convicted of something that seems small, but in so doing we have come again to the sinner's place—though we may have been Christians for many years. Behind each sin God may show us things more serious until not one but many things are admitted and we are brought to admit the whole radical evil of our nature. A man once confessed he had stolen a rope. He brought it back. The next day he returned, this time bringing a cow he had been unwilling to admit was on the end of the rope! When we take the sinner's place, we admit the truth about ourselves—the whole truth.

The sinner's place is where we take blame. We stop excusing ourselves and saying, "I was not really myself when I did that." Instead we bow our head saying, "Yes, Lord, that was me; that is what I am really like." We no longer blame our nerves, our circumstances, or other people. Should someone point out some fault or criticize us, even unkindly, we do not argue and justify ourselves or try to explain things away. We even admit to the critic that if he knew us as we really are he would find much else to criticize. We save endless time and breath when we come quickly to the sinner's place. Indeed things would be different in many a church if the members met regularly there at the sinner's place.

This is the place David took as, when Nathan challenged him, he bowed his head saying, "I have sinned." Here Job stood and cried, "Behold, I am vile," and Isaiah said, "Woe is me! For I am undone." Here the publican prayed, "God be merciful to me a sinner"; here Peter fell at the feet of Jesus saying, "Depart from me; for I am a sinful man." In this place, the prodigal son confessed "Father, I have sinned and am no more worthy." Paul often knelt in the sinner's place and many a saint has watered it with his tears. If we have not come here, we have not yet begun with God (2Sa 12:13, Ps 51:4, Job 40:4, Isa 6:5, Lk 18:13, Lk 5:8, Lk 15:18).

We do not like the sinner's place for we are afraid it will hurt our pride. So we fight, argue, put others in the wrong, excuse ourselves, and in fact do anything rather than take the sinner's place where God awaits to forgive and set us free.

### **AVOIDING THE SINNER'S PLACE**

Often, we avoid this place because we will not call sin, sin. We talk of shortcomings, failures, weaknesses, frailties, faults, disabilities, propensities; anything but sin. A rose by any other name is just as sweet, and sin by any other name is just as evil—to God. The trouble is we make our own definitions instead of accepting God's. In the Scripture, sin is anything short of the glory of God, anything that misses the mark of moral perfection or crosses the line of God's will, anything that is twisted from the plumbline of Divine righteousness whether it be in motive, desire, intention, instinct, thought, habit, look, word, deed, reaction or relationship. If done heedlessly or in ignorance, it is still sin and to call it something else needing neither repentance nor forgiveness is to avoid the sinner's place.

We can refuse to see sin as sin. Maybe we are active people who have no time to bother with such trivialities. We have our positions and programs to maintain. Like Naaman, we are busy winning our laurels while we cover our leprosy. We address meetings, chair committees, take on jobs, give money to this and that—in fact do anything—except confess ourselves spiritual lepers who need to wash and be clean. We are as those in Jeremiah's day who rushed like horses into battle but never stopped to repent or say, "What have I done?" We are so very busy—too busy ever to stand in the sinner's place (Jer 8:6).

We may avoid this place by assuming the role of correctors. With our doctrines neatly tied up, we are evangelical experts with a keen sense of theological smell. We love to correct but not to be corrected. Like the Pharisees of old we keep ourselves out of the sinner's place by putting others in. We are so full of knowledge that we have no room for a broken and contrite heart. Yet even Henry Martyn, great saint as he was, recorded in his diary, "I have resolved never to reprove another except I experience at the same time a peculiar contrition of heart!" He found he needed to live in the sinner's place.

We may avoid this place by making our security in Christ a pretext for non-repentance. We are assured of our salvation, yet somehow we are no longer convicted of sin. We are like the small boy who, when sent from the table to wash his hands, returned with a big smile and the astonishing remark, "Well, they've had such a wash this time they'll never need to be washed again."

We are by faith sons of God and citizens of heaven. But we are still sinners as well. We still need to wash at "the fountain opened for sin and for uncleanness" (Zec 13:1). Grace will never lead us into sin, but it will ever convict us of it, and sin thus revealed will always lead us back to grace.

It is possible to avoid the sinner's place by misapplying the blood of Christ, speaking of it as "covering" or "protecting" as did the blood of the Passover lamb. The sacrifice of Christ on Calvary, however, was for sin. It is an *atonement*, not simply a *protecting* agent. If therefore we need it, we do so as sinners coming for cleansing, not as sinless ones needing only to be secured from evil outside ourselves. When we speak only of the blood protecting us, we are avoiding the sinner's place.

A student of Spurgeon (a well known English preacher) once preached before him on "The Whole Armor of God." A conceited young man, he dramatized his message, putting on the armor piece by piece, until, having fortified the whole, he waved the sword of the Spirit and cried triumphantly, "And where is the devil now?" Mr. Spurgeon leaned forward and said, "Young man, he's inside that armor!" We must watch that we do not let Satan in by forsaking the sinner's place. Our hearts are deceitful above all things and, like the mythological Proteus, will adopt any guise to hide their true nature. Beneath our spiritual phraseology and church reputation we are but poor sinners, who need to be cleansed every day in the blood of Jesus.

## **FINDING GRACE IN THE SINNER'S PLACE**

Is it not strange that the place we sinners avoid is the very one the sinless Savior took? Surely if He were the Son of God He would have come down from the Cross! Miracles, mighty sermons, even resurrection itself we could expect of such a One, but not a baptism in Jordan with publicans and harlots, or a criminal execution with murderers and thieves! Yet this is where He came, for His face was set towards this place from all eternity.

There on the same level a sinner met Him that day. Unlike his comrade who died blaming others and cursing God, this dying thief admitted guilt and found forgiveness. Peace and paradise came to him as he took the sinner's place and found Jesus there. This is the paradox of grace. He who insists he is right will be pronounced wrong, while he who admits he is wrong will be declared right. The righteousness of God is only given to those who stand in the sinner's place.

Here and here alone is the place of true peace, for here we cease our strivings and find our God. Here is rest of heart and heaven's door. Here we cast away our pretense, and admit what we really are. Here we come to Jesus to be cleansed by His precious blood. Here the Holy Spirit fills and holiness is found. Here are the springs of revival. This is where the whole church needs to come again and again. It is the place of truth and grace and freedom—the sinner's place. When were you last there? In fact, are you there now?

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# PRAYER

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PRAYER

LESSON 5

# Prayer and Fasting

## ☞ Lesson Purpose

To take a fresh look at the roles of prayer and fasting in the church planting process.

## ☞ Main Points

- Prayer is essential to the accomplishing of the spiritual work of church planting.
- Fasting was a biblical method of intensifying prayer in both the Old and New Testaments.

## ☞ Desired Outcomes

When he has mastered the content of this lesson, each participant will ...

- Know biblical teaching on prayer and fasting.
- Be consistent in his or her dependence on God through prayer and fasting.
- Pray and fast for the church planting task.

## INTRODUCTION

As church planters are involved in the many activities necessary to see a new church planted, it is easy to neglect spiritual disciplines. If we attempt to do spiritual work in the flesh, discouragement may set in as the desired results are not forthcoming. At this point the church planter needs to stop and take a fresh look at the role of prayer and fasting.

### I. THE ESSENTIAL NATURE OF PRAYER

God has revealed Himself to be omniscient: He knows all things. God is also omnipotent: He is able to do all things. Why then should we pray? If something is God's will, won't He just do it? Or if we do not pray, does that somehow impede the all-powerful God from working?

#### A. Old Testament Examples—God Is Waiting For His People to Pray

a. *Exodus 3:7:*

The Israelites were in captivity in Egypt, and God appeared to Moses and said, "...I have heard them crying out...and I am concerned about their suffering. So I have come down to rescue them...."

b. *Exodus 32:7-14*

Israel had turned away from God and made a golden calf to worship. God said to Moses, "Now leave me alone so that my anger may burn against them and that I may destroy them. Then I will make you into a great nation." But Moses prayed to the Lord, reminding him of his promises. "Then the Lord relented and did not bring on his people the disaster he had threatened."

c. *2 Chronicles 7*

After Solomon built the temple, he prayed, dedicating it to God. God responded by sending fire from heaven to consume the burnt offering and sacrifice. And his glory filled the temple. He told Solomon, "I have heard your prayer and have chosen this place for myself as a temple for

sacrifices.” Furthermore, he promised that “if My people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven and forgive their sin and will heal their land. Now my eyes will be open and my ears attentive to the prayers offered in this place.”

## **B. New Testament Examples—There Is A Relationship Between Action Taken In Heaven And Our Prayers On Earth**

### *a. James 5:13-18*

In this passage, the apostle James talks about the prayer of faith and confession of sin. He says, “The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective” (v. 16). James then goes on to cite the example of Elijah who prayed for no rain for three and a half years. God responded to Elijah’s prayers by withholding the rain. Then Elijah prayed for rain and God sent it.

### *b. Luke 6:12-16*

Just before an important decision (the choosing of the twelve disciples), Jesus went up on a mountain to pray and continued to pray through the night.

### *c. Matthew 26:36-44*

As Jesus approached His death, He prayed in agony, “My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will.” The second time Jesus cried out, “My Father, if it is not possible for this cup to be taken away unless I drink it, may your will be done.” Jesus cried out a third time, praying the same thing.

### *d. Matthew 6:5-18*

Jesus taught His disciples to pray. Even though the “Father knows what you need before you ask him,” (v. 8). Jesus encouraged the disciples to ask for their daily needs to be met, to be kept from temptation, and for the Father’s will to be accomplished on earth as it is in heaven.

### *e. Matthew 7:7-12*

Jesus, in speaking to His disciples, tells them, “Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you.” Jesus encouraged the disciples not to be afraid to express their needs and desires in prayer to the Father.

## **C. Some Conclusions Regarding the Essential Nature Of Prayer**

God can do anything that He desires to do, but it seems that He has determined to wait, to postpone His work until His people express their agreement in prayer before He acts. From the examples and teachings of Scripture, it appears that God has linked Himself to our prayers, choosing to accomplish His purpose through these prayers.

God respects man’s will and He desires man to exercise his will in union with God’s will and in opposition to the will of Satan. Prayer is the expression of our desire for God’s will and is one way we work together with God in accomplishing His purposes. Prayer is not a battle to convince and compel God to change His mind to suit our own pleasures. Rather, through prayer we discern His will and then bend our own will to God’s desires and purposes. Therefore prayer has the dual purpose of:

- Expressing our thoughts and desires to God
- Discerning His will for us

## **II. THE ROLE OF FASTING**

Fasting is our deliberate abstinence from some or all food or drink for the purpose of undistracted prayer. Also there may be times of withdrawal from activities and the fellowship of friends for a time in order to devote one’s self more fully to fellowship with the Lord—to seek Him and His will. **Fasting is a spiritual discipline, not a commandment.** Therefore, if a person has medical problems or for some

other reason cannot fast, that person should not be made to feel guilty or be accused of sinning. Fasting is done in some cultures and religions as a ritual or tradition. The function of biblical fasting is to focus one's undivided attention on the Lord. It should never be done merely as a ritual.

### **A. The Teaching Of Christ**

Jesus taught fasting and fasted himself (Mt 4:2). His disciples may not have fasted while he fasted while with them (Mk 2:18-19). However, even this text clearly states that Jesus expected that the disciples *would fast after He was taken up to heaven*. He also taught His disciples regarding fasting in prayer. In a context of teaching about prayer, twice Christ said about fasting, "When you fast...do not be as the hypocrites..." (Mt 6:16-17). Note that He said "when" not "if," as if this were a regular practice of the disciples.

### **B. The Example Of The Early Church**

In the book of Acts, we see prayer, fasting and church expansion all going hand in hand. As the church relied upon the Lord, the Gospel advanced.

#### **1. Acts 13:1-3**

As the leaders of the church in Antioch ministered (prayed) unto the Lord and fasted, the Holy Spirit came to them with instruction and guidance. The expansion of Paul's ministry and the expansion of the church into Asia Minor and Europe began with prayer and fasting.

#### **2. Acts 14:23**

Paul and Barnabas committed the elders of the new churches into the Lord's care with prayer and fasting. Through prayer and fasting, Paul and Barnabas gained the courage to release control of these elders and how they would lead their churches into the Lord's hands.

### **C. The Nature Of Fasting**

Christ taught that to receive heaven's answers we need to ask, seek and knock (Mt. 7:7). Each word indicates a deep intensity of seeking. Deliberate fasting reveals a yearning desire, a persistent burden of the heart that is greater than the desire for physical food. The motivation for fasting seems to be two-fold. The believer enters into a more intense seeking of God for the dual purpose of:

- Spiritual strengthening
- Advancement of the kingdom of God.

As shown in the instruction of Christ and the example of the early church, fasting is an expected and a vital aspect of prayer.

## **QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION, REVIEW AND APPLICATION**

- Have you ever spent time in prayer and fasting? What was your experience like? Did you sense a spiritual strengthening or see God answer your prayer in a special way?

## **ACTION PLAN**

- Read Matthew 6:16-18.
- Describe how the "hypocrites" looked as they fasted. Why did they do this?
- Describe how a person should look when he fasts.
- How can we keep our fasting from becoming a ritual?
- Plan and experience the spiritual discipline of fasting. Below are a few ways that some Christians do this. You may wish to follow one of these, but the form is up to you.
  - Abstain from some food and drink for a specific time.

- Abstain from all food but drink juices and other fluids for a specific time.
- Abstain from a specific food but not all food for a specific time.
- Set aside one day a week/month that you will fast.
- Make a list of specific things for which you will pray when you fast.
- Record in your spiritual journal your experiences during your fast. How did you feel? What did you learn about yourself? About God?

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PRAYER

LESSON 6,7

# Concert of Prayer

## PRAYING TO SPREAD THE GOSPEL

### ☞ Lesson Purpose

To provide opportunity for the church planters to have united prayer for themselves and for other church planters throughout Central/Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union.

### ☞ Main Points

It is important to pray for the spread of the Gospel beyond our local area.

### ☞ Desired Outcomes

When he has mastered the content of this lesson, each participant will ...

- Know how to better use biblical prayers as a model for his praying.
- Be strengthened through the prayer of others.
- Pray not only for the local church planters, but also for church planters working in other countries.

### ☞ Suggestion to Trainers

Lead the trainees in praying through the prayer of Paul in Colossians 1:3-14, keeping the instruction time at a minimum so that most of the time can be spent praying.

It is suggested that trainees pray for church planter trainees in other countries who are going through the same training program. The countries where this is presently happening are Albania, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Romania, Russia, Slovakia, Serbia and Ukraine. For current information, contact the Alliance office in Budapest.

## INTRODUCTION

One of the best ways to pray is to use biblical models. For this concert of prayer, follow the prayer of the Apostle Paul for the Colossians given in **Colossians 1:3-14** as your outline for praise, worship, and prayer. Note that this prayer begins and ends with thanksgiving to God (cf. Fig. 6.1). The fact that this is a common biblical pattern stresses the importance of praying *with thanksgiving*. We will follow the same cycle in this concert of prayer. We will progress from thanksgiving, to the Gospel, to knowledge, and back to thanksgiving again.

### I. THANK THE FATHER—COLOSSIANS 1:3-5

Read together verses 3-5: *"We always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, when we pray for you, because we have heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of the love you have for all the saints—the faith and love that spring from the hope that is stored up for you in heaven and that you have already heard about in the word of truth, the Gospel that has come to you."*

#### A. Thank the Father for the saints

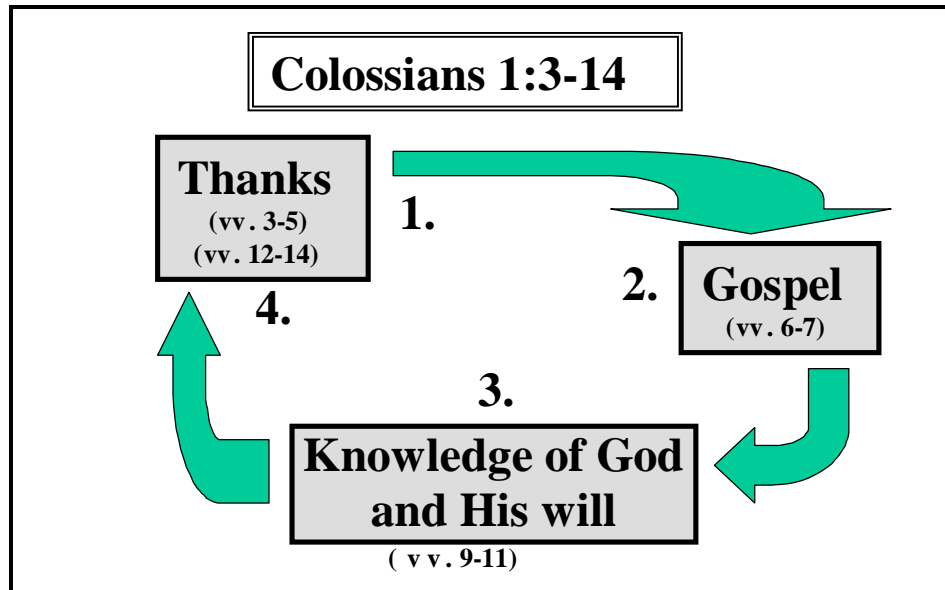
- in this training (specifically, by name).
- in your church.
- in your life: those who have had a spiritual influence in your life.

## B. Thank the Father

- for the love He has shown to you.
- for the faith He has given you.
- for the hope that you have in the midst of a hopeless world.
- that the Gospel came to you.

Note: Be specific in your prayers. Thank and praise the Father for specific instances in your life where God has shown you love, faith, hope, and when you received the Gospel.

Figure 6.1 The Prayer Cycle



## II. PRAY FOR THE GOSPEL TO BE HEARD THROUGHOUT THE WORLD—COLOSSIANS 1: 6-7

Read together verses 6 and 7: "...the Gospel that has come to you. All over the world this Gospel is producing fruit and growing, just as it has been doing among you since the day you heard it and understood God's grace in all its truth. You learned it from Epaphras, our dear fellow servant, who is a faithful minister of Christ on our behalf, and who also told us of your love in the Spirit."

- Pray that the Gospel would bear much fruit in the lives of people you have witnessed to (Be specific in your prayers).
- Pray that the Gospel would bear fruit in the places where others are planting churches. (The trainer will have a list of countries where Church Planter Training is going on now.)
- Pray for other missionaries that you know, that their ministry would result in much fruit.
- Pray that God would call more faithful ministers to take the Gospel to the ends of the earth.

## III. PRAY THAT GOD WOULD FILL YOU WITH THE KNOWLEDGE OF HIS WILL—COLOSSIANS 1:9-11

Silently read verses 9-11: "For this reason, since the day we heard about you, we have not stopped praying for you and asking God to fill you with the knowledge of his will through all spiritual wisdom and understanding. And we pray this in order that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and may please him

*in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God, being strengthened with all power according to his glorious might so that you may have great endurance and patience..."*

**A. In the spaces below, list the reasons that Paul prayed that they would be filled with the knowledge of his will through all spiritual wisdom and understanding. What were the intended results? The first two are completed for you.**

1. *That the believers may live a life worthy of the Lord*
2. *That the believers may please God*
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_
6. \_\_\_\_\_

**B. Using the list you completed in part A above, pray these things for your fellow-participants in this training.**

#### **IV. GIVE THANKS TO THE FATHER—COLOSSIANS 1:12-14**

Read together aloud verses 12-13: *"...and joyfully giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in the kingdom of light. For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.*

- A. Praise the Father for bringing you into His kingdom.**
- B. Praise the Father that you no longer live under bondage to Satan.**
- C. Praise the Father that you have been redeemed.**
- D. Praise the Father that your sins have been forgiven.**
- E. Praise the Father that you can call him "Abba" or "Daddy."**





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# LEADERSHIP

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LEADERSHIP

3

LESSON

# Spheres of Leadership

## ☞ Lesson Purpose

The purpose of this lesson is to help the trainees identify where they need to focus their leadership development efforts.

## ☞ Main Points

- Church planters need to make training of new leaders a high priority.
- Effective leadership training requires that a church planter spend more time and effort with those who will become leaders and multiply the ministry.

## ☞ Desired Outcomes

When the content of this lesson has been mastered, each participant should . . .

- Be convinced that leadership training should be a priority for his or her time and effort.
- Know how to use the concept of 'Spheres of Leadership' to help plan leadership training efforts.

## INTRODUCTION

One of the most difficult decisions that leaders face is how to use their time. Demands are endless. There are never enough hours to get everything done. What must be done, and what can wait? The answers are not simple, but there are some general principles. One of the most important guidelines is that new leaders must be trained in order for any ministry to grow and expand. This is especially true with the planting of churches. Without ongoing development of new leaders, the process will stagnate and die.

Every church planter should be involved in the development of new leaders. But even then, there needs to be some kind of guidance concerning which leaders to train, and how much time to invest in each one. Jesus is the best example of how to maintain this balance.

## I. THE EXAMPLE OF JESUS

Jesus came to earth in order to pay for our sins, and to establish His Church. This Church would be His instrument to preach the Gospel to all nations. Considering the huge task that faced Jesus, it is truly amazing that He chose to spend His time as He did. He could have done incredible miracles every day, and spend all His time preaching to the multitudes who came to see them.

Indeed, Jesus did many miracles, but not daily, and not nearly as many as He could have done. Furthermore, He clearly chose to spend most of His time training twelve men rather than the multitudes. Instead of reaching as many people as possible, Jesus trained a handful of leaders who would reach others. The results were incredible. Although the powerful Roman Empire viciously persecuted the young, new Church, it survived and grew until Emperor Constantine himself became a Christian. Clearly Jesus' unusual method works.

Instead of reaching as many people as possible, Jesus trained a handful of leaders who would reach others.

A close look at the ministry of Jesus shows that He seems to have dealt with four distinct groups of people. These groups were:

- *The Three* – Jesus repeatedly took Peter, James and John apart from the other disciples and showed them more about His nature and purpose. Examples include Matthew 17:1, Mark 5:37, Mark 13:3, and Mark 14:33. As we look to the Book of Acts, we see that these three played a much more prominent role in the development of the Church than did the other disciples.
- *The Twelve* – The twelve apostles enjoyed a special relationship with Jesus. They were chosen for this honor from among the many disciples that followed him (Lk 6:13). Although the other disciples would play an important role in the new Church, the twelve (except for Judas) would provide the leadership. They were therefore a priority for Christ's time and effort.
- *The Disciples* – As we have seen above, there was a larger group of 'disciples' who were not chosen to be among the twelve. This group also left their homes and lifestyles in order to follow Him (Lk 14:27). The total number apparently changed often. On one occasion, many of them left Jesus (Jn 6:66). In Luke 10:1, the group was large enough for Jesus to select seventy-two of them for special ministry. After His resurrection, He appeared to more than 500 (1Co 15:6). And a core group of 120 devoted themselves to prayer as they waited for the promised Holy Spirit (Acts 1:15).
- *The Crowds* – Large numbers of people followed Jesus, listening to His teaching and waiting to see His miracles (Mt. 4:25; 13:2). We know that they numbered up to 5000, counting only the men (Lk 9:14). Some of them believed, and some did not. The people included in them ranged from disciples to Pharisees who wanted to catch Jesus in some fault.

**Figure 3.1 Spheres of Jesus' Leadership**

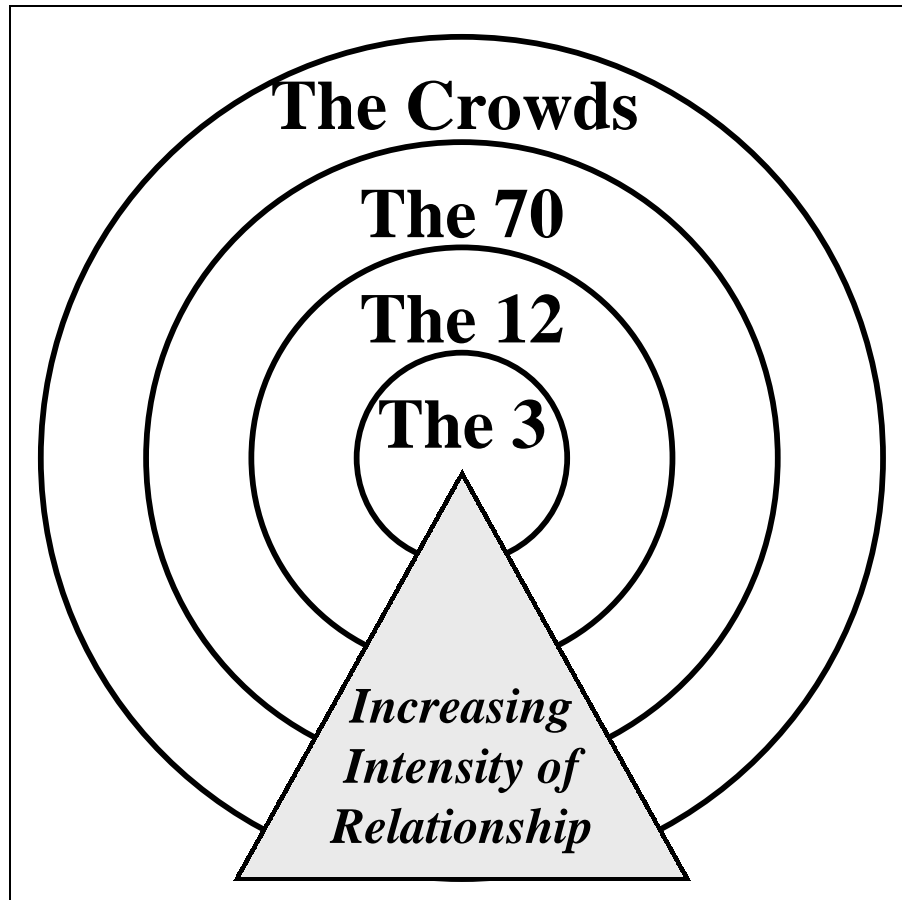


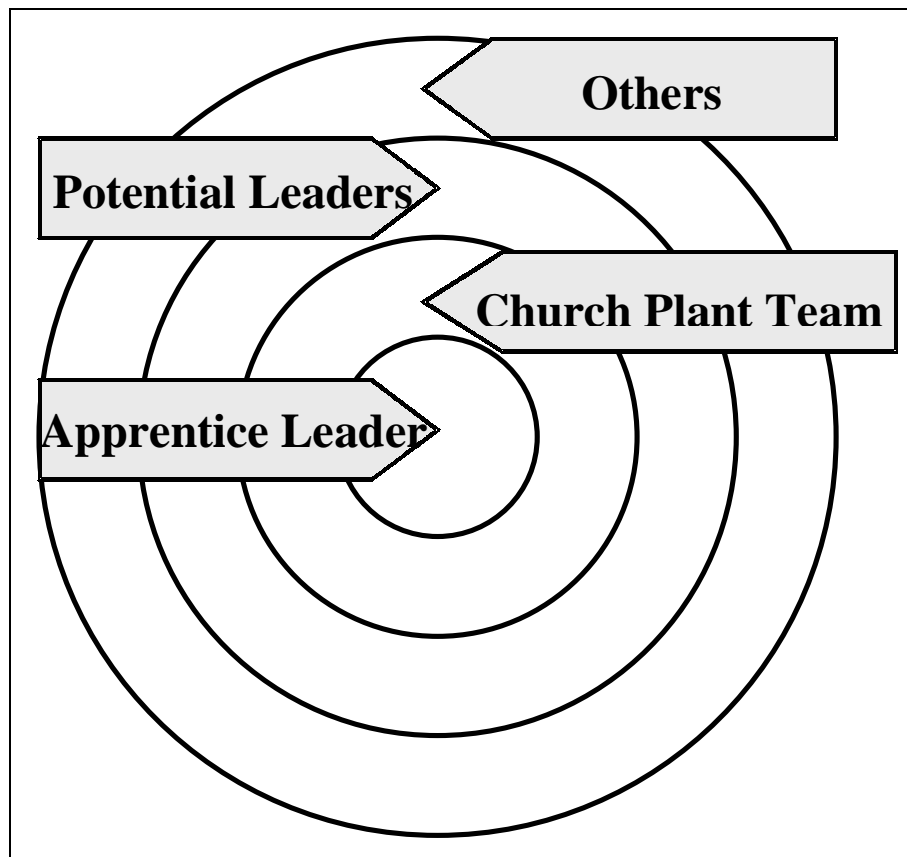
Figure 3.1 illustrates these various groups that followed Jesus as a series of spheres. The intensity of the relationship increases as we move from the crowds in the outer circle toward the inner circle composed of Peter, James and John.

As we look at Jesus' ministry, He seems to set a higher priority on the formation of the spheres nearer the center. As we move from the outer to the inner circle, He spent more time, revealed more truth, and expected more in return.

## II. THE CHURCH PLANTING SPHERES OF LEADERSHIP

Church planters should also follow the example of Jesus by focusing their leadership training efforts on the appropriate people. If you were to draw out your relationships as spheres, it might look something like Figure 3.2. On the 'outside' would be the general group to whom you minister—including both believers and unbelievers. The next level in would include those believers who seem to have potential as future leaders. Further in would be the church planting team—those with whom you are working to plant the church and who are already involved in the ministry. The center would be the person (or perhaps 2-3 people) with whom you are working most intensely to prepare him or her for leadership.

**Figure 3.2 Church Planters Spheres of Leadership**



As you look at Figure 3.2, there are several key points that you should notice:

- The closer one is to the center, the more time and effort you should spend developing them for leadership.
- You should be working to some degree with *everyone* in your spheres, since you cannot be sure who will or will not become a good leader in the future.
- Ideally, those in the outer spheres will continually move to the inner ones as they grow and mature, and as the apprentice leaders are released for ministry.
- Because you spend most of your time with the inner spheres, the other people with whom you work need to be carrying on the ministry to the 'outer' spheres so that they are not neglected. You will be the 'equipper' and they will be the 'ministers.' This model is biblical (Eph 4:11-12).

- Apprentice leaders will most likely be members of the church planting team that makes up the next spheres. This is similar to Peter, James, and John who comprised the inner Three, but were members of the Twelve.

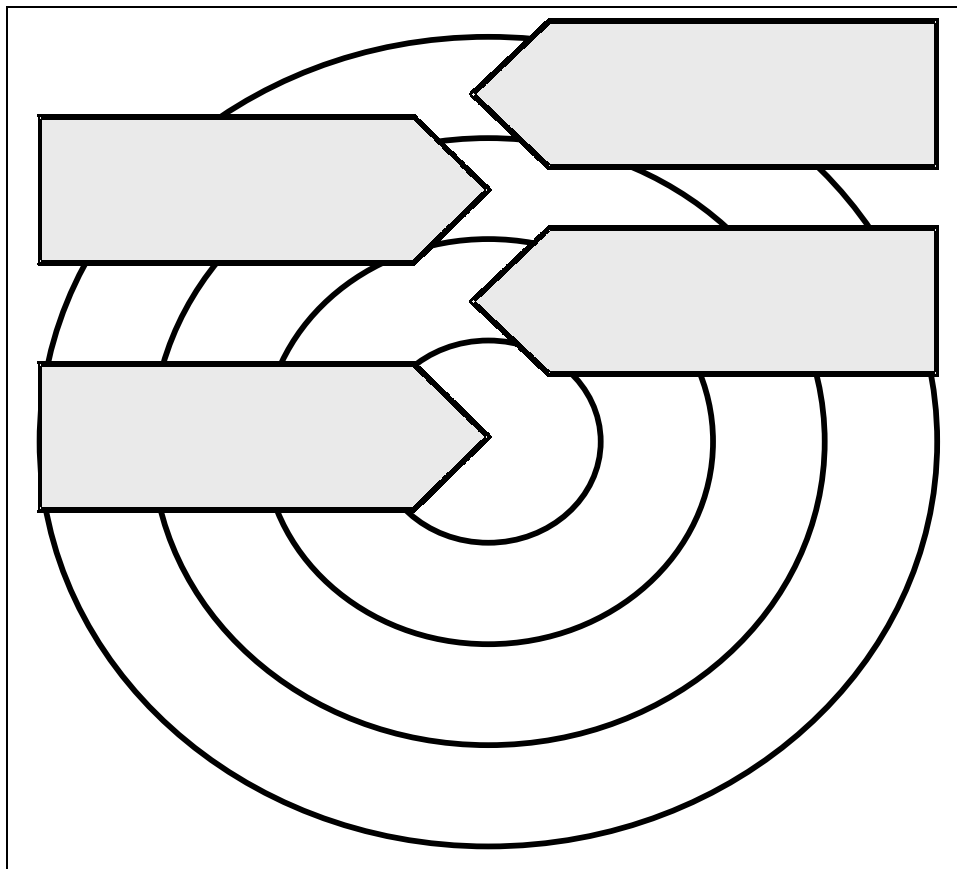
### III. YOUR SPHERES OF LEADERSHIP

What about your situation? Who would fit into your spheres? Take a few minutes and fill in Figure 3.3 with the names of the individuals and groups to whom you minister that would best be described by each of the spheres of leadership.

You may have a formal church planting team, and you may not. The ideal situation would be to begin a new church plant as a team, for the reasons already explained in this material. Unfortunately, the ideal is not always possible. If you already have a team, the spheres should be easy for you to fill in. If not, consider the following ideas and fill it in the best you can:

- If you don't have a 'formal' church planting team, perhaps you have an 'informal' one. Is there a small group of committed individuals with whom you are working closely with the goal of planting the new church? Consider them your team, even if it is not 'official.' But as you lead them using the principles in this material, you might want to discuss the possibility of forming a more organized team in the near future.
- Sometimes you have to begin a work alone, such as in a new area with no known believers. If this is your situation, you can only fill in the outer circle, but you should start planning now how you will train new believers and move them up through the levels as soon as possible. Your situation is far from ideal, and it is doubtful that you will be very successful in planting the new church unless you can begin to find people for the inner spheres.

**Figure 3.3 Your Spheres of Leadership**



- If you have doubts about whether people should be in a 'higher' circle, write their name in with parenthesis around it. This will remind you to spend the necessary time to evaluate these people,

and to develop learning activities to see if they are indeed faithful. If you find that they are not, you can then remove them from that circle.

- Don't worry about having a lot of people in the inner spheres. Jesus was only able to intensely disciple three—Peter, James, and John. Don't be concerned if you are not able to accomplish more than the Lord. Having only one apprentice is better than having none. And it is much better to have only one and train him or her well, than to train several poorly.
- If you just can't think of anyone who might be in the inner spheres, you need to begin serious, specific, intense prayer that God would raise up leaders from within the new church plant.

Now that you have filled in your spheres, think about how you use your time and energy. If you have people at every level, you should be concentrating your time near the center. Are you? How much more time do you spend with those in the inner spheres than the outer ones? What kind of activities do you do with them? Are you consciously developing leadership and ministry skills in them?

Assuming that you are now spending enough time with the leaders and potential leaders, are the outside spheres being neglected? You will not have enough time and energy to minister to them alone and still develop leaders. It is imperative that you learn to delegate ministry to those who work with you. You need to be an equipper and resource person for those who are doing that ministry. How are you doing in that?

## **QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION, REVIEW, AND APPLICATION**

- How long will it take for a new believer to move through the spheres to the inner circle? That is about how long it will take to establish the church. Is this an acceptable time?
- How high a priority is leadership training in the eyes of most pastors in your area? How will this help or hinder church growth and the planting of new churches?

## **ACTION PLAN**

Use your completed Figure 3.3 to develop a plan to help those in each circle develop as leaders. Then critically evaluate your plan to see if it is possible for you to implement it. Will you have enough time to spend with the 'inner' circle? How much? How often? Will someone minister to the 'outer' circle? Who? When? How? Make any needed adjustments to your plan, and then discuss it with your mentor. Then do it.





LEADERSHIP

LESSON 4

# Introduction to Teamwork

## WORKING WITH OTHERS

### ☞ Lesson Purpose

This lesson explains how working together with others in a church plant can increase the effectiveness of the church planter by complementing his abilities.

### ☞ Main Points

- Teamwork is more effective than working alone.
- Teamwork involves a group working together on a common task.

### ☞ Desired Outcomes

When the content of this lesson has been mastered, each participant should . . .

- Understand the benefits of including others in ministry versus working alone.
- Understand the biblical basis for teamwork.
- Be committed to teamwork for effective church planting.

### ☞ Suggestions to Trainers

This lesson about teamwork relates to both formal church planting teams, and also to more informal groups of believers working together to plant a new church. It would be helpful to ask if any of the trainees are working on formal teams, and then decide which kind of teamwork would be the most helpful focus for your trainees.

## INTRODUCTION

A typical church leader may find his congregation wandering aimlessly, even with his very clear direction. He might say to himself, "I can't get the congregation moving, even though I'm using every ounce of energy I have. I have to keep driving the people constantly just to keep the things done that we have going now. If I stopped pushing, our church would simply be adrift." How sadly true these words are for so many churches. Strong direction from strong leadership has, over the years, lulled many congregations to sleep. They begin to move only when they are pushed, and to do only as much as they are instructed to do (Adapted from Kilinski, pp. 159, 160).

"Work alone" leaders, like the one described above, believe the only way to lead is to use personal influence and charisma to motivate, push and persuade the masses. For someone who takes this approach, success is limited to the number of people that he can influence and the extent of his personal ability and creativity.

## I. WHAT IS TEAMWORK?

Teamwork involves working together with others on a task (such as planting a church), rather than doing it alone. As such, teamwork requires an agreed-upon goal that the group is working to accomplish. By doing the work together, the members of the group (or team) make use of the varying gifts and abilities of each member, as well as the increased amount of time and effort each can contribute to the task.

Teamwork involves working together with others on a task, rather than doing it alone.

Teamwork might take the form of a formal ministry team, with a focus on starting a new church. In this situation, there would normally be a recognized team leader, and perhaps some kind of official

agreement spelling out the task and the responsibilities of each member. This kind of arrangement has many advantages. Roles are clearly defined, and so is the goal. Usually, there is a strong system of accountability that keeps each team member effectively contributing to the common goal. However, teamwork should not be limited only to such formal situations.

Even when a formal 'team' does not exist, or when cultural issues hinder a team's formation, teamwork can and should be used. Almost any difficult task is easier when a group works on it together. This is especially true when the task is a new church plant, where countless man-hours are needed to evangelize, disciple, and edify potential church members. One person attempting such a task alone usually gives way to frustration and exhaustion, rather than to the reaching of the multitudes. Teamwork is a better way.

Almost any difficult task is easier when a group works on it together.

Even informal groups working together to plant a church will function more smoothly if there is one person who is recognized as the 'leader.' Hopefully, that leader will be functioning as a servant-leader, building up the other members, rather than "lording it over" the group. This lesson focuses on that "leader" and how he can create an atmosphere that fosters teamwork. There are several characteristics common to both formal and informal teamwork:

- The ministry vision (goal) is determined by the group.
- Decisions are made by the group.
- Problems are owned by the group.
- The members of the group are mutually accountable to one another.
- Each member uses his or her strengths to contribute to the successful completion of the task.
- Someone is recognized as 'the leader.'
- The group accomplishes more than the individuals could do alone.

## II. BIBLICAL BASIS FOR TEAMWORK

### A. We Were Created to Be 'Together'

God calls his children to work together. We see this principle as early in the Bible as creation itself. God first created Adam but soon declared "It is not good that man should be alone." God then created Eve to be a "suitable help mate for him."

Solomon, in all his wisdom, also understood that we need each other.

*"Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their work:*

*If one falls down, his friend can help him up.*

*But pity the man who falls and has no one to help him up!*

*Also, if two lie together, they will keep warm.*

*But how can one keep warm alone?*

*Though one may be overpowered, two can defend themselves.*

*A cord of three strands is not quickly broken" (Ecclesiastes 4:9-12)*

### B. Leaders Should Not Work Alone

Moses had enormous responsibilities as the leader of the Israelites enroute to the Promised Land. Moses accomplished much and was faithful as a leader, and yet, if we examine his faults, we notice that he worked alone too much. We do occasionally see Joshua and Aaron at his side, but more often we see Moses acting as the sole individual responsible for the multitudes. There were times when this became too much for Moses and he felt himself to be a victim of the people (Ex 17:4; Nu 11:10-14).

When Moses was reunited with his father-in-law Jethro in Exodus 18, we see that Jethro was very impressed with all the God had done through Moses (Ex 18:1-12). But when Jethro noticed that Moses was the sole judge and leader for all the people, he immediately told Moses that what he was doing was "not good." Moses apparently thought that serving the people alone in this way was commendable. But he needed help to lighten the workload and make sure that the work was done properly. So Jethro set up a plan by which Moses could share this responsibility with others (Ex 18:17-26). Later in a similar situation, when Moses was sad about the rebellion of the people, God saw that Moses needed support and established the 70 elders to help 'carry the burden' (Nu 11:16-17).

Moses serving the people alone was "not good."

### C. Working Together Is the Normal Pattern for New Testament Ministry

We see teamwork again at several points in the New Testament. Jesus called His disciples and worked with them as a group. When Jesus introduced them to ministry, he multiplied their efforts by sending them out 'two by two' (Mk 6:7, Lk 10:1). Peter went with *other Christians* to evangelize in Caesarea (Ac 10:23). The Holy Spirit set apart Paul and Barnabas as the first missionary team (Ac 13:2). After the first missionary journey, this team multiplied into two (Ac 15:36-41). Paul had an open door for ministry, yet he held off from taking the opportunity because he was alone at the time (2Co 2:12-13). When leaders were appointed in the early church, normally a group of elders was appointed to lead each church (Ac 14:23).

The reasons for the biblical emphasis on teamwork is obvious: in the multiplicity of counselors there is great wisdom (Pr 15:22), and no one person has all the gifts (Eph 4, 1Co 12). We need one another. Ministry today should benefit from the advantages of teamwork. As few as 2-5 people working together can drastically increase the growth of the new church. In your church plant, look for those who seem to have a vision similar to yours, and ask them to pray about joining you in ministry.

Teamwork can dramatically increase the growth of the new church.

## III. CHARACTERISTICS OF EFFECTIVE TEAMWORK

### A. A Common Vision and Understanding of the Task

A group of people cannot move together if they are not going in the same direction. Teamwork requires that each member knows the goal towards which the group is working. Some formal teams have a purpose statement, which in one sentence explains why they work together. In other situations, the purpose statement of the church could be the common vision that keeps a church planting team working together.

If you have not taken the time to discuss and agree on a goal with those you work with, do so as soon as possible. This process in itself can be a very valuable experience. As you talk about the purpose of your group, the personal passions, desires and preferences of each member may become clearer. These desires may not be made known otherwise. As the unique passions and desires of team members are discovered, consider how they can be incorporated into an overall vision. Often you will find that God has brought together just the right "mix" of gifts and abilities in order to enable you to accomplish the task.

Incorporate the passions and desires of group members into an overall vision.

However, when people working together have incompatible approaches or conflicting goals, working together is not always possible. In such a case, either the members must give up particular desires, or they form a separate team, as Paul and Barnabas did in Acts 15:36-41.

Review your common goal on a regular basis with your group. Do not assume that each member understands it (or remembers it!), so that it does not have to be revisited.

Here are some examples of purpose statements:

- Our team exists to plant a healthy, multiplying church in \_\_\_\_\_.

- Our group exists to minister to alcoholics in \_\_\_\_\_ in such a way that they will find salvation from their sin and freedom from their addiction.
- We are working together to facilitate the birth and development of a saturation Church planting movement in \_\_\_\_\_.
- Our group exists to plan and lead meaningful worship when believers gather at \_\_\_\_\_ Church.

## B. Time Spent Together for Prayer and Planning

The participation of group members is most valuable when people know what is happening and can adequately communicate ideas, needs and desires to one another. This can be accomplished by meeting together weekly (or more often) and doing the following things:

### 1. *Pray Together*

Nothing binds people together in unity as much as prayer. Effective church planters and church planting groups are committed to prayer. They pray together for personal needs, ministry goals and also for the lost with whom they have contact.

### 2. *Discuss Individual Ministries*

Teamwork requires taking time to hear what individual members are doing. Hearing first hand how other team members are contributing can help the team grow closer, build morale and teach ministry skills.

### 3. *Plan Together*

Planning together can be a very valuable experience. Some leaders make plans and then tell their group what they are to do. When group members are inexperienced or immature, they may need the leader to temporarily do this. But more often, the leader should involve those working with him in the planning process. People are most committed to the things that they themselves have been involved in creating.

The leader should involve those working with him in the planning process.

Planning maximizes the potential of teamwork. This planning could involve: 1) looking at the common task, 2) determining what the group needs in order to reach its goal 3) identifying ministry resources 4) developing strategies for reaching goals.

### 4. *Edify and Equip Each Other (As Needed)*

A good leader will facilitate the development of the ministry skills of each member of his group. He will set aside time to help them to be more effective in preaching, evangelism, or caring for the sick. Reviewing the ministry of the recent past may provide the teachable moment when someone is willing to learn.

If the group that you lead does not have regular meetings, then consider starting them according to the pattern above.

## C. Relationships Characterized By Love

Teamwork assumes a willingness to harmonize and work together. Group members need to possess a willingness to be open about themselves. Closeness is gained by acceptance, shared experiences and time. Therefore, mutual respect, understanding, encouragement and an emphasis on serving one another are key elements to teamwork.

Group members need to possess a willingness to be open about themselves.

In order to achieve this kind of closeness, relationships among the group members must be based upon a special kind of love—God's love. This love does not love another person because of his personality, looks, ability or intelligence. It is motivated by God's infinite and unconditional love for us. When we apply this kind of love we encourage and build up one another as Paul says to the

Thessalonians (1Th 5:11). Jesus Christ is the model for the leader who wants to learn to “consider others better than themselves” (Php 2:1-8).

One test of love is the ability to handle conflict. Conflict is normal, but when there is disagreement, it must be acknowledged and discussed. Groups that love one another have the confidence to discuss even things that they do not agree on. They recognize that each member is important to the group and will not let disagreement destroy their relationship.

#### **D. Clear and Diverse Roles**

Many people in ministry look for people exactly like themselves to join with them in church planting. This is a big mistake, and it ignores the fact that we are a body with many parts, and many different gifts (1Co 12:12-31). A variety of people can better accomplish complex tasks. For example, a group planting a new church together might need people responsible for the following:

A variety of people can better accomplish complex tasks.

- Evangelism
- Discipleship
- Worship
- Finances/facilities
- Assimilation of new members
- Cell group ministry
- Ministry training
- Care for the sick
- Hospitality

Teamwork demands that members understand each other's responsibilities. If members do not know who is responsible for certain areas, then frustration levels are bound to rise, and the ministry will suffer. If no one is in charge of worship, the group might find itself scrambling each worship time, since no one knows the plan for the service. When no one is in charge of finances, members may not have the funds necessary to purchase evangelistic literature when it is needed.

Teamwork is most effective when each member knows his or her particular role, and is placed in situations that build on his or her strengths. When this happens, the result of the group's efforts multiply, because every member is working to their maximum potential. A primary responsibility of the group leader is to see that this happens.

Teamwork is most effective when each member is placed in situations that build on his or her strengths.

#### **E. Honest and Open Communication between Members**

A major barrier to good communication is the tendency to evaluate and to judge without really listening. When a group is practicing teamwork, they seek to understand others before giving advice or sharing their own opinion. This kind of communication shows love and respect for the other person.

This kind of communication happens only when we take the time to understand problems before offering a solution. One good rule of thumb is to always restate a problem or the opinion of another before responding. Restating gives a chance for feedback and correction. It also shows understanding and respect.

When communication problems arise among your group members, remember the following:

- Ask questions to clarify the thoughts, feelings or opinions of others.
- Recognize and admit your personal desires, agenda and ambitions.
- Maintain unconditional acceptance even when you do not agree.

If the conflict is interpersonal, remember:

- Speak only to the individuals who are involved in a situation or issue (Mt 18:15).
- Do not enter into gossip or slander (2Co 12:20).
- Watch your words (Jas 3:1-12).
- Bless, and do not curse (Ro 12:14).

## QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION, REVIEW AND APPLICATION

- What advantages are there for church planters to work together with others, rather than working alone? What are some disadvantages to this approach?
- Teamwork requires a common vision. What are three things you can do as a leader to help those who work with you formulate and remember a common vision?
- Sometimes meetings are seen as “boring” and a “waste of time.” What kinds of meetings would be a waste of time, and what kinds of meetings would be beneficial to a group working together to plant a new church?
- In your particular context, what roles are necessary to start a new church (e.g. evangelist, discipler, etc.)? Is it necessary to have all the roles present before you start a church?

## ACTION PLAN

List four key tasks that need to be accomplished in your church planting task. Consider to whom you might assign responsibility for each task, based on the designated gifting and strengths of others believers who might be willing to help. Then decide how you might recruit and train the person for that task. Then, do it.

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- Engel, James F., Jane Overstreet, and Terry Sparks. *Leadership: Making Human Strength Productive*. St. Davids, PA: The Center For Organizational Excellence, Eastern College, 1996.
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LEADERSHIP

LESSON 5

# Team Development

## ☞ Lesson Purpose

The purpose of this lesson is to explain how a Christian leader can form a church planting team and develop the character and abilities of the members.

## ☞ Main Points

- The key to team formation is commitment to a common task, such as planting a new church.
- A leader's first responsibility is to develop the character and abilities of the team.
- Teamwork doesn't just happen—it evolves through four stages.

## ☞ Desired Outcomes

When the content of this lesson has been mastered, each participant should . . .

- Know the basic steps to form a church planting team.
- Understand that the role of a team leader is to develop the character and skills of each team member.

## ☞ Suggestions to Trainers

Although the material in this lesson concerns developing the members of a church planting team, it is applicable to a cell group leader, who also must strive to develop his or her cell group members in similar ways. It is also valuable for a pastor who seeks to develop members and other leaders in his church.

## INTRODUCTION

The advantages of planting a church as a team have been discussed in previous lessons. Perhaps you already have a team. Maybe you don't, but would like to have one. You might be undecided and would like to know more about how a team would work. This lesson helps to address those issues.

In many ways, the success of a church planting team hinges on the leader. Often, it is the responsibility of the leader to recruit the team members. And while a church planting team should work together to make decisions about vision, task and purpose, there still must be one person, the leader, who is responsible to help them strive toward their vision and reach the goals they have set. This lesson will assume that you are that person who will form and lead the team in the successful planting of a church.

## I. FORMING YOUR TEAM

Even if you already have a group of people working with you to plant a new church, you may or may not have a team. Much has been written about the essence of a team. There is also a tremendous amount of research on how to lead a team. The majority of this research is secular, and while it offers helpful ideas, is not sufficient to a good church planting team. As you assemble a team for the spiritual task of church planting, you will need to seek individuals who have three basic characteristics:

- Commitment to the goal of planting a church.
- Godly character.
- Agreement to maximize strengths through clear roles.



It is desirable, but not necessary, that potential team members have all these characteristics. If they are lacking in some of the traits, they might be able to grow in those areas during the church planting process. Your role as a leader will be vital in these kinds of situations. You will need to be aware of the weaknesses and encourage growth regularly. If you are successful, your team can model the fact that all believers are growing and maturing—none of us is perfect. This might make team members more approachable and sensitive to the new contacts that you will seek to win.

On the other hand, planting a new church is a serious undertaking. There might not be time or energy enough to sort through known weaknesses in the team as you are working to evangelize the lost and make disciples of them. Jesus did not pick perfect men as His disciples, but He also spent three and a half years changing their lives before they were ready. How much time do you have? The presence of immature members on the team could possibly cause great harm through ungodly actions or attitudes. Therefore, you will need to evaluate both the strengths and weaknesses of each potential member carefully and prayerfully before you make a decision.

If you are still forming a team, evaluate these qualities in each potential member carefully. If you already have a team that includes some members who are weak in the three qualities listed above, you should make it a priority to begin helping them to overcome them. Failing that, you will need to consider asking them to leave the team.

#### **A. Commitment to the Goal of Planting a Church**

The importance of a common goal can hardly be overstated. This seems logical. In the sporting world, for example, ‘successful’ teams are often composed of people that might not be particularly compatible in any other situation. In fact, they may not even like one another. But a strong commitment to the goal of winning the game can often help them overcome their differences and work/play together.

If a group of unbelievers can demonstrate such cooperation and sacrifice for the sake of sport, how much greater might be its effect on a church planting team? If each member of your church planting team maintains a strong and vital commitment to seeing the church planted, they will be much more understanding and flexible in their ministry relationships. This strong commitment might already exist, or you might have to help them develop that vision. Either way, you will also have to help them continue to *maintain* that commitment.

#### **B. Godly Character**

Consider for a moment the disciples that Jesus chose. They were hardly an educated or ‘capable’ group. Jesus evidently looked for another qualification. You should do the same. What was the qualification? When the disciples were faced with choosing men to help them, they looked for men “full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom” (Acts 6:3). They apparently did not care about education, age, ability, experience, or the other characteristics that we might consider important. Rather, they valued godly character.

Paul he told Timothy to choose “faithful” (Gk.*pistos*)<sup>2</sup> men (2Ti 2:2). In the same verse, he says they will be “able” to teach others. The word “able” or “capable” is a translation of the Greek word *ikanos*<sup>3</sup>. This translation has led some to emphasize education or ability, in contrast to Acts 6. A study of the usage of *ikanos* shows that a better translation would be “worthy.” Consider the same word in Matthew 3:11—“whose sandals I am not fit (*ikanos*) to carry.” Do you think John wasn’t “able” to carry sandals, or that he was not “worthy?” In Matthew, *ikanos* is translated as “deserve.”

This means that Paul agrees with the apostles that godly character is the most important issue. Without godly character, we are not “worthy” of serving the Lord. It should be the primary quality that you look for in a

Godly character is the most important issue.

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<sup>2</sup> ΠΙΣΤΟΣ  
<sup>3</sup> ΙΚΑΝΟΣ

team member. God will bless such choices. Whether your team members are men, women, or both, the same biblical principle would seem to apply. This does not mean that training, ability, or experience are of no value. But these things are secondary to a godly, Spirit-filled life.

### C. Agreement to Maximize Strengths through Clear Roles

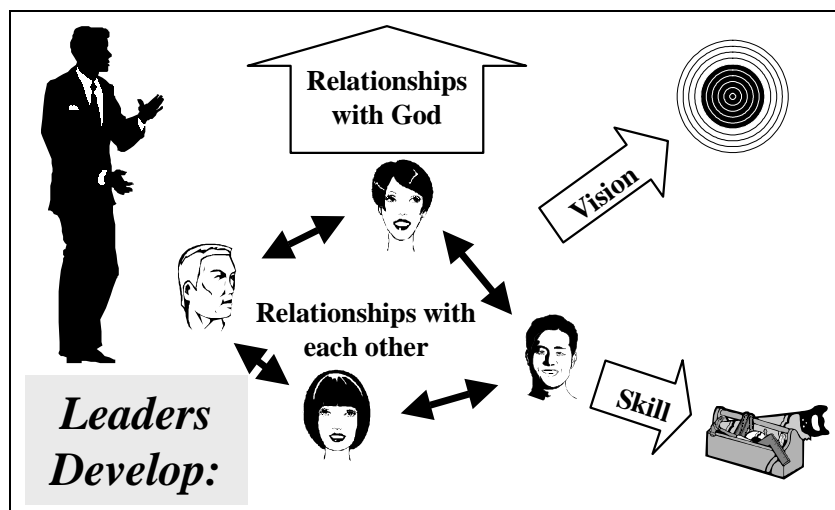
A church planting team should represent the church it seeks to plant. The biblical model is a body, with its diversity working together in unity (1Co 12). This image of the body illustrates the advantage of the different team members having complementary abilities and spiritual gifts. A good church planting team will have this diversity. There might be an evangelist, a counselor, a shepherd, a teacher, someone to show mercy, etc. Each is important. There should probably also be diversity in gender, age, and personality. The exact balance will depend on the needs of your situation and the available members. Look to diversity as an advantage rather than a weakness.

Like the body, this diversity is valuable only if guided toward the common goal. It must have a head. In the same way, a team must have a head, or leader—probably you. The emphasis is on guiding the members into ministry, rather than “lording it over them.” This ‘headship’ should be *functional* rather than *positional*. Make sure that the team agrees to be led.

## II. LEADING YOUR TEAM

The specific responsibilities of a leader will be related to the purpose of the team he leads. The following objectives reflect the responsibilities of a leader in the context of starting a new church. As you lead your team, strive to do each of the following activities.

Figure 5.1 Leaders Develop Their Team



### A. Develop Your Team Members' Relationships with God

Be a pastor to your team. Offer spiritual support when they are in need spiritually. This assumes that you know each of the team members well enough to know when they have spiritual needs. Spend time with them, and do not be afraid to ask them "hard questions" about their walk with the Lord and struggles that they may be having.

The spiritual health and growth of each member of your team will be directly related to their understanding of God's Word and their ability to put biblical truths into practice in ministry and in their everyday lives. Pray for their spiritual health and growth. If they do not have one already, help team members to develop a personal discipline of Bible study and prayer. Pray that they will discover and develop their spiritual gifts, and then actively look for ways to give them opportunities to do this.

## **B. Develop Your Team Members' Relationships with Each Other**

Teamwork requires that team members understand and trust one another. If there are relationship problems in your team, the ministry of the team will suffer. You will need to help team members develop and sustain trust and love for one another. Keep the following goals in mind as you do this:

If there are relationship problems in your team, the ministry will suffer.

- Help the team members understand their temperaments.
- Help the team members understand their relational strengths and weaknesses.
- Help the team members develop positive attitudes towards differences.
- Identify relationship tension areas.

## **C. Develop Team Members' Vision for Ministry**

Many church planting situations are difficult. In these cases, your team needs to see progress or they will get discouraged. This is especially true in the early stages, when the foundation is being laid, and a little later, when there may only be a few converts. As the leader, look for ways to help the team see the big picture, the vision (the Z!), so that they will be inspired to be more dedicated to the task (Gal 6:9).

Do not assume that the vision and goals are understood by every member of the team. People in most teams tend to lose sight of the vision if not constantly reminded of it by the leader. Keep the vision out front, and whenever possible challenge the team to think just a little bigger, so that they do not become satisfied with less than what God intends for them.

## **D. Develop Your Team Members' Ministry Skills**

Most people avoid ministry if they do not have the skills required to carry out the task. Many people do not evangelize or study the Bible because they feel that they do not know how. Be willing to take time to improve the ministry skills that your team will need to plant the new church. Practice inductive Bible study together. Talk about and demonstrate several different ways to do evangelism.

Be willing to take time to improve the ministry skills of those working with you to plant the new church.

When training people for ministry, do not assume that good example and general instruction are sufficient. Some people need direct and personal contact (1Th 5:14). As you teach ministry skills remember the following:

### **1. Prepare your heart and mind before you advise**

Spend time in prayer, asking God to give you wisdom in working either with the entire team, or with one member. Put together a concrete plan for what skills you want to teach, and the different ways in which you might be able to do this. Think about what was helpful for you when you first learned how to do different types of ministries.

### **2. Look for teachable moments (Pr 25:11 "A word aptly spoken")**

The time to instruct is when:

- People are not threatened.
- You are not angry or frustrated.
- The other person recognizes his or her need for help or support.

## **III. UNDERSTANDING YOUR TEAM**

Your team will not immediately or automatically function the way you might desire. Every team goes through a process of growth and maturation. The chart in table 5.2 describes four common phases that teams normally go through as they grow and mature together. It is essential for the leader to be able to identify where his or her team is in regard to leadership, common purpose, relationships, roles, flexibility,

communication and spiritual life. Each of these areas represents an important aspect of the overall health and maturity of a church planting team.

**Table 5.2 Four Phases of Team Development**

	<b>1. IMMATURE TEAM</b> <i>Leader-centered</i>	<b>2. YOUNG TEAM</b> <i>People-centered</i>	<b>3. LEARNING TEAM</b> <i>Process-centered</i>	<b>4. MATURING TEAM</b> <i>Purpose-centered</i>
<b>Leadership</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Leaders make most of the decisions</li> <li>Directive (telling) style</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Decisions are still made by the leader but more input is given, more options are considered</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Becomes more participative as members work towards the purpose</li> <li>Decisions are made by the team efficiently and effectively</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Leader is flexible in style, adapting to situation</li> <li>Some leadership is task-driven, so that those with skills assume temporary leadership roles</li> <li>Tasks are delegated</li> </ul>
<b>Common Purpose</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No shared understanding of what needs to be done</li> <li>Confused purpose</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Team still lacks unity of purpose but becomes aware of lack</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Purpose is discussed and clarified in the minds of team members</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Effectiveness becomes the focus</li> <li>Progress becomes pertinent</li> <li>Internalized</li> </ul>
<b>Relationships</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Little or no understanding of others ... their strengths, weaknesses, etc.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Focus is on getting to know and understand others, their strengths, weaknesses, etc.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Love and loyalty among the members is developing</li> <li>Members have become less defensive and more open to input</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pride in team membership</li> <li>Weakness is accepted &amp; accounted for</li> <li>Commitment to helping others reach their full potential</li> </ul>
<b>Specified Roles</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Well-defined on individual basis</li> <li>Not yet clear how roles fit with the task</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The matching of strengths &amp; situation is discussed but little is done</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Roles are clarified—strengths are matched to situations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Division of labor is apparent but with concern for the whole task</li> </ul>
<b>Flexible Processes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rules, processes &amp; procedures imposed from the top or outside</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Problems are faced more openly</li> <li>Risky issues are discussed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Team explores different approaches &amp; alternate routes</li> <li>Focus in on efficiency</li> <li>There is agreement on how things will be done</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Individual initiative is encouraged</li> <li>Flexibility becomes the keynote with both strategy and method</li> </ul>
<b>Communication</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Little effective communication</li> <li>Defensiveness</li> <li>Mistakes are covered up</li> <li>Self-centered</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Communication is more open and effective</li> <li>Self-centered</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Open, task-oriented</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Communication is characterized by trust, openness, honesty, cooperation and confrontation</li> </ul>
<b>Dynamic Spiritual Life</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Prayer is routine</li> <li>Faith walk not owned as a team experience</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Team meets regularly to pray for common needs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Interpersonal relationships are measured against the Scriptures</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Prayer is a natural, first response to new problems</li> <li>Obedient faith is stimulated</li> <li>Spiritual warfare entered into by the team</li> </ul>

In an ideal situation, a team of Christians working together would be at the same level in all areas. However, in reality, they may be very immature in terms of leadership and specified roles, but more mature in the area of relationships and communication. This is more realistic to expect.

This chart has a two-fold purpose. One, it can be used by the leader to help identify where his or her team is in terms of development and maturity. Second, it can be used to help the leader to see how the team needs to develop further, and how to tell when they have reached a higher level of development.

For example, in the area of leadership, a team might let the leader make all the decisions and always tell them what to do. Using the chart, the leader sees that

A leader should identify where his or her team is in terms of development and maturity.

the team members need to participate more in making the decisions. He or she can then think of several ways to ask for input, request others to help, etc. in order to help the team grow and mature. This process can and should be repeated for all the areas that are listed.

## QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION, REVIEW AND APPLICATION

- How does being a leader of a team that is planting a church differ from being a leader in general?
- The responsibilities of a leader are focused on developing character, vision and ministry skills in the members of his or her team. Why bother with all that when there is a job to be done (i.e. plant a new church)?
- In your own words, describe the role of a leader as it relates to the task to be accomplished and the members of the church planting team.
- What can happen to a team which matures in some areas but remains immature in other areas?
- Is a leader able to help his or her team develop and grow, or is this simply a "natural" process which will happen on any team that spends enough time together?

## ACTION PLAN

- Using the chart in table 5.2, "Four Phases of Team Development," determine at what level your team is currently in each of the listed areas. On a separate piece of paper, make a list of each area (leadership, purpose, relationships, etc.) and write down where your team is at (phase 1, 2, 3 or 4).
- Look at the chart to see what would be some characteristics of a team that is more developed in each of these areas. For each area listed on your paper, write down at least three concrete, measurable things which you can do in order to help your team to develop and mature in this area.
- Begin to implement your ideas, and after two months, review this chart and repeat this exercise. In what areas did your team grow? In what areas did it stay pretty much the same? What other ways can you try to help your team continue to grow and develop in these "static" areas? Review your ideas and insights with your mentor.

## SOURCES

- Engel, James F., Jane Overstreet, and Terry Sparks. *Leadership: Making Human Strength Productive*. St. Davids, PA: The Center For Organizational Excellence, Eastern College, 1996.
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# CELL GROUPS

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CELL GROUPS

7

LESSON

# Cell Group Discussion Dynamics

## ☛ Lesson Purpose

The purpose of this lesson is to equip the cell group leader with the skills necessary to lead meaningful times of discussion in the group.

## ☛ Main Points

- The goal of cell group discussion is to involve the group members.
- The group leader should be aware of common discussion problems.

## ☛ Desired Outcomes

When the content of this lesson has been mastered, each participant should . . .

- Understand communication skills which are necessary for the cell group leader.
- Know the principles of developing good discussion questions.
- Practice identifying and resolving problems that arise during the cell group discussion time.

## ☛ Appendix

7A Cell Groups: Sample Discussion Questions

## ☛ Suggestions to Trainers

Although the purpose of this lesson is to equip a cell group leader to lead times of good discussion, the discussion itself is not the ultimate goal in a cell group. A time of meaningful discussion between group members encourages fellowship, strengthens relationships, and provides a means for learning and applying biblical truth. By learning how to lead discussion well and avoid communication problems, the cell group leader will be able to build trust and commitment between group members and motivate the group to fulfill its purposes.

Note that Leadership lesson 8 “Styles for Interaction” in manual 4 complements this lesson in the area of how to communicate well with others in a cell group.

Plan to spend at least 20 minutes of class time for the “Handling Discussion Problems” exercise at the end of this lesson.

## I. LEADING DISCUSSION IN A CELL GROUP

The value of good discussion time in a cell group cannot be emphasized enough. It is through discussion that the members learn more about each other and grow closer to one another in Christian love. Discussion of the Bible is a vital part of the process of discipleship and growth in the life of a believer. Cell groups add the dynamic of interactive discussion that is missing in a large group meeting. The Holy Spirit uses these discussions between believers and unbelievers in order to draw people closer to Jesus.

The role of the cell group leader is to facilitate meaningful discussion and to model to the members of his group how to listen, ask good questions, and avoid problems that might arise. In this way, the leader continues to help the members of the cell group grow and mature in their faith and in their ministry skills.

The cell group leader facilitates meaningful discussion and models to the group members how to listen, ask good questions, and avoid problems.



This lesson is designed simply to teach a form, or method, for leading times of discussion in a cell group. Trust, commitment and strong relationships should be the outcome of group discussions, not the ability of the leader to “put on a good show.” Each trainee should think about group communication and interaction in light of his own culture, and then use appropriate discussion skills which will build trust between the cell group members. The following keys to good communication are simple and easy to use:

**A. Listen**

One of the most important skills of the leader in discussion is **listening**. Listening involves both physically and emotionally focusing on the person who is talking. Remember that your body language speaks louder, perhaps, than your words. Maintain good eye contact, and don’t be preoccupied with other things while someone else is talking.

**B. Ask**

Often, people who are more extroverted will tend to do all the talking in a cell group. If this happens, **ask others** in the group their ideas or opinions. Don’t let one or two people control the conversation.

**C. Clarify**

Sometimes you will need to **clarify** something that has been said. “Max, what did you mean when you used the word ‘saved’?” Do not assume you understand what someone has said, without restating what you think she said in your own words. Or, ask her to restate her thought in a different way. “Lena, I’m a bit confused—could you explain that differently?”



**D. Justify**

It can be helpful to ask people to **justify** their comments. Ask why they feel that way, where they find that idea in the passage of Scripture being studied, etc. “Vladimir, I don’t come to the same conclusion as you did from these verses of Scripture. Could you help us better understand your point of view?”

**E. Extend**

Sometimes you will need to **extend** the discussion by asking if anyone has more to add, or asking how what has been said relates to a previous thought.

**F. Redirect**

When someone in the group is talking only to the leader, **redirect** his or her questions or comments to others in the group. “Bob, I can understand why you would feel that way. Laura, what is your impression of Bob’s suggestion?” If the discussion is always between the leader and only one other person in the group, the rest of the people have nothing to contribute and feel left out. Communication in a group should go back and forth between the members of the group, and not just one way from the leader to each group member.

**G. Summarize**

At several points in a discussion, it can be helpful to stop and **summarize** what has been said. Point out main ideas or contributions that individuals have made. This will help keep the focus of the discussion on the main topic, and provide a sense of accomplishment to the group members.

**H. Affirm**

Remember to **affirm** the group members by recognizing and appreciating what each person is saying. Thank them for their contribution to the discussion. “Lisa, I want you to know that I appreciate that you shared your thoughts on this with us.” Even if the comment which a person

made requires amending, the speaker is important and should be acknowledged for their willingness to contribute to the discussion.

## II. DEVELOPING GOOD QUESTIONS

The questions you ask in your cell group can greatly enhance the relationships between members and can facilitate the discovery of truth in God's word. Questions that are well thought out will encourage people to share about themselves, their thoughts and their feelings.

### A. Fellowship Questions

Questions are an important part of building personal relationships between members in the group. Appendix 7A, "Sample Discussion Questions," contains examples of questions that will help the members of your group get to know each other better. It is important that you learn how to format your own questions that relate to the lives of the people in your group. Ask questions that will enable members to share about themselves things that would not easily be seen by others: *"What is something that you are worried about?" "What is one change that's coming for you in the future? How do you feel about it?"* These types of questions encourage people to talk about their inner thoughts and feelings, which builds a caring and supportive atmosphere in the group.

It is important that you learn how to format your own questions that relate to your life and to the lives of the people in your group.

Ask questions that can be answered in 2-3 minutes: *"Could you please share one area of struggle that you are working on this week?"* In the early stages of a new group, occasionally ask questions that will let members affirm one another: *"What one good thing can you say about at least one other person in our group?"*

Fellowship questions are simple and yet strengthen relationships in a group. They do not require negative answers (e.g. don't ask, *"What is your worst fault?"*). Everyone in the group is able to answer fellowship questions, and they help members get to know and love one another. These types of questions ask people to share from their heart, not give opinions on issues.

### B. Bible Discussion Questions

The questions you ask during the Bible discussion time will be slightly different from those you use during fellowship time. You will want to develop questions that will guide the group through an inductive study of a portion of Scripture. When your cell group is still very new, your questions will be an example to them of how to study inductively.

As the group grows and matures, you will want to have them begin to ask the questions that will give them insight into God's word. You can do this formally by requesting one of the members to lead the study in one of the meetings. Or, you can do this informally, by simply asking the group for ideas as you go through a passage of Scripture together. You might ask things like, "What could we ask about these verses in order to observe carefully what has been written?" or "What kinds of application questions can you think of to relate this passage to our everyday lives?"

Remember, the focus during a Bible discussion time is not simply Bible knowledge, but to discover truth in God's word which will result in changed lives.

One possibility is to take one or two meetings and develop a Bible discussion lesson as a group. Not only would this teach the members of the group how to develop good questions, but it would help to further prepare them for future ministry, especially those who will become leaders of cell groups themselves.

When a cell group leader uses good Bible discussion questions, he or she models for the group how to lead a Bible discussion time. These lessons provide guidelines and practice for leading Bible discussion times in a cell group. Remember, the focus during a Bible discussion time is not simply Bible knowledge, but rather the ability to discover truth in God's word which will result in changed lives.

### III. DISCUSSION PROBLEMS

Every group will have some members who like to talk and some who are more quiet. Some people can get off track and talk about anything besides the topic at hand. Others like to argue in order to prove their point. As a cell group leader, you will soon find that problems will arise in the discussion time. How you handle those problems is important to the growth of the group as a caring community, as well as the personal growth of each group member.

#### A. Types of Discussion Problems

1 *Someone is talking too much / Someone is not talking at all*

These are perhaps two of the most common problems during a time of discussion. How do you tactfully ask someone who talks too much to be quiet and let someone else contribute to the discussion? When someone is talking too much, affirm that person's comment and then direct the discussion to someone else in the group. "Tom, that's a good point. How about someone else who has not shared yet? Are there other ideas? Jim, you have been quiet tonight, what do you think?" The leader can also choose to sit beside the talkative person, so he or she is able to make more eye contact with others in the group and encourage them to share.

Sometimes the only way you will get shy or quiet people in the group to talk (at least initially) is to ask them questions directly. "Janet, what are your thoughts on this verse?" Again, the leader can also sit across from a quiet person in the group (assuming the group is sitting in a circle) so that he or she can encourage them to share through eye contact and body language.

You might also have someone in your group who has been a Christian for a while, and who knows the answers to many of the questions during the Bible discussion time. The problem is, this person also gives all the answers before the others have time to think about it or venture their own answers. In this case, it can be helpful to talk with this person privately and enlist his support to help you include the rest of the members of the group into the discussion. Maybe this person is a potential apprentice leader whom God is wanting you to mentor.

2 *The speaker is being too general or vague*

Sometimes people find it difficult to express what they really want to say. You can help them focus their idea or main point by asking for clarification. "Can you give us an example of that point? Your general idea is good, but I wonder if we can bring it into sharper focus. Does anyone know of an example of something like this?" Or you might need to rephrase in your own words what was said, in order to make it more clear and understandable.

3 *The conversation has gotten away from the topic at hand*

Keeping the group members on track can be one of the most difficult aspects of leading the discussion. People have a tendency to talk about what they know, even if that is not what you are studying or discussing. "Karen, that's an interesting point, and perhaps we can talk about it (or do a Bible study on it) at another meeting." Or, you could say "Karen, that's an interesting idea, but it does not really relate to tonight's topic." You could then ask the group members a question which relates to the topic at hand, in order to get them back on track.

4 *There is a question which the group and the leader cannot answer*

This happens more often than you might think. The worst thing to do is to give a vague or general answer, so it appears that you know something you don't. Your group needs to know that leaders don't know everything. If no one in the group is able to answer the question, then as leader, tell them you will do your best to find out and let them know at the next meeting. Make yourself a note to do this so that you will not forget.

5 *Two or more members get into an argument*

First, arguments in your cell group are not always bad. They can help to clarify what is being said, and they can help the group think through a passage of Scripture or a topic at hand. However, there is a difference between healthy debate and angry confrontation. Your role as a

leader is to carefully monitor the conversation and stop it if things become too heated. "Ivan, Sergei, I think we all understand both of your points of view, but we need to move on. Perhaps you can discuss it more after our meeting."

Sometimes arguments are not angry, but have no single or quick solution. Two people can argue two points of view for a single portion of Scripture, with no progress toward a solution. In this case you also need to stop the debate and get back on track with what you are studying or discussing.

6. *Someone is always joking around*

Some people enjoy telling jokes or being witty, and in reality, they can be very funny. God may have given your group a person who has a good sense of humor and the ability to find something funny in almost any situation. In the right context, these people can be very beneficial to your group, since they can help to "break the ice" when things either get too serious or boring.

However, if this person is constantly making jokes and wanting to be the center of attention, he soon becomes a problem. Take him aside privately and let him know how much you appreciate his ability to "help" when things get slow or uncomfortable, but make sure you set limits on what is and is not appropriate behavior. Often he does not realize that he is causing a problem. Do not imply that he is the problem, but rather that it is harder for the others in the group to concentrate or participate when he is always being funny.

7. *Someone is either not paying attention, or is preoccupied with something else*

If someone appears bored or not interested in the discussion, try to get him or her involved by asking them questions directly. "We've not heard from you yet, Sharon. What do you think?" If she is obviously preoccupied with something else (knitting, shuffling through papers, etc.), try to get her involved in the current conversation by asking her enough questions so that she doesn't have time to do whatever else it is she is doing. However, if this is something she constantly does, you might need to talk with her privately and share how her behavior is disrespectful to the others in the group.

There is one other thing to consider in this situation. Perhaps the discussion really is boring! If boredom seems to be a problem in your group, it would be wise to discuss this with your apprentice leader, or with someone in the group whom you trust, to learn what topic is more relevant for the group.

8. *Two members are constantly having a "private" conversation between themselves*

There are several ways you might be able to get them to stop. One would be to ask them to share what they have been discussing with the group (assuming they are talking about the topic at hand). Another would be to ask them more questions directly, so that they have to stop talking with each other in order to talk with the group. If it becomes a constant problem, you will need to talk with each of them separately and privately about how their conversations are disruptive to the group.

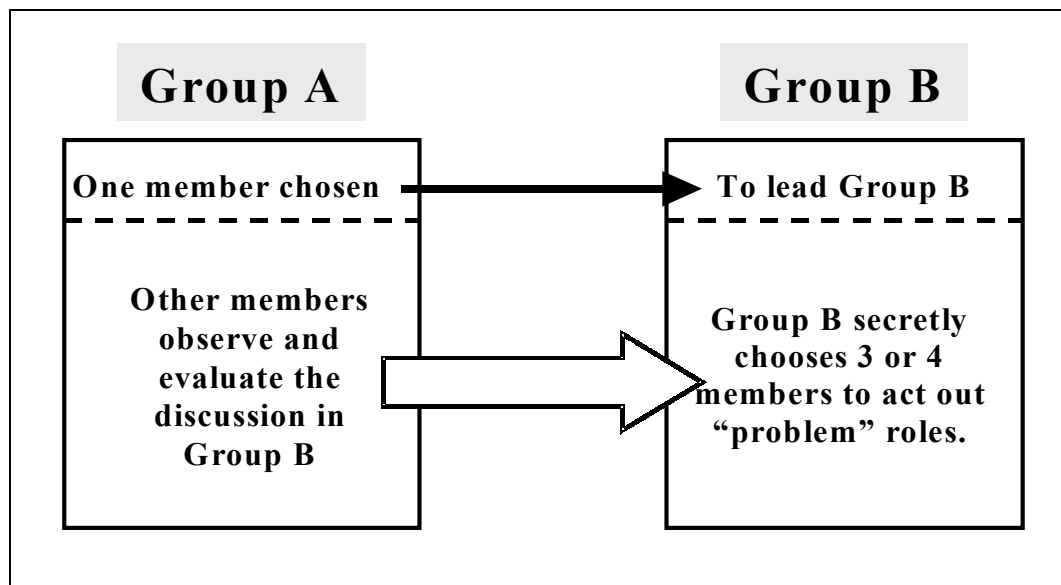
## **B. Exercise: Handling Discussion Problems**

Divide the trainees into two groups, Group A and Group B. Group A chooses one person from their group to "lead" Group B. While they are choosing, Group B secretly picks no more than 3-4 people to act out one of the roles listed below. For a period of about five minutes, Group B is to discuss the topic "The Role of the Church in Improving Society" (or any topic they want). Group A observes. Figure 7.1 illustrates how to arrange the two groups.

The "problem" people in Group B should act out their roles accordingly, and the leader from Group A must try to solve the problems as they occur. Remember, the "normal" people must also contribute to the conversation, and not just the "problem" people! At the end of five minutes, Group A may guess which people played which roles. Both groups should evaluate how the leader attempted to handle the problems which arose.

Group B now chooses someone to lead Group A, while Group A secretly chooses 3-4 people to act out the problem roles, etc. The activity continues as long as time allows.

**Figure 7.1 Discussion Exercise**



**Problem Roles:**

- The shy person who does not talk
- The “jokester” who is always being funny
- The chatterbox who talks all the time
- The busy person who is preoccupied with something else
- The two friends who carry on their own private conversation
- The two friends who get into a heated argument
- The person who always wants to talk about something else
- The person who is always very vague and unclear
- The person who gives a sermon instead of a short answer to a simple question

**QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION, REVIEW AND APPLICATION**

- What communication skills do you consider to be most important for the leader of a cell group? Why?
- What types of discussion questions would be appropriate for a new group, or a new person who has come into an existing group? What types of questions would not be appropriate in these situations?
- During the “Handling Problems” exercise, in what ways did the “leader” handle the problems well? In what ways did the “leader” poorly handle some problems?

**ACTION PLAN**

- Spend some time developing sample questions to use for a new cell group. What could you use to help new members get to know one another?
- Next, develop some questions you could use to help the group grow deeper in their relationships. What topics or areas of life would you discuss?
- Finally, develop some questions that would encourage the group to reach out to the people in their circle of *oikos* relationships. What could you ask that would motivate them to build relationships and share Christ?



# Cell Groups: Sample Discussion Questions

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These discussion questions are best suited for use during the fellowship time of a cell group meeting. They differ from the “ice breaker” questions in Cell Group Appendix 2A (Manual 2) in that they are designed to go deeper in understanding oneself and others in the group. They are best suited for use in a cell group where the members are already comfortable with one another and where there is some level of trust.

The questions have been organized into four areas, representing four types of relationships a person can have in their life.

## THE FOUR RELATIONSHIPS:

### I. RELATIONSHIP TO GOD

1. When was the first time that you were aware that God loved you?
2. What are your strongest convictions about God?
3. What do you think is the one thing God is trying to say to you?
4. What one thing would you want God to hear you say to Him?
5. What single question would you most want God to answer for you?
6. Describe someone you know who you feel knows God intimately.

### II. RELATIONSHIP WITH SELF

1. Draw a crest or coat-of-arms as it best describes you, and explain it to the group.
2. What would you do if you knew that you could not fail?
3. What would you most like to do over the next five years if there were no limitations?
4. Who is the most interesting person you have ever met? What did you like about him or her?
5. What is your most satisfying accomplishment? In your early life? In recent years?
6. Share your three strongest points.
7. What is your happiest memory (at various ages)?
8. Describe the most significant event in your life.
9. Describe the characteristics of the “ideal person” to the group.
10. Who, besides your parents, has been most influential in your life?
11. What gift would most bless you?
12. Whose approval do you need the most?
13. In whose presence are you most comfortable? Why?
14. If you had what you really wanted in life, what would you have?
15. Briefly list your long-range and short-range goals.

16. Describe the most exciting, creative person you have met.
17. What will people say about you after you die?
18. List some creative, helpful ways to begin and to end a day.
19. In what do you trust the most?
20. Who has most changed your life?
21. What are the two best books you have ever read (besides the Bible)?
22. How do you like to spend your spare time?
23. What makes you feel most impressed?
24. What makes you most worried, anxious, or afraid?

### **III. RELATIONSHIPS WITH OTHERS**

1. Describe the person who means the most to you, and tell why.
2. Who is the first person who really understood you?
3. What kind of person do you find yourself confiding in the most?
4. What makes a person a good listener?
5. Are you the kind of person others confide in? Why?
6. How do you feel this group has listened to you (corporately and individually)?
7. What makes a good marriage?

### **IV. RELATIONSHIP TO THE WORLD**

1. What would you most like to be known for by the world around you?
2. What is most needed in our society?
3. Describe your feelings about injustice in society. What most concerns you?
4. What is the most important thing you can do about that injustice?
5. What is the most obvious need in society?
6. What will you do to change your church, your community, or your job for the better?

CELL GROUPS

8

LESSON

# Caring for People in a Cell Group

## ☛ Lesson Purpose

The purpose of this lesson is to enable the cell group leader and the members of the cell group to be able to discern and genuinely care for the needs of people.

## ☛ Main Points

- Relationships are the key to meeting needs.
- Meeting needs is an important part of cell group life.

## ☛ Desired Outcomes

When the content of this lesson has been mastered, each participant should . . .

- Understand the components of building relationships: love, prayer and time spent together.
- Know how to discern needs of the members in the group.
- Learn how to meet the needs of those in the group or people to whom the group is reaching out.

## ☛ Suggestions to Trainers

Plan to spend at least 10 minutes of class time on the “Care for People” exercise at the end of this lesson. Note that there are not “correct” and “incorrect” responses to the situations given. The goal of the exercise is to help the trainees understand that love expresses itself through action when needs arise in a cell group. By thinking through some of the given situations, the trainees will be better equipped to handle similar situations in their own cell groups.

## I. BUILD RELATIONSHIPS

*Natalie had been attending her cell group for several months. She liked the people in the group, and although she didn't know any of them very well, she enjoyed going to the meetings once a week. Natalie's husband, who did not come to the group, recently lost his job. Their money was running out, and Natalie was very worried about what they were going to do as a family. She wanted to say something to the group, but she was embarrassed and did not want to bother them with her problems. Soon after that, she stopped coming to the group meetings, and the members sometimes wondered out loud, “Whatever happened to her?”*

What is wrong with this situation? Maybe Natalie should have spoken up and at least asked her cell group to pray for her family. But the real problem is a lack of genuine relationships in her cell group. She did not know the people in her group, and they did not know her. One of the purposes of a cell group is to provide the fellowship, nurturing and encouragement that Christians are to give to one another. But without caring relationships, this will not happen.

A cell group provides an excellent setting for relationships to grow and develop. It will take time and effort to really get to know the members of your group, but effective “people” ministry requires these close personal relationships. Until you build trust between yourself and the people in your group, you cannot truly minister to their deepest needs.

Effective “people” ministry requires close personal relationships.

In the same way, you want the members of your group to develop relationships between themselves. You need to model the process of building relationships, as well as provide opportunities for this to



happen in your cell group. In order for relationships to grow and develop in a cell group, three components are necessary: love, prayer and time spent together.

### A. Love One Another

Relationships with fellow believers must be based on the “agape”<sup>4</sup> love of 1 Corinthians 13. This type of love does not love another person based on his personality, looks or intelligence. Love continues to love, even when no love is shown in return. Love is motivated by God’s infinite and unconditional love for us. The Bible says, “We love because he first loved us...And he has given us this command: Whoever loves God must also love his brother” (1Jn 4:19,21).

How is love expressed in a cell group? People feel loved when they are accepted and have a sense of belonging in the group. Love is present when members feel that people care for them. Love is shown when someone has a problem and the group (or individuals in the group) help him or her. Love is evident when visitors come and see a difference in the relationships between the believers in the group. Christian love between the members of a cell group is shown by actions, and not only by words.

### B. Pray for One Another

Sincere relationships with fellow believers require prayer, especially with those believers who are “difficult” to love. As a cell group leader, you need to pray and ask God to give you an honest love for each member of the cell group. Think about each person and pray for him or her. Pray for your relationship with each and your ability to minister to each person. Pray for the spiritual growth of each member and that each member will discover and use his or her spiritual gifts. Pray that each person will be an effective witness to the people in his or her network of relationships. Pray also for each member’s personal needs and struggles. As you pray for each person in the group, your love for them will grow and your relationship with them will deepen.

In the same way, encourage your group to pray for one another. Plan times in the cell group meetings when people can share both personal and ministry-related problems or needs. Then spend time praying for one another.

### C. Spend Time Together

It takes time to build relationships. You must plan to spend time with the people in your group outside of the cell group meetings. You can invite them to have a meal with you, join your family for a walk in the park, or simply spend evenings together in their homes or at yours. The activity is not as important as the time that you spend with them. Trust is developed in a relationship when people see that you are genuinely interested in them, in their family and in their interests. When problems come into their lives, the trust that has developed between you will allow you to minister to them. You can also let them know that you are thinking about them and praying for them by calling them or sending them quick notes or letters.

You must plan to spend time with the people in your group <u>outside</u> of the cell group meetings.
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It is also very healthy for the cell group to gather occasionally for special events outside of the cell group meetings. This will help to deepen and strengthen the relationships between the group members. These activities can be very informal, such as having a picnic together or going cross-country skiing. They can also be more structured, such as working together on a project to help one of the group members or someone in the community (e.g. repairing a roof, helping with the garden of an elderly person, etc.). If the members of your group have been praying and meeting with unbelievers who would not feel comfortable coming to a cell group meeting, these are also excellent events to which they can be invited. This gives them a chance to meet with other Christians in an enjoyable, non-threatening environment.

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<sup>4</sup> αγάπη

## II. DISCERN PEOPLE'S NEEDS

Cell groups provide a marvelous environment in which to minister to people's needs. Often, as the group grows and matures, members will feel comfortable sharing needs and looking for help. But there will always be some members who will not openly share their needs, especially when the group has first formed, or if they are new to the group. As the cell group leader, you need to be aware of some indicators that signal a problem or need. You can also help the group to learn how to discern these clues so that they can ask about needs and minister one to another.



There are several factors which will help you and the group determine if needs exist which are not being expressed. Once you get to know someone, often his or her facial expression or tone of voice might indicate a problem. Sometimes, his comments or answers to questions during the Bible discussion time can reflect spiritual or emotional problems. How does this person feel about himself? How does he feel about God? This might also be evident when he prays.

Sometimes while prayer requests are being shared, people will "hint" at a problem without actually disclosing it. The group should tactfully ask for more details, so that they can help meet the need. Sometimes a person's inappropriate behavior during the group meeting will indicate that there is an underlying problem. Instead of the leader simply taking him aside and asking him to stop, the group can begin to ask questions and probe to see if there are deeper, underlying reasons for his behavior.

Don't ignore the Holy Spirit as He helps you discern people's needs. As you pray and study the Scriptures personally, learn to rely on His guidance as you seek to minister to the members of your group. Don't forget that in order to discern needs, you need to watch for them! Sometimes we get too busy with all the "details" of our ministry and forget that the most important thing is the people with whom we are involved.

Sometimes we get too busy with all the "details" of our ministry and forget that the most important thing is the people with whom we are involved.

## III. CARE FOR NEEDS IN YOUR CELL GROUP

If your cell group is going to be the caring, nurturing community of believers that God calls it to be, members must learn how to love one another and "carry each other's burdens" (Gal. 6:2). The leader of the cell group needs to set the example by caring for others in ways that show love and concern.

### A. Respond to Needs

When a member of the group has a need or problem:

- Strive to understand the problem and to empathize with him. "If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it" (1Co 12:26). Demonstrate that you care for him as an individual. Take the time simply to listen to his need. Imagine how you would feel if you were in his situation.
- As a group, pray about a solution. We need God's wisdom, not our own. "If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him" (Jas 1:5). Doing this as a group helps to strengthen relationships and to give the group a feeling of solidarity.
- As a group, look to the Bible for answers. "All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work" (2Ti 3:16-17). The better your group knows their Bible, the more they will be equipped to minister to people's needs. This is also an opportunity to demonstrate how the Bible is applicable to the problems of everyday life.
- Consider what the group can do spiritually, emotionally, or materially to help. Sometimes all that can be done for a hurting person is to pray, offer encouragement and let him know that you care. If a material need can be met, the group should decide what they can do to help.

Obviously needs don't exist only within the group—if someone has a friend with a problem, the group can decide if and how they could help meet the need. This is one of the best ways for the group to reach out with the love of Christ in a tangible way.

Sometimes problems are an issue of sin in the life of one of the group. If someone in the group has sinned against another member, Jesus' instruction in Matthew 18:15-17 should be used as the method to address the situation. If someone in the group has fallen into sin, the group needs to "restore him gently" (Gal 6:1). Holding one another accountable to our walk with Christ is an important aspect of the fellowship of believers in a cell group.

How should the group respond when someone misses a meeting? Someone from the group (not necessarily the leader) needs to contact this person the next day to let him know he was missed. Perhaps he is ill, or has some other problem. Again, the group should decide what they can do to help. When people don't come to the meetings, don't ignore it. Go after them! Let them know that the group cares!

Caring for one another is a mandate that all Christians have. However, some problems, especially severe emotional problems, are serious enough that professional help should be obtained. As this person works with a specialist, the group should continue to pray for and encourage him or her.

## **B. Exercise: Care for People**

Following are several scenarios of some situations you might face in your cell group. In class, discuss each situation and suggest ways that the cell group could help. There are not necessarily "correct" and "incorrect" responses to these situations. The main point is that love expresses itself in action – different people might react in different ways.

- Katrina: You receive a phone call from Katrina the morning after your most recent cell group meeting. She tells you that she is not going to attend the meetings any more, but she is very vague about the reason why. As you think about it, you remember that Katrina spoke very little during the fellowship or discussion time, and left without talking to anyone after the meeting was over. What would you do?
- Olga: During one of the meetings, the group members have been sharing personal prayer requests. When it is Olga's turn, she looks at the floor and says quietly that everything is fine, thanks. During the prayer time, you are not sure, but suspect that she is crying. What would you do?
- Andrew and Maria: A married couple, Andrew and Maria, have been coming to your group for almost a year. During that time, their attendance has been sporadic, at best. Lately, during the group meetings, it is obvious to the group that there is some definite tension between them. You suspect perhaps they have a problem in their marriage, but don't feel that you know them well enough to ask them about it. What would you do?
- Michael: Recently, one of the group members invited a co-worker named Michael to the group. During the Bible discussion times, he asks a lot of questions and wants to learn more about Jesus. However, Michael has a very irritating personality, and he is constantly insulting people (apparently without realizing it). His presence has disrupted what used to be very enjoyable meeting times. For several weeks now, he has not attended the meetings, and to be honest, most of the group members are relieved that he is no longer there. What would you do?

## **QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION, REVIEW AND APPLICATION**

- In 1Th 2:8, Paul writes, "We loved you so much that we were delighted to share with you not only the gospel of God but our lives as well, because you had become so dear to us." Why was "sharing their lives" an important part of Paul's ministry?
- Review the story at the beginning of this lesson about Natalie. What should have happened differently in her group, and how might have the group helped her?
- Should a cell group be quick to help with financial needs? Why or why not?

## **ACTION PLAN**

- Write down two or three ways that your cell group can grow in their love for one another. Write down several activities that your cell group can do to pray more for one another.
- Write down two ideas for ways that your cell group could spend time together outside of a regular meeting. Plan to do this sometime during the next three months.
- Encourage the members in your cell group to share needs, concerns and problems with the group, and look for ways the group can help.

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CELL GROUPS

9

LESSON

# Training New Cell Group Leaders

## ☛ Lesson Purpose

The purpose of this lesson is to provide practical guidelines for existing cell group leaders to train new cell group leaders.

## ☛ Main Points

An apprentice group leader must be chosen, prepared, and released.

## ☛ Desired Outcomes

When the content of this lesson has been mastered, each participant should . . .

- Know the importance of having an apprentice leader in his cell group, and know how to choose an apprentice.
- Understand the process of preparing an apprentice for leadership by involving him or her in all areas of ministry.
- Understand the process of releasing an apprentice to lead his own cell group.

## ☛ Suggestions to Trainers

The in-class exercise “Whom to Choose When No Choice is Obvious” contains several scenarios of cell group leaders who are having a difficult time choosing an apprentice leader. Remember that there is not one correct answer for each of these scenarios. The purpose of the exercise is to help the trainees think in practical terms of choosing an apprentice, and to deal with situations which may be similar to what they will face in their own cell groups.

Cell Group lesson 10 in the next manual provides an opportunity for cell group leaders to discuss questions and problems which they are having in their groups. Remind the trainees to make a list of these questions and problems to bring with them when they receive Manual Four training.

## I. CHOOSE AN APPRENTICE LEADER

### A. The Importance of Apprentice Leaders

A biological cell in the human body, by its very nature, will reproduce itself. The definition we have chosen for a cell group, which sets it apart from other groups, is that a cell group also multiplies. However, whereas a cell in the body is able to multiply on its own, a cell group cannot multiply without someone to lead the new cell which is formed.

The overall philosophy of cell group ministry is that cells are only a building block, or smaller part, of a larger ministry strategy to start new churches. There are many methods and approaches to using cell groups in order to start churches, and the groups themselves are often an integral part of the church planting process.

Without new leaders to begin new cells, it is obvious that this process breaks down. Where do you find new cell group leaders? From within the cells themselves! One of the first tasks of a cell group leader is to prayerfully choose and develop an apprentice leader. The process of cell group multiplication becomes a reality only when new leaders are chosen and discipled.

Where do you find new cell group leaders? From within the cells themselves!

## B. The Process of Choosing an Apprentice

Cell group leaders are to entrust the teachings of Christ to “reliable men who will be qualified to teach others” (2Ti 2:2). These are people who are not only able to become leaders, but who are also able to repeat the process and train other leaders themselves.

We have many examples from the Bible of mature believers who spent time and ministered with those who were less mature in their faith and ministry experience. The well-known exhortation from Paul to Timothy can be seen in some of the examples we have in the New Testament: Jesus with his disciples, Paul and Timothy, Aquila and Apollos, Paul and Silas, etc.

What are the requirements for an apprentice cell group leader? Every mature cell group leader should have the following three aptitudes: character, experience, and skills. Of these three aptitudes, only character is required for someone to begin the process of developing as a cell group leader. Experience and skills will come in time, as the cell group leader discipled his apprentice and involves him in various areas of ministry.

The issue of character is very important. The apprentice should be growing in Christian character, as listed in the qualifications for overseers and deacons in 1 Timothy 3:2-12. If these character traits are evident, this person can be considered a “candidate” to become a cell group leader. The goal of our search is not a perfect person, since that person doesn’t exist. Rather, we want a person who is diligently pursuing growth in these areas. Spiritual character is discussed in detail in the spiritual character track of this training program. You can use it as a guide for encouraging the development of your own and your apprentice’s spiritual character.

The timing for choosing an apprentice leader is important—not too early, and not too late.

The cell group leader should spend much time in prayer before choosing an apprentice leader. He should pray for guidance and wisdom from the Holy Spirit as he makes a decision. Selecting someone as an apprentice leader is no small matter, and the cell group leader must seek confirmation from the Holy Spirit about the choice he is making.

The timing for choosing an apprentice leader is important. The cell group leader cannot make the choice too early, when perhaps he has not had sufficient time to observe and get to know the members of his group. On the other hand, the apprentice leader cannot be chosen at the last minute, when the cell is ready to multiply and the leader realizes that he needs a new leader to help. Sufficient time must be spent with an apprentice leader in order for him to learn and grow in his experience and skills in the cell group. The cell group leader must prayerfully decide when to choose his apprentice and begin modeling ministry with him.

## C. Exercise: Whom to Choose When No Choice is Obvious?

Cell group leaders often struggle with the important decision of whom to choose to be an apprentice leader. It is helpful to observe the example of the Apostle Paul as he traveled and started new churches. As we look in the book of Acts, Paul and Barnabas did not install leaders in the new churches until their second missionary journey. They did not immediately appoint elders to lead these churches.

1 Timothy 3:1 says, “Here is a trustworthy saying: If anyone sets his heart on being an overseer, he desires a noble task.” 1 Peter 5:2 says, “Be shepherds of God’s flock that is under your care, serving as overseers - not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not greedy for money, but eager to serve.” Leadership is to be appointed to the person who “sets his heart” on it and is “willing” and “eager to serve.” Spiritual maturity is a prerequisite for leadership, but an apprentice leader must also earnestly desire to serve the Lord.

In class, discuss the following situations:

1. *Scenario:* Michael has recently started a cell group in his neighborhood. His goal is to start enough reproducing cell groups so that several new churches can be planted in his city. He has invited several friends and family members, and the group has met for several months already. Everyone in the group is a new believer, and no one seems mature enough to be an

- apprentice leader. Michael has prayed about it, but he is unsure what to do. Can he choose a new believer to be his apprentice leader? What would you suggest to him?
2. *Scenario:* Peter has started a cell group with the help of two other believers. These other men have been Christians for several years, but neither of them has much ministry experience. Peter thinks he should wait a long time before choosing one of them to be his apprentice leader, so that they will have lots of opportunity to watch him as he runs the cell group. What do you think of his approach? What would you suggest?
  3. *Scenario:* Eugene started a cell group in a community with a very high unemployment rate. The group attempts to help the men in the community find work, as well as introduce them to the Bible. Eugene asked the first few men who came to invite other friends who were out of work. The response was overwhelming, and the group grew to 15 people in one month. Eugene knows that the group should multiply when it reaches 15, but this obviously cannot happen since none of the members are even believers yet. He is worried that the group will continue to grow, and he doesn't know what to do. What advice would you give him? What do you think of his strategy? Is there anything you would have done differently?

## II. PREPARE YOUR APPRENTICE FOR LEADERSHIP

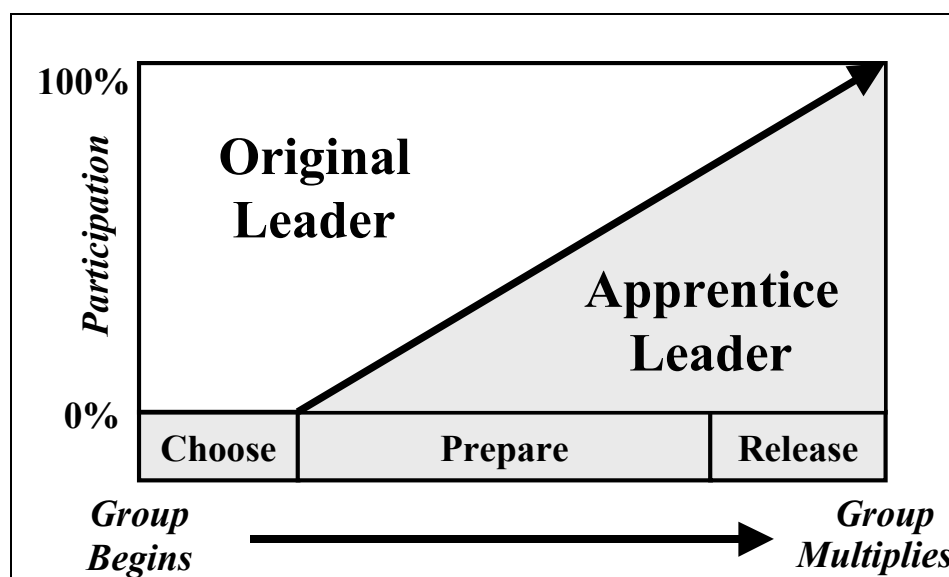
### A. Involve Your Apprentice with You in All Aspects of Ministry

Once you have chosen your apprentice leader, you must make a conscious effort to involve him in everything you do with regard to the cell group. Everything that you used to do on your own, you must now attempt to do with your apprentice leader. Explain everything, more than once, until you are sure that your apprentice understands it well enough to pass it along to another new leader.

You should begin involving your apprentice with the preparation and running of each cell group meeting. Discuss in advance what you are going to do in each meeting, and explain why you are taking this approach. After each meeting, discuss what you both learned from that meeting. Then plan the next meeting together. Discuss problems in the meeting, such as someone dominating the conversation, and how the issue was (or wasn't) resolved. This increasing involvement of the apprentice is illustrated in Figure 9.1.

You must make a conscious effort to involve your apprentice leader everything you do with regard to the cell group.

**Figure 9.1 Developing an Apprentice**





Once your apprentice is comfortable with the various aspects of planning and running individual meetings, you can begin to help him develop an understanding of the bigger picture and philosophy of cell group ministry. Discuss your church planting goals and explain how the cell groups are a part of your church planting goals. Help him understand the life cycle of a cell group, and discuss at which phase your group is currently.

Of course, this process of involving your apprentice with you requires a significant investment of your time and effort. But in the process of discipling, there are no shortcuts. Investing your life in the life of another requires commitment, perseverance, and a lot of help and encouragement from the Holy Spirit.

## **B. Evaluate your Apprentice**

As a cell group leader, you know all too well that you have strengths and weaknesses as you carry out your ministry. In the same way, your apprentice will excel in some areas of ministry, while making mistakes or struggling in other areas of cell group leadership.

You should discuss with your apprentice the things that he does well. This will provide encouragement and confirmation of his calling to be a leader. It is also beneficial to talk with him, in love, about areas in which he needs to grow. A cell group apprentice can have lots of ministry experience and yet lack good ministry skills. As you disciple your apprentice, you need to help him to see where and how he can improve as a leader. When you see an area of need, offer constructive ways to improve. In other words, don't simply point out the problems; offer suggestions on how he can correct problem areas.

As you model ministry with your apprentice, ask him also to share with you areas where he thinks you might have room for improvement. None of us is perfect, and quite often we have shortcomings or weaknesses that we don't even realize. The beauty of the discipling relationship is the ability to help each other towards deeper Christian maturity and growth. By discussing and evaluating together your strengths and weaknesses, you are demonstrating the value of team work. Church planting is best done in a team of people who can help to compensate for one another's strengths and weaknesses and help one another grow towards deeper Christian maturity.

Church planting is best done in a team of people who can help to compensate for one another's strengths and weaknesses.

## **C. Pray For and With Your Apprentice**

As you disciple your apprentice and model ministry for him, take time to pray for growth in his character, his experience and his skills. Pray that the Holy Spirit will continue to comfort, encourage and guide him. Pray also for your ability to disciple him and to be an example of a cell group leader for him.

It is also important to pray with your apprentice. Make time to spend together in prayer as you plan meetings and evangelistic events. Pray together about individuals in the group, about their needs and the people to whom they are reaching out. Pray for each other regarding areas of struggle or other personal needs. Attempt to instill in your apprentice the tremendous importance that prayer has in all areas of cell group ministry.

# **III. RELEASE YOUR APPRENTICE FOR MINISTRY**

## **A. Give Vision to Your Apprentice**

One of the most important steps in releasing your apprentice leader is to continually give him a vision for what could happen through his life and ministry. Ministry skills training without vision is like preparing to go on a journey but having no destination in mind. Your apprentice needs to understand that the potential end result of his ministry could be many, many new churches started through his cell group ministry. He needs to see how what he is learning and doing right now fits into this larger "end result" vision. The realization of what God can do through His imperfect people

can be a tremendous motivation for your apprentice leader. Take time to ask your apprentice what his own vision is for the work God is calling him to do. Evaluate whether or not you are helping develop his vision. Make sure your apprentice understands that he has an important role in helping to fulfill the Great Commission.

## **B. Delegate Ministry to Your Apprentice**

As your apprentice grows in his understanding of the various aspects of cell group ministry, you need to begin to delegate more and more responsibility to him. In general, you want to first model ministry for your apprentice, explaining what you did and why. Then, perform the ministry together with your apprentice (such as planning for a meeting or leading the Bible discussion time). Now allow your apprentice to perform the ministry on his own, with your encouragement and supervision. Objectively explain strengths and weaknesses you observed, and provide constructive suggestions for improvement. Finally, allow your apprentice to perform the ministry without any involvement on your part. When he reaches the point of being able to completely run the cell group meeting, you might want to "be busy" from time to time so that he gains confidence in his abilities without your being there.

This process of delegation starts small, but eventually you want your apprentice to have many experiences in leading a cell group without your involvement. It is the only way that he will be truly prepared to lead a group of his own, trusting the Lord Jesus to guide him in that leadership role.

Realize that delegation is not always easy for the cell group leader. Giving up the authority and responsibility for your group is hard to do. What if the apprentice doesn't do a good job? What if he or she makes lots of mistakes? What will the group think, and how will they react? The cell group leader must step out in faith as the apprentice takes on more and more responsibility. He must decrease as the apprentice increases. To some leaders, it feels like they have "lost" their job and they are now unemployed. Share your feelings with your apprentice during this time, so that he will be prepared to deal with it when the time comes for him to turn over his group to a new leader.

## **C. Release Your Apprentice to Start a New Cell Group**

As your cell group continues to reach out and grow, the time will come when it is ready to multiply into two cell groups. As this time approaches, discuss with your apprentice an overall ministry strategy for his new group. What are his goals for starting a church, and how will his new cell fit into this larger ministry strategy? Perhaps his cell group will be a building block for the same church as your group, or perhaps his group will help start a different church. The important part is that your apprentice understands the larger strategy and where his cell group fits into that strategy.

Encourage your apprentice to develop a prayer support team to pray for him before, during and after the beginning of the new cell group. Help him to understand how to prepare for the very first meeting, since he may not have been a part of that process when your group was started.

During the final month before your cell group is ready to multiply, completely turn over the ministry of the cell group to your apprentice. In this way, the members of the cell group will have confidence in him as a new leader when two groups are formed from one. Finally, stay close and be available to help your apprentice with his new group. Don't "abandon" him to swim in the deep waters alone. Pray with him and hold him accountable to select an apprentice of his own from the new group. Continue to encourage him as he leads his own group.

(The process of multiplication in a cell group will be discussed in detail in lesson 11, "Cell Group Multiplication" in Manual 4.)

## **D. Begin the Apprentice Process Again**

After your cell group has multiplied into two groups, your former apprentice leader will now be working with some of the people from your original group. This means that the original group can begin again to actively reach out and draw in new people. This also means that you again need to prayerfully consider who will be your next apprentice leader. This process of finding, discipling, and

releasing leaders is an effective method to see new groups started, to see people come to the Lord, and to fulfill the Great Commission through new churches.

## **QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION, REVIEW AND APPLICATION**

- What are the qualifications for an apprentice leader?
- If no one in your cell group appears to qualify as an apprentice leader, what are some concrete ways that you can develop leaders from within your group? What would you need to do to make this happen?
- What would you do if you prayerfully chose an apprentice leader and he or she refused?

## **ACTION PLAN**

- If you have not yet chosen an apprentice leader from within your cell group, pray about it and then do it. If no one seems qualified, select someone to disciple and develop into a leader.
- Begin to involve your apprentice in ministry with you, and actively delegate more and more ministry to him.
- From time to time, evaluate your apprentice, and ask your apprentice to evaluate you in regards to your ministry with the group.
- Pray for your apprentice leader.

## **SOURCES**

- Neighbour, Ralph. *The Shepherd's Guidebook*. Houston: Touch Publications, 1990.
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# EVANGELISM

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EVANGELISM

LESSON 8

# Relational Evangelism

**"GREATER LOVE HAS NO MAN..."**



## Lesson Purpose

To underscore the need for and strategic importance of building friendships with unbelievers



## Main Points

- Jesus actively sought to develop friendships with sinners in order to win them.
- God's desire is for Christians to *go* and seek the lost rather than *meet together* and invite the lost to come to us.
- There are costs and benefits to befriending unbelievers.
- The Gospel is communicated best when we have a relationship with the unbeliever.



## Desired Outcomes

When they have mastered the content of this lesson, participants will...

- Determine to befriend non-Christians for the sake of the kingdom of God.



## Suggestions to Trainers

This final lesson on evangelism is designed to maximize the emotional impact of key Scriptures regarding our relationship to the lost. It is important that people have time to grapple with the Luke 15 passage and its contemporary value for them personally. Let them consider it in silence for a time and arrive at their own answers to the questions posed in section I B.

Your passion to reach the lost must be evident, personal and practical. Include examples of how someone reached you or how you have brought someone to faith through friendship.

## INTRODUCTION

WARNING! This lesson could change your life. If you understand and apply its message, your ministry could become immeasurably richer, fuller and more satisfying. It is also true that if you are applying the teaching of this lesson, you may be misunderstood by Christian friends who think you will be contaminated by the world. But remember, Jesus Himself was called a "friend of sinners" (Mat 11:19). It will be worth the risk to be like Him.

To see a saturation church planting movement established in your country, meaningful saturation evangelism must occur. Strategic priority must be given to reaching people ... individuals with faces and problems. Relationships build faith, faith builds fellowships, and fellowships reach nations!

Proceed with caution, but proceed in faith.

## I. BEFRIENDING NON-CHRISTIANS

### A. Three Parables: One Lesson—Luke 15

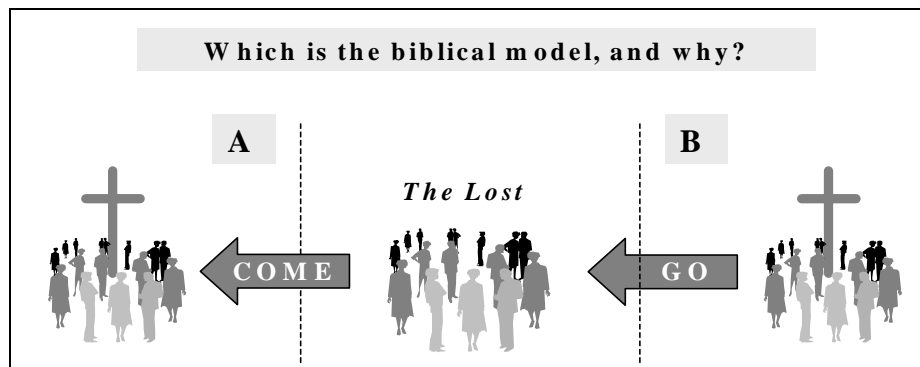
The Pharisees were upset that Jesus spent time with sinners. They felt that a righteous person could not and should not associate with sinners. This would contaminate the righteous person. Their logic seems reasonable, but it was wrong. In response to this issue, Jesus told the stories of the lost things that are recorded in Luke 15. The point of all three stories is the same. When a coin

or other possession is lost, we seek it and rejoice when we find it. But God values lost people even more than these things. So should we.

### B. What lessons can we learn from the parable?

- Who did Jesus address in this parable according to verses 1 and 2?
- What causes the most rejoicing in heaven according to verses 9 and 10?
- Which is more important to God—a group of ninety believers faithfully worshipping Him—or the repentance of one sinner (v. 9,10)?
- Was the complaint of the older brother justified (v. 29-30)? Did it match the heart of the father?
- Which concerned Jesus more: the approval of the religious or the salvation of the lost?
- Can you perceive yourself in the parable of the lost son? Which character are you most like? Which character do you want to be?
- What is the prevalent attitude in our churches toward outreach to the lost? Do our churches resemble the Father or older brother more? Are you willing to take a different stand, if necessary, to befriend and reach the lost?
- What types of efforts will be necessary to reach people where you live?

**Figure 8.1 Seeking vs. Inviting**



### C. What about the other verses in the Bible?

Luke 15 clearly teaches that our priority should be to go out and seek the lost. Jesus clearly spent time "eating and drinking" with sinners in order to win them. How do we harmonize these facts with the verses such as:

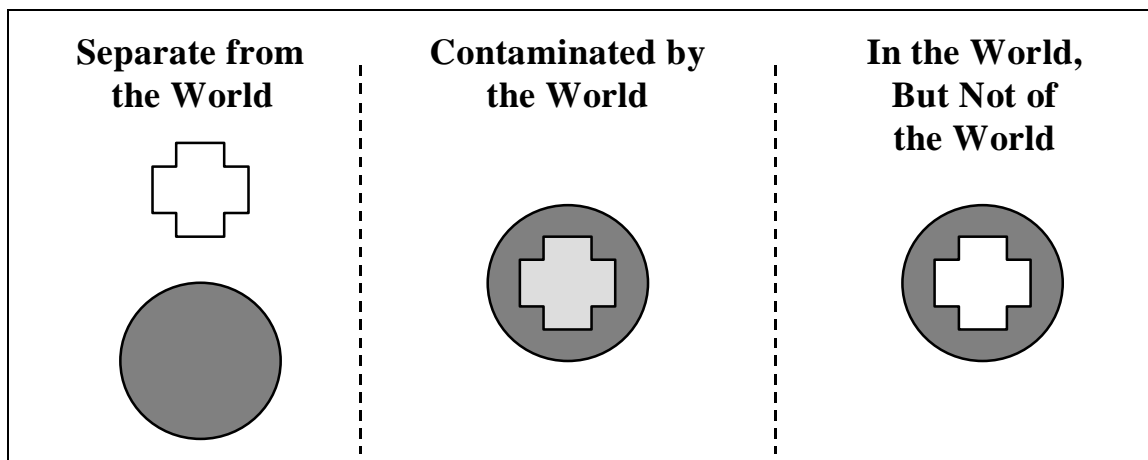
- 2Co 6:14 No fellowship between light and darkness.
- 1Jn 2:15 Don't love the world.
- 1Co 15:33 Bad company corrupts good morals.

It is indeed true that too close a relationship with an unsaved person can lead us astray. Our closest friends should be believers. For example, Jesus' closest friends were the twelve apostles, Mary and Martha, Lazarus, and other disciples. At the same time, though, Jesus also reached out to establish relationships with sinners. He went to their homes and to the places where they were. "Loving the lost" is not the same thing as loving the world. And preaching "Repent!" is not the same thing as a relationship. Paul clearly told the Corinthians that he did not intend them to avoid sinners (1Co 5:9-11). According to Paul, it is wrong to associate with an immoral *believer*, but not with an immoral *unbeliever*. This is a shocking statement, but nevertheless, it is true.

Certainly we need great wisdom to discern how close our relationships with unbelievers may be. However, the Pharisees erred on the side of excessive caution, and many churches and believers today seem to follow their example—rather than the example of Christ. We must have relationships with unbelievers that are close enough to cause them to trust us to explain the Gospel

to them. The solution is not to withdraw from believers—but rather to be careful to keep our own righteousness as we “eat and drink” with them.

**Figure 8.2 Three Views on Friendships With Unbelievers**



## II. FOLLOWING CHRIST IN FRIENDSHIP

Jesus didn't just tell stories. He backed up these parables by offering sincere friendship to needy people. The Scriptures comment on the nature of Jesus' friendship.

### A. Romans 5:6-8

"You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly. Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous man, though for a good man someone might possibly dare to die. But God demonstrates His own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us."

### B. John 15:13

"Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends."

### C. Mark 10:45

"For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."

What is the thrust of these three passages of Scripture? What proofs of friendship did Christ offer? How can we convincingly demonstrate friendship and love to those outside the Body of Christ?

## III. COUNTING THE COST

### A. The Cost of Befriending Non-Christians

- It will cost you time.
- It could cost you your reputation "friend of sinners" (Lk 7:34).
- It could cost you emotional anguish and pain.
- It will cost you inconvenience.

### B. The Benefits of Befriending Non-Christians

- You gain a friend—one with a different perspective.



- You gain an opening to the Gospel, not only for your new friend, but for his circle of friends, and potentially theirs as well.
- You gain an advocate among unbelievers for your faith.
- You gain the hope of new brothers or sisters in Christ, future co-workers in the task of reaching your community and nation.

#### **IV. LIFE EXPERIENCES CONCERNING FRIENDSHIP EVANGELISM**

*Spend the remainder of the lesson time sharing illustrations and personal examples about the importance of friendships in evangelism from your own lives.*

#### **QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION, REVIEW AND APPLICATION**

- How could I begin to establish communication with non-Christian acquaintances in my community?
- How could I initiate relationships with non-Christians in my community?
- Am I willing to count the cost to step out and reach others who are currently beyond my reach with the Gospel?
- What happens to a church planting movement if fervent, on-going evangelism breaks down?
- Jim Elliot, a missionary martyr to the Auca Indians of Ecuador, once wrote, "He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose." Was he right? How do his words relate the task of winning others to Christ?

#### **ACTION PLAN**

- Pray for divine encounters with non-Christians. What are ways in which you can initiate relationships with non-Christians in your community? Ask for boldness to walk through the doors He opens. Pray for insight to see them.
- Will I count the cost and demonstrate faith to befriend five non-Christians in my community this month to eventually win them to Christ?
- Seize the day! Be a friend and win those friends to Christ! Incorporate them into your Bible studies, fellowship and ministry outreach. Make them a part of the team!

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- Petersen, Jim. *Living Proof: Sharing the Gospel Naturally*, Colorado Springs: Navpress, 1989.
- Pippert, Rebecca Manley. *Out of the Salt Shaker & Into the World: Evangelism As a Way of Life*. Madison, WI: Intervarsity Press, 1999.

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# DISCIPLE MAKING

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DISCIPLE MAKING

1

LESSON

# Introduction to Disciple Making

## Lesson Purpose

The purpose of this lesson is to introduce the strategic place of disciple making in the overall church planting process.

## Main Points

- Disciple making is the responsibility of the church.
- Disciple making is the heart of the church's life.
- Disciple making is critical for the growth of the church.

## Desired Outcomes

When the content of this lesson has been mastered, each participant should . . .

- Understand the biblical basis for disciple making as it relates to the Great Commission.
- Have a greater personal vision for and commitment to the disciple making task.
- Understand God's ultimate purpose and how that relates to the disciple making task
- Understand how effective disciple making will contribute to his success as a church planter.

## Suggestions to Trainers

The discipleship lessons in Manuals Three and Four fit together. It is recommended that one trainer lead the entire discipleship track. If more than one trainer is needed, the trainers must have close coordination. Prior to beginning a cycle of training the trainer should read through the entire track (all six lessons, including action plans) to gain an understanding of the unique approach to content.

## INTRODUCTION

Disciple making is essential to church planting and is the responsibility of the local church. Churches reproduce because disciples reproduce themselves in the lives of others through disciple making. If evangelism is spiritual obstetrics, disciple making is spiritual pediatrics. In the process of raising children, it is not our desire to raise children who will be perpetually dependent and immature. In the process of disciple making we assist our brothers and sisters in Christ to grow to full spiritual maturity, partnering with God in the process of mutual edification and sanctification. Though disciple making is the task of the local church, it may be accomplished in a variety of ways. Rather than propose a rigid program of disciple making, this series of lessons will help you to understand the function of disciple making in the church planting task and to think through how to effectively accomplish that function in your own church planting ministry.

### I. THE BIBLICAL FOUNDATION

Disciple making was at the heart of Jesus' ministry while He was on earth. The Gospels give a clear description of how Jesus chose certain people to follow Him, trained them, and released them to carry on His mission. The Bible calls these people "disciples", which means learners, followers, or apprentices. In the Great Commission Jesus reveals that disciple making is at the center of His purpose for His Church until His return.

"**All** authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Therefore, going, make disciples of **all** nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them

to observe **all** that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you **all** the days, even to the end of the age" (author's literal translation of Matthew 28:18-20).

Disciple making is the very heart of the Great Commission. The dominant word which ties this passage together is "All": All authority, all nations, all things (that I have commanded you) and all the days. In the Greek, "going", "baptizing" and "teaching" are participles. Only the verb "make disciples" is in the imperative tense. With these simple yet profound words, Jesus gives His Church both her main assignment until He returns and the promise upon which her success is guaranteed. In the remainder of the New Testament, especially in the writings of Paul, we see how the early church lived out its obedience to this command.

## A. The assignment

The main emphasis is placed on the central command to "make disciples." Note that the command is to make disciples, not just converts. The three related participles reveal three important aspects of the disciple making process:

### 1. *Going*

The original Greek could easily be translated 'as you are going' or 'having gone.' It assumes that those who obey the Great Commission are "going." Disciple making is to be a natural part of going about our lives. Jesus did not make disciples in the sterile isolation of a classroom, but in the context of going about life. His disciple making was integrated, rather than isolated. His disciples are to follow His example, taking the initiative and not waiting for people to come into the church.

### 2. *Baptizing*

Baptism is the public testimony that the individual has placed his faith in Christ. The Great Commission indicates that baptism is 'into' the Trinity. From this we learn something of the nature of the disciple's new identity. One of the amazing qualities of the Trinity is the community which the Father, Son and Spirit share. In a similar way, a believer is baptized into the covenant community, the community of believers which shares the same kind of unity as the Trinity (Jn 17).

### 3. *Teaching*

As members of Christ's covenant community, the Church, and as those who have pledged submission to His lordship, Christians must learn how to live accordingly. Note carefully what is to be taught. The verse does not say the goal is to teach commandments, rather, the goal is to **teach obedience** to all that Jesus commanded. There is a tremendous difference between teaching commandments and teaching obedience. To simply inform people of Christ's will for them does not accomplish Christ's purpose. We must teach (and encourage and enable) people to obey. Note also that they are to be taught to obey "all that I have commanded." This means we must teach them to obey the whole will of Christ, leaving nothing out. We must not be satisfied with the partial obedience which can so easily become the norm. Rather, we must constantly search the Scriptures, asking ourselves, "Have we obeyed everything which is written here? And, "How can we obey each command more faithfully?"

Finally, we are to persevere in these three things "to the end of the age", i.e. until Jesus returns for His Church. With these words, Jesus shows that these instructions are for the whole Church until He returns, not just for the twelve disciples. This brings disciple making and church planting into an essential partnership. Church planting requires disciple making to mature the young church. Disciple making requires church planting to bring new believers into the process of becoming disciples.

## B. The promise

The assignment just described may seem overwhelming. However, as we go to make disciples, baptizing them and striving to teach them to obey all that Jesus commanded, we can go with confidence. We are assured of our ultimate success because Christ now has **all authority** and has

promised to be with us **in all days** to the end of the age. Christ Himself is the guarantee of success, as we abide in Him, depending on His authority and presence (cf. John 15:4-17).

The Apostle Paul, sitting in jail, wrote with assurance to the Philippian church (Phil. 1:6), "... being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus." Because He recognized that God was at work and that God's Spirit was resident in believers and the believing fellowship, he knew his work was not in vain. That's good news for us as we embark on a discussion of disciple making.

## II. DEFINITION OF DISCIPLE AND DISCIPLE MAKING

### A. A Disciple

A disciple can be defined as one who has placed his faith in Christ and, through baptism, has identified himself as a follower of Christ and as a member of Christ's Church. As a member of Christ's covenant community, he has pledged submission to Christ and is striving to live a life of obedience to the whole will of Christ. This obedience is not merely an external conformity to Christ's will, but springs from a heart of love, faith and hope. The disciple's growth in obedience is a lifetime process. The Scriptures describe a disciple as one who will "deny himself and take up his cross and follow (Christ)" (Mt 16:24). The disciple serves others (Mt 20:25-28). He has a supreme love for Christ (Lk 14:25-27). People will know that he is a disciple of Christ by his love for others (Jn 13:34-35). His life will bear the fruit of the Spirit (Jn 15:8).

### B. Disciple Making

Disciple making can be defined as the process by which the Church, depending on the authority and presence of Christ, takes the initiative...

- to lead people to faith in and submission to Christ,
- to incorporate them into Christ and his covenant community, the Church, through baptism
- to lead them into a life of obedience to the whole will of Christ.

Leading people to faith in and submission to Christ we often refer to as evangelism, which you have studied earlier. For the purpose of this part of your training, we will also assume that they have already been incorporated into Christ's covenant community through baptism, and are part of His Church. In this part of the course we turn our attention to leading them into a life of obedience to the whole will of Christ.

## III. GOD'S CALL TO MAKE DISCIPLES

### A. To Prepare the Bride of Christ

As we examine Scripture, we see that God's great goal in history is to glorify Christ by making Him head over everything. We also see that Christ will be presented with a "bride", made holy and blameless, who will be "his body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way" (Eph 1:23). Christ will rule supreme, yet He will not exercise His authority alone. He will rule in union with his Bride, the Church. In church planting, evangelism focuses bringing people to be a part of the Bride; and disciple making focuses on preparing the Bride for her relationship with Jesus, her Lord.

Thus, the Church is an essential part of God's eternal plan. All that God is doing now is designed to create this holy community, a people for this special purpose—to be truly one with Him and each other, to be participants in the very life that characterizes the Trinity. The unveiling of the Church, and her presentation to her husband, Christ, is the final, climactic event recorded in Revelation. Throughout eternity the perfected Bride and the Godhead will delight in and rejoice in one another. The Church will finally bring to God the glory He deserves, reflecting His holy character and worshipping Him "in spirit and in truth" (Jn 4:23). By His grace, God has ordained the Church as the means He will use to fulfill this purpose. **In summary, Christ's command to make disciples is**

**His call to take part in the creation of God's holy community, a perfect and holy bride set apart for Christ.**

#### **B. To Make The Bride Worthy Of the Bridegroom**

All that we are and all that we do must be evaluated in light of God's "calling" to take part in the creation of God's holy community, the Church. Our success in disciple making is measured by how well we are preparing a bride worthy of Christ. Are the things we are doing now preparing a bride who is worthy of Christ? Consider these questions:

- Are we equipping people to grow in union with God and with one another? Are we leading them to live lives that manifest that divine love which reflects this union?
- Are we equipping people to grow deeper in their faith and hope in Christ?
- Are we equipping our disciples to minister effectively to others, to build others up in Christ?
- Are we equipping people to be Christ's ambassadors, calling others to become part of God's holy community and thereby enlarging Christ's Bride?

### **IV. HOW DISCIPLE MAKING CONTRIBUTES TO CHURCH PLANTING**

Disciple making lies at the very heart of church planting. Your success in establishing new churches will depend not just on winning new converts to Christ, but in making true disciples who obey Him more and more faithfully.

**The planting of churches is in reality the establishing of communities of disciples where none had existed before.** The initial phase of church planting involves leading people to faith in and submission to Christ. As seen in the discussion on the Great Commission above, conversion is the first step in making disciples.

It must always be remembered that conversion for conversion's sake is never the goal. Conversion must be understood as simply the first step in a lifelong process. Disciple making leads these new converts to an ever deepening understanding of Christ's will for them and builds them up in such a way that they obey more and more fully. This deepening understanding and obedience comes from hearts of love that are growing in union with Christ and one another. In other words, true "community" is created when disciple making is done properly. If church planting involves the establishing of new "communities" of disciples, then disciple making, as we understand it here, is absolutely essential.

Another vital aspect of enabling your new converts to obey Christ is equipping them for ministry. Disciple making includes enabling your converts to fruitfully serve others, employing the spiritual gifts God has given them. Thus, disciple making leads to the rapid multiplication of co-workers in the ministry. Among these new co-workers will be those who will join in the church planting task. This rapid multiplication of co-workers is one of the most critical factors in the establishment of a church planting movement.

### **V. BEGINNING WITH THE END IN MIND**

As you put together a comprehensive disciple making plan for your church planting effort, you need to work through three critical steps:

- Understand your disciple making goal.
- Understand the present spiritual condition of your people.
- Develop a plan how to help your people grow from where they are now toward your disciple making goal.

Your concern here is to identify what your disciple making goal is and to allow that goal to shape what you are doing now. God is the one who determines the goal. Our responsibility is to clearly understand what God is calling us to be and do and then to respond in faith and obedience. Any planning we do is nothing more than our obedient response to God's revealed purpose. We plan because we want to obey God with all our heart and mind. We plan because we **intend** to obey and order our lives

accordingly. Such planning is always done in conscious dependence on God. It is birthed and maintained in prayer.

With regard to disciple making, your goal is lives of obedience to the whole will of Christ. Your beginning point is the present spiritual condition of the people you are discipling. Finally, you must develop a strategy how you are going to help your people grow from where they are now towards the goal of obedience to the whole will of Christ. You must find a practical way to help them understand more deeply what it means to live as members of Christ's covenant community and enable them to live accordingly, i.e. to live in obedience to the whole will of Christ. Disciple making occurs in no set place or time. It is a dynamic, multifaceted process and can be accomplished through a variety of settings and people. (Refer to Discipleship Lesson 5, "Forms for Disciple Making.")

## **QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION, REVIEW AND APPLICATION**

- What is wrong with evangelism without discipleship?
- What difference would an effective disciple making ministry make in establishing a new church? ... in establishing a church planting movement?
- Is it possible to plant a church without a good emphasis on discipleship? Why or why not?
- In what different contexts/formats could the church work toward making disciples?

## **ACTION PLAN**

- Describe what kind of disciple making goals your church presently has in place.
- List the disciple making goals you think you should have.





DISCIPLE MAKING

LESSON 2

# Your Role in Making Disciples

## KEYS TO SUCCESSFUL DISCIPLE MAKING

### ☞ Lesson Purpose

The purpose of this lesson is to review key considerations for success in making disciples.

### ☞ Main Points

- An effective disciple maker is one who is continually growing himself in faith, hope, and love.
- An effective disciple maker models faith, hope, and love to others.
- An effective disciple maker focuses on the essential core of faith, hope, and love.

### ☞ Desired Outcomes

When the content of this lesson has been mastered, each participant should . . .

- Understand why his own on-going spiritual growth is critical to making disciples.
- Be fully convinced of the strategic importance of investing himself in prayer and preparation and in quality contact time with believers for their progress as disciples.
- Understand the need to focus on people development, not program accomplishment, and to model and promote creativity and flexibility in disciple making.
- Understand the tremendous potential long-range impact of his current disciple making on multiplying fellowships and generations of believers.

### ☞ Appendix

2A Characteristics of Christian Love

## I. GROW SPIRITUALLY

Airline safety instructions tell us that, in the event of an emergency, adults are to put on required safety equipment prior to assisting others in the same process. This is because if we are incapacitated due to neglecting ourselves, we will be unable to assist others in need. This instruction is not selfish but pragmatic. It also applies in the realm of discipleship.

Your own spiritual growth is absolutely essential if you are to become an effective disciple maker. What you learn in this training is just a small beginning. Deepening your own spiritual life must be your number one priority.

### A. Develop Spiritual Discernment

In the end, your ability to discern the spiritual condition of your people will depend on your own level of spiritual maturity. No training program or book can replace that. The more mature you are, the deeper your own personal experience and understanding of faith, hope and love, the more clearly you will be able to discern their presence or absence in others. The deeper you have grown, the more clearly you will understand what the real spiritual issues are in your disciple's lives, from God's point of view.

Spiritual discernment comes through having your heart, soul, and mind conformed to God. This means you begin to look at things the same way God does. What God loves, you love. What God rejects, you reject. What causes God to rejoice causes you to rejoice. What causes God to mourn causes you to mourn. God's cause is your cause. His goals are your goals. His values are your

values. Spiritual discernment comes from sharing a deep fellowship with God as you share all these things with Him in prayer.

Growth in spiritual discernment creates a hunger to grow in your knowledge and understanding of God. You will desire to be open and honest with God, not to hide anything from Him. You will want to give God all you are and all that you have. You will rejoice at every opportunity to serve Him. You will consider it a joy and privilege to make sacrifices for His sake. Nothing will matter more to you than to walk with God in this way, to experience His intimate fellowship.

## **B. Learn What Produces Spiritual Maturity**

Your understanding of what it takes to grow spiritually depends on your own struggles and victories in these areas. If you have not grown yourself, then you have no practical experience of what “works” and what doesn’t. The deeper you have grown, 1) the more clearly you will understand what direction you need to take so your people will continue to grow, and 2) the more clearly you will understand how to deal with the spiritual barriers in their lives.

## **C. Develop Spiritual Influence**

The demonstration of spiritual growth in your own life will be the single greatest “eye opener” for your disciples. Their understanding of these things will deepen as they observe you. On the other hand, if they see that you are all talk but reality doesn’t match what you say, they will quickly lose motivation. They may also lose respect for you as a spiritual leader, destroying your ability to influence their lives. You will talk, but no one will listen.

# **II. DEMONSTRATE CHRIST-LIKE LOVE FOR YOUR DISCIPLES**

It is absolutely essential that you love your disciples with Christ-like love and that you demonstrate this love to them in practical ways. If they know beyond all doubt that you love them greatly, then they will be much more open with you, they will be much more open to be influenced by you, and they will be more willing to overlook your weaknesses and mistakes. They will learn what it means to love others by the way you love them.

## **A. What Does It Mean to Love Your Disciples?**

It has to do with your desires—what your heart truly wants. **To love one another means to desire one another.** You long for true fellowship with one another (Heb. 10:24-25). You want to spend time with each other (Php. 4:1, 1 Th. 2:17-18).

It has to do with your joys—what your heart rejoices in. **To love one another means to rejoice in one another** (Php 4:1; 1 Th. 2:19-20; 3:9; 2 Co. 7:14-16).

You desire to be with other brothers and sisters so that you may rejoice in one another. You enjoy each other and enjoy being together. You rejoice in the image of your beloved Savior, which you see in even the most humble and broken people. You rejoice when you recognize the Father’s work in the other’s soul, as a mother rejoices over her infant’s first words or first steps. You accept and appreciate others for who they are. You notice and rejoice in other’s good qualities and accomplishments. You are patient with other’s imperfections and failures.

It has to do with the orientation of your heart and mind—with whom your heart and mind identify. To love one another as Christ loved you means to be of one heart and mind (Ro. 12:10,15; Php 1:27, 2:1-5; Heb. 13:3).

The basis of your oneness with others is your oneness with Christ. If what is in Christ’s heart and mind is in you and others, then you share the same heart and mind. In Christ you share the same point of view, the same values, the same purpose, the same suffering and burdens, etc.

If you are one in heart and mind with others you no longer think in terms of just “me” or “mine,” but rather of “us” and “ours.” Your joys are their joys and your sorrows are their sorrows. Your need is their need. Your success is their success and your failure is their failure. When you are blessed, they are blessed. Your problems concern them and they want to help you in any way they can to

face or overcome them. Your goals are of special interest to them. They long to do whatever they can to help you achieve them. They want to give you the opportunity to help them as well. They long to bless you and be blessed by you. They want to know and understand you better. And they long for you to know and understand them better too.

## **B How This Love Manifests Itself in Your Life**

The Bible is filled with descriptions of how this love should manifest itself in your life. When this kind of love is present, it will profoundly affect what you do, as described, for instance, in 1 Corinthians 13. Look at the expanded version of 1 Corinthians 13:4-7 in Appendix 2A, "Characteristics of Christian Love."

You are commanded to love all men. You are to express this kind of love to everyone with whom God brings you in contact to the degree you can. However, you are limited. You don't have the time or resources to show the same amount of love to all. There must be priorities. God is first. Then God has put others in your life with whom you are to experience this kind of relationship in more depth, such as your family, your brothers and sisters in your local church, etc.

## **C. Some Practical Suggestions for Demonstrating Love for Your Disciples**

- **Spend time with them, to rejoice in them and to show that you are of one heart and mind with them.** Look at the characteristics of love for others which are described in Ro 12:10-21, Php 2:1-8 and 1Co 13:4-7.
- **Pray together.** Pray about problems being experienced and answers being given to situations. Ask God to show you how to demonstrate such love to the people He has given you, in ways to which they will respond and grow.
- **Study together.** Read books together and share the things you're learning. Study the Scriptures together, applying them to everyday problems.
- **Be creative.** Use time creatively to accomplish multiple purposes. Work together, play together, have meals together. Surprise growing believers with your sincere, intense interest in them.
- **Be available.** It's important that your disciples know you are available for answering questions and counseling concerning doubts that arise in everyday life.
- **Seek suggestions and support from other Christians.** If you are weak in this area (i.e. demonstrating love), seek the support you need in order to make progress.

# **III. FOCUS ON THE REAL SPIRITUAL NEEDS OF PEOPLE, NOT ON PROGRAMS**

## **A. Keep Things Simple**

Maintain the focus on the simple core, i.e. on love, faith and hope. The rest will flow from these three. The most basic of all is love. If your disciples fail to maintain their love for God and others, the Holy Spirit will be grieved and quenched. When this happens, the Spirit is no longer able to witness to their spirits that they are children of God. They can easily begin to lose both faith and hope. They can easily lose confidence that God really accepts them, and perhaps even doubt that they are saved. If they reach this point, all your comforting words will not help. You must recognize the work the Holy Spirit wants to do in their lives and cooperate in that work with Him. Help the person resolve any sin issues. Don't give false comfort. Help them see God's ultimate purpose for them and how He is working it out in their lives.

## **B. Enable Them To Keep Their Proper Priorities**

Don't overload your people with programs and activities. Give them the freedom to drop out of activities that are less important so that they can maintain their priorities without becoming overworked.

### **C. Be Patient**

New believers have a long way to go. Their whole interior life must be renewed: how they think, their values, and their desires (Ro 12:2).

You must continue to give them hope when they fall. Their natural tendency will be toward despair. You need to be like a parent who encourages his child when the child has failed. Give them time to come to their senses. Encourage them. Never give up on them. They must know that you believe in them and that God can and will forgive. They must know that nothing they do can stop you or God from loving them. If you fail to communicate these things, they will be in great danger of losing hope and giving up.

## **IV. AIM FOR REPRODUCTION AND MULTIPLICATION**

Regardless of what kind of “form” or structure you use for disciple making, you must find ways to multiply those who are involved in the disciple making task. You cannot personally disciple everyone. Your resources are limited and you need to get others involved in the task for their benefit and growth. You must plan how you will multiply co-workers for ministry on the large group, small group, and one-on-one levels.

In general, you will need to provide the following kinds of support to those whom you are equipping for the disciple making task:

- Opportunities to observe people who are doing the kind of ministry for which they are being prepared.
- Instruction and practical training in critically important skills.
- If needed, help in developing a practical strategy to do what is needed.
- Appropriate opportunities to practice what they are learning, with helpful feedback.
- Practical advice and support as they develop confidence and skill.

## **V. FREQUENTLY EVALUATE YOUR MINISTRY AND BE READY TO MAKE NEEDED CHANGES**

Is each person receiving what is needed in order to live a life of love, faith and hope? Is each person growing in love and unity with God and each other? Is each person being effectively used by God to build up the Body of Christ and his/her own family? Is each person being effectively used by God as His ambassador to the world? What changes need to be made in order to enable each person to make real progress in each area?

Don't waste time maintaining a program just for the sake of having a program. Your goal is that every ministry activity serves the purposes mentioned in the previous paragraph. Always ask yourself if your “forms” are effectively serving the “functions.”

## **VI. LEARN, LEARN, LEARN!**

Keep setting the pace as a disciple. Don't stop asking questions. Discover what resources are available to help you grow and help you help others grow in Christ. Ask others what tools are available and helpful in disciple making. If some resource is needed but not available, create it and share it with others.

## **QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION, REVIEW AND APPLICATION**

- How could these concepts apply to the raising of our children for Christ?
- Discuss the following statement: “People do not care how much you know until they know how much you care.” If this is true, how might it impact the ways we minister to others?
- What good tools are available in your language? What tools should be translated or created to meet your needs in disciple making?

## **ACTION PLAN**

- Read 1 Corinthians 13:1-7 and reflect on the characteristics of Christian love in Appendix 2A. Select three to five specific situations in which you need to apply characteristics of love. In your spiritual journal write how you applied these characteristics and the results.
- Compile a list of discipleship materials available in your language or the target language of the people you are seeking to reach in your church plant.

DISCIPLE MAKING  
APPENDIX

2A

# Characteristics of Christian Love

(1 CORINTHIANS 13:4-7)

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As you read through this list ask God to show you specific situations in which you need to apply these characteristics of love.

## Love is patient

- Love endures injuries without giving in to anger or bitterness nor seeking to retaliate.
- Love trusts God to work in the life of his brother, leaving judgment in the hands of God, yet longing over his brother who has lost his way.

## Love is kind

- Love yearns to bless the other, desiring only the best for his brother, sympathetically understanding his brother's weaknesses, and responding to injuries with deeds of kindness.
- Love always manifests a spirit of tenderness and compassion for his brother, no matter what that brother has done, caring intensely for the struggles and sufferings of his brother and does all he can to help his brother bear them.

## Love is not jealous

- Love is not resentful that others have benefits or advantages which he does not have, and is even willing to sacrifice his own position and influence for their sake.
- Love rejoices in the success and progress of others and encourages them onward, not looking at others as rivals for position or influence, but rather as partners in the Gospel to be served. Love always asks, "What can I do to help them be even more useful servants of Christ?"

## Love does not brag and is not arrogant

- Love never points to himself as being better, "more righteous", wiser or more gifted than others, seeking to draw attention to himself; but is eager to give credit, praise and approval to others.
- Love, acknowledging his limitations, is always open to the instruction of others, eager to be helped by others to have a deeper understanding of God's Word and to live in faithfulness to it, and is deeply concerned about the impact his words and actions have on his brother.

## Love does not seek its own

- Love is not concerned with self-gain, self-justification or self-worth, but rather is concerned only for the good of the community as a whole, willing to give up for the good of others even those things to which he is entitled.
- When disagreements arise (which are not clearly issues of sin), love is willing to look at things from the other person's perspective and submit to proper authority and the expressed will of the body. Love does not react in a way that destroys the unity of the body. Rather, love humbly and gently seeks to communicate his convictions in a way that preserves the unity of the body and honors those in leadership.

## Love is not provoked

- Love is slow to be offended or to become angry, hardly noticing when others do him wrong.
- When love is wounded, he never strikes back, seeks revenge or utters threats; instead, love returns good for evil.

### **Love does not take into account a wrong suffered**

- Love never keeps track of the sins of others or dwells on the faults of others.
- Love quickly forgives every offense, whether the offender repents or not, and refuses to dwell on them later.

### **Love does not rejoice in unrighteousness**

- Love does not enjoy pointing out or discussing the wrongs of others or speaking of a brother to others in a judgmental or unloving way.
- Love protects the reputation of his brother, never spreading rumors and gossip, but tries to stop them.

### **Love rejoices with the truth**

- Love yearns for truth to prevail in every situation, even when it is very painful to do so, or even if that means oneself is proven wrong.
- Love yearns to know the truth, to walk in the truth, to embrace the truth, to uphold the truth of God's Word, desiring for God to examine his words, deeds and motives so that God may reveal to him anything which is not pleasing to God.

### **Love bears all things**

- There is no sin so big that love can not forgive and respond in kindness.

### **Love believes all things**

- Love is always willing to give his brother the benefit of the doubt, to always interpret the other person's words and deeds in the most generous way, and to conclude that his brother has done nothing wrong.
- Love is reluctant to judge the motives behind his brother's words and deeds, knowing that only God truly understands his brother's heart.

### **Love hopes all things**

- Love always hopes for the best; and without being gullible, he is eager to forgive and give a brother a second chance.
- Love always hopes for the full recovery of a brother who has fallen, hoping and praying for God to be merciful to him.

### **Love endures all things**

- Love never reaches its limit, coming to the "breaking point."
- Love never says, "That was the last straw!"





DISCIPLE MAKING

3

LESSON

# Know Your Goal, Know Your People

## Lesson Purpose

The purpose of this lesson is to clarify the goals of disciple making and how to discern the spiritual maturity and effectiveness in ministry of one's disciples in light of those goals.

## Main Points

- A good disciple maker understands the biblical criteria for growth in obedience in spiritual maturity and effectiveness in ministry.
- A good disciple maker discerns the spiritual condition of his people.
- A good disciple maker has a specific goal in mind for his people.

## Desired Outcomes

When the content of this lesson has been mastered, each participant should . . .

- Know the primary biblical criteria for spiritual maturity and effectiveness in ministry.
- Be convinced that it is essential to focus on the heart, rather than just external behavior.
- Understand how to begin evaluating the spiritual maturity and ministry effectiveness of his disciples in the light of the biblical criteria.

## Appendix

3A Faith, Hope and Love Worksheet

## Suggestions to Trainers

It is helpful to have the trainees work through appendix 3A before you begin teaching this lesson.

## INTRODUCTION

As stated in Lesson One, "Introduction to Disciple Making", there are three critical steps in developing a disciple making plan for your church planting effort:

1. Understand your disciple making goal.
2. Understand the present spiritual condition of your people.
3. Develop a plan how to help your people grow from where they are now toward your disciple making goal.

In this lesson we will focus on steps 1 and 2.

## I. UNDERSTAND YOUR DISCIPLE MAKING GOAL

The first step in developing an effective disciple making plan is to clearly understand your ultimate goal. As stated in lesson one, your ultimate goal in disciple making is to enable people to live lives of obedience to the whole will of Christ. But what does this mean in practical terms?

### A. Criteria For Spiritual Maturity—Faith, Hope And Love

As we read the New Testament, we see that Jesus summarizes the whole issue of obedience in terms of "love" (Mt 22:36-40). This assumption underlies much of His teaching throughout the

Gospels (Mt 5-7 - Sermon on the Mount, Lk 7: 36-50, Lk 11:39-46, Jn 14:21, etc.). Later, we see that Paul does the same thing (Ro 13:8-10, 1Co 13:1-13; Gal. 5:6, etc.).

The Bible consistently gives two other critical elements of the obedient life as well: faith and hope (1Co 13:13). For more information, refer to Appendix 3A, "Some New Testament References to Faith, Hope and Love." Faith, hope and love are by far the most important traits of people who live lives of obedience to the whole will of Christ. They are the only true measure of spiritual maturity. Everything else flows from these. If your disciples have these, they will soon have everything else you would desire to see in them as well. Above everything else, you want your disciples to be people of faith, hope and love.

## **B. Criteria for effectiveness in ministry**

When it comes to ministry, love is also the key (Eph 4:15-16 and 1Co 12-14). Regardless of what kind of ministry a person may have, the goal is to build up the Body of Christ in love until the whole Body has "attained the whole measure of the fullness of Christ." Therefore, a life of love, faith and hope will by necessity result in ministry to others – both believers and unbelievers. Jesus Himself said that He "...did not come to be served, but to serve ..." (Mt 20:28). We are to follow in His footsteps.

The result is that the Church will experience both quantitative and qualitative growth (Mt 13:31-32). Quantitative growth means that the church will multiply in numbers, both individuals and congregations—this affects the whole body of Christ throughout the world. Qualitative growth means that the church grows in Christ-like maturity.

## **II. UNDERSTAND THE PRESENT SPIRITUAL CONDITION OF YOUR PEOPLE**

Once you have clarified your goal, i.e. the kind of disciples you want your people to become, you must evaluate them in light of this goal. Following are some suggested questions to help you begin. Ultimately, however, your ability to discern the maturity of your people depends on your own spiritual maturity. No list, book or training program can replace that. The more mature you are, the more clearly you will be able to discern spiritual reality in the lives of those you help. The deeper your own personal experience and understanding of faith, hope and love, the more clearly you will be able to discern their presence or absence in others. As your own "heart" knowledge of the Word of God increases, you'll be able to use the Word with more skill and insight in making disciples.

### **A. Focus On Issues Of The Heart, Not External Behavior**

In determining the spiritual condition of your people, it is important to focus more on the issues of the heart rather than on external behavior. The presence and growth of faith, hope and love in the person's heart is the primary thing you are concerned with. External behavior (words and deeds) reveals what is in the heart (Mt 12:34-35, 15:18-20; Lk 6:43-45, 8:15). It is a waste of time to try to produce desired behavior if there is a problem in the heart. If the heart is changed, appropriate behavior will follow.

If you notice something in their behavior which is not right, try to discern the reasons and motives behind their actions. For example, let us say someone is no longer attending church services. Instead of focusing just on their behavior and putting pressure on them to attend, try to discern why they have stopped coming and minister to them on that level. There are three basic questions to ask yourself:

- What does their behavior reveal about what they believe or don't believe?
- What does their behavior reveal about what they understand or don't understand?
- What does their behavior reveal about the orientation or attitude of their hearts?

In most cases, it will be necessary to talk with the person in order to really find out what is going on inside them.

A disciple making ministry which fails to focus on the heart will produce people who may be good at external conformity to what is expected. In the meantime, little real spiritual growth will occur.

**IMPORTANT:** Although the orientation of the heart cannot be directly observed, it can be measured indirectly by the person's words and deeds. Learn to look for patterns of behavior which show their basic heart attitudes with regard to the following questions.

## **B. Evaluate Maturity In Love, Faith, And Hope**

### *1. How To Evaluate Maturity In Love*

Key questions to ask concerning how mature your people are in the area of love:

#### **a) Love For God**

- Do they desire God above all other things or relationships? Is He their number one priority in life? If not, then what has taken His place in their hearts? What do they desire more than Him?
- Do they rejoice in God above all else? Do they delight in Him above all else? If not, then what do they enjoy more than Him? What has taken His place in their hearts?
- Are they of one heart, soul and mind with God? If not, then what has taken His place in their hearts? To whom or what have their hearts and minds conformed? With whom or what do they identify? Whose values do they reflect? Are their loyalties divided?
- How consistently do they walk in this love? When they do fall, how quickly do they repent and begin walking with God again?
- Do they evidence any (inappropriate) love for this world? We must realize the seriousness of this issue. It is in fact an issue of idolatry. To whom or to what one has given one's heart is the single most important question we face in this life. Many will display divided hearts, trying to love both God and the world at the same time. Help your disciples realize the impossibility of this position (Mt. 6:24, Jas 4:4-5, 1Jn 2:15-17). Love for the world and love for God are incompatible. One or the other will win out in the end. Clear evidence of continuing love for the world indicates that their love for God is either dead or dying, regardless of how "religious" they appear on the outside. Spiritual growth is impossible until this is dealt with. See the lists which Paul wrote describing the fruit of the flesh. These are an additional indication that love of the world is present in their hearts (Gal 5:19-21; 1 Co. 6:9-10; Ro. 1:28-32; Jas 3:14-16).

#### **b) Love For Others**

- Do they desire to have true fellowship with other believers (Heb. 10:24-25) and to spend time with them? (Php 4:1, 1Th 2:17-18).
- Do they rejoice in other believers? Do they delight in them? (Eph 1:15-16, Php. 1:3-8, 4:1, 1Th 2:19-20, 3:9).
- Are they of one heart and mind with their brothers and sisters in Christ? Are they demonstrating in practical ways their unity and love? (Ac 4:32-35, Ro 12:10-21, 1Co 13:4-7, Php 1:27, 2:1-4, Heb 13:3).
- Do they love their families? Are they consistently serving their families in love, deepening their unity as a family and building each member up in Christ? (Eph 5:25 - 6:4).
- Do they have a heart for the lost? Are they consistently demonstrating love to the lost? (Gal 6:10).

### *2. How To Evaluate Maturity In Faith*

Key questions to ask concerning how mature your people are in the area of faith:

- a) Do they understand what faith is?
- b) Do they understand God's grace?

- c) Is their faith firmly rooted in the Scriptures? Do they have an adequate understanding of the central biblical truths (Ro 10:17)?
- d) Do they have a deep conviction concerning these truths?
- e) Do they have a deep conviction that God loves them and has accepted them fully in Christ?
- f) Are they living by faith, depending on God's grace in every area of their lives?

### 3. *How To Evaluate Maturity In Hope*

Key questions to ask concerning how mature your people are in the area of hope:

- a) Are their hearts set on Christ and His call to them? (1Jn 3:1-3). Is this what they are really living for? (Php 3:7-14).
- b) Do they understand God's promises to them? Are they trusting God to be faithful to His promises? (Ro 4:18-24).
- c) Are they convinced that God is causing all things to work together for good for them, preparing them for the destiny He has for them? (Ro 8:28-30).

## C. Evaluate Effectiveness In Ministry To Others

As your disciples grow in faith, hope and love, they should become more and more effective in ministry to others. Key questions to reflect upon are:

- Are they effectively using whatever gifts and abilities God has given them to build others up in love, faith and hope? (Eph 4:11-13, 15-16).
- Are they encouraging and enabling people to grow in union with God and with one another? Are they enabling others to live lives which manifest that divine love which reflects this union? (Heb 10:24-25).
- Are they giving their brothers the practical support they need in order to overcome the spiritual difficulties in their lives? (Refer to Disciple Making Lesson 4, "Helping Disciples Grow Spiritually.")
- Do they effectively communicate the Gospel to the lost? (1Th 1:8).
- Are they effectively leading the lost to Christ and incorporating them into Christ's Body?
- Are they encouraging and enabling other Christians to effectively communicate the Gospel to the lost by word and deed?

## III PRACTICAL GUIDELINES FOR MAKING DISCIPLES

- **Spend time regularly with them.** Rejoice in them and show that you are of one heart and mind with them. Look at the characteristics of love for others which are described in Ro 12:10-21, Php 2:1-8 and 1Co 13:4-7.
- **Plan your time together.** Spiritual growth in discipleship doesn't happen by chance. Disciples are made, not born. Each disciple has special needs, and you need to address these needs in an organized way.
- **Share your struggles.** Sharing your struggles and being open to each others' needs is helpful for creating a bond between you and your disciples.
- **Pray together.** Pray about problems being experienced and answers being given to situations. Ask God to show you how to demonstrate such love to the people He has given you, in ways to which they will respond and grow.
- **Study together.** Read books together and share the things you're learning. Study the Scriptures together, applying them to everyday problems.
- **Be creative.** Use time creatively to accomplish multiple purposes. Work together, play together, have meals together. Surprise growing believers with your sincere, intense interest in them.

- **Be available.** Its important that your disciples know you are available for answering questions and counseling concerning doubts that arise in everyday life.
- **Seek suggestions and support from other Christians.** If you are weak in this area (i.e. demonstrating love), seek the support you need in order to make progress.

## QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION, REVIEW AND APPLICATION

- In light of God's ultimate purpose, what does it mean to be spiritually mature? What does it mean to be effective in ministry?
- How mature do you think your people are, when measured by faith, hope and love? Where is growth most badly needed? (If you have not yet started working with anyone, apply these questions to yourself.)
- How effective do your think your people are in ministry to others in light of the above criteria? (If you have not yet started working with anyone, apply this question to yourself.)

## ACTION PLAN

Complete the worksheet contained in Appendix 3A, " Faith, Hope and Love Worksheet."



# Faith, Hope and Love

## WORKSHEET

---

*Below are several passages of Scripture which were addressed to various New Testament churches. Please circle each occurrence of the words "faith", "hope" and "love" in these passages, using a different color for each of the words.*

**Romans 5:1-5** <sup>1</sup>"Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, <sup>2</sup>through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God. <sup>3</sup>Not only so, but we also rejoice in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; <sup>4</sup>perseverance, character; and character, hope. <sup>5</sup>And hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us."

**1 Corinthians 13:13** "And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love."

**Galatians 5:5-6** <sup>5</sup>"But by faith we eagerly await through the Spirit the righteousness for which we hope. <sup>6</sup>For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision has any value. The only thing that counts is faith expressing itself through love."

**Ephesians 1:15-18** "For this reason, ever since I heard about your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints, <sup>16</sup>I have not stopped giving thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers. <sup>17</sup>I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better. <sup>18</sup>I pray also that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, "

**Ephesians 3:14-19** <sup>14</sup>"For this reason I kneel before the Father, <sup>15</sup>from whom his whole family in heaven and on earth derives its name. <sup>16</sup>I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, <sup>17</sup>so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, <sup>18</sup>may have power, together with all the saints, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, <sup>19</sup>and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God."

**Colossians 1:3-5, 22-23** <sup>3</sup>"We always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, when we pray for you, <sup>4</sup>because we have heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of the love you have for all the saints—<sup>5</sup>the faith and love that spring from the hope that is stored up for you in heaven and that you have already heard about in the word of truth, the gospel ..." <sup>22</sup>"But now he has reconciled you by Christ's physical body through death to present you holy in his sight, without blemish and free from accusation—<sup>23</sup>if you continue in your faith, established and firm, not moved from the hope held out in the gospel. This is the gospel that you heard and that has been proclaimed to every creature under heaven, and of which I, Paul, have become a servant."

**1 Thessalonians 1:2-3** "We always thank God for all of you, mentioning you in our prayers. <sup>3</sup>We continually remember before our God and Father your work produced by faith, your labor prompted by love, and your endurance inspired by hope in our Lord Jesus Christ."

**1 Thessalonians 3:6** <sup>6</sup>"But Timothy has just now come to us from you and has brought good news about your faith and love. He has told us that you always have pleasant memories of us and that you long to see us, just as we also long to see you."

**1 Thessalonians 5:8** "8But since we belong to the day, let us be self-controlled, putting on faith and love as a breastplate, and the hope of salvation as a helmet."

**2 Thessalonians 1:3-4** "We ought always to thank God for you, brothers, and rightly so, because your faith is growing more and more, and the love every one of you has for each other is increasing. 4Therefore, among God's churches we boast about your perseverance and faith in all the persecutions and trials you are enduring."

**1 Timothy 1:5** "5The goal of this command is love, which comes from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith."

**2 Timothy 1:13** "13What you heard from me, keep as the pattern of sound teaching, with faith and love in Christ Jesus."

**Philemon 4-7** "4I always thank my God as I remember you in my prayers, 5because I hear about your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints. 6I pray that you may be active in sharing your faith, so that you will have a full understanding of every good thing we have in Christ. 7Your love has given me great joy and encouragement, because you, brother, have refreshed the hearts of the saints."

**Hebrews 6:10-12** "10God is not unjust; he will not forget your work and the love you have shown him as you have helped his people and continue to help them. 11We want each of you to show this same diligence to the very end, in order to make your hope sure. 12We do not want you to become lazy, but to imitate those who through faith and patience inherit what has been promised."

**Hebrews 10:22-24** "...22let us draw near to God with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water. 23Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful. 24And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds."

**James 2:5** "5Listen, my dear brothers: Has not God chosen those who are poor in the eyes of the world to be rich in faith and to inherit the kingdom he promised those who love him?"

**1 Peter 1:3-9, 21-22** "3Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, 4and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade—kept in heaven for you, 5who through faith are shielded by God's power until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time. 6In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. 7These have come so that your faith—of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire—may be proved genuine and may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed. 8Though you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy, 9for you are receiving the goal of your faith, the salvation of your souls." "21Through him you believe in God, who raised him from the dead and glorified him, and so your faith and hope are in God. 22Now that you have purified yourselves by obeying the truth so that you have sincere love for your brothers, love one another deeply, from the heart."





DISCIPLE MAKING

LESSON 4

# Helping Disciples Grow Spiritually



## Lesson Purpose

The dual purpose of this lesson is to prepare the church planter to identify the things Christians need (1) to know and do in order to live lives of love, faith and hope and (2) to prepare them to deal with the most common causes of spiritual struggle.



## Main Points

- Every believer faces spiritual struggle.
- The right kind of support at the right time can prevent spiritual stagnation and encourage growth.
- “Knowing” and “doing” are essential in order to live a godly life and minister to others.



## Desired Outcomes

When the content of this lesson has been mastered, each participant should . . .

- Understand and be able to recognize the most common causes of spiritual struggle in new believers.
- Be aware of appropriate biblical ways of addressing these hindrances in order to promote spiritual development.
- Be able to identify the most urgent things new believers need to know and do in order to live lives of love, faith and hope and to effectively minister to others.



## Appendix

4A Spiritual Growth Need Evaluation



## Suggestions to Trainers

Based on your own experience, fill out Appendix 4A before class and prepare overheads or posters to display the content to the class. Try to give the class a good idea of what it is they are trying to do with these worksheets.

Emphasize the material contained in Table 4.1

## INTRODUCTION

As church planters, part of our task is to ensure that the new church is growing spiritually. In this session we will discuss some common causes and remedies of spiritual struggle in the lives of new believers.

### I. IDENTIFY COMMON CAUSES OF SPIRITUAL STRUGGLE

There is one more important consideration you must deal with if you are to discern and address the true spiritual condition of your people. This has to do with the major spiritual hindrances in their lives. What are the most common reasons for spiritual struggle? What keeps them from living lives of love, faith and hope? What prevents them from ministering effectively to others? In order for your disciples to grow, you must find ways to help them overcome these hindrances.

Some of the most common causes of spiritual struggle are the following:

#### A. New Believers Lack Understanding

- They fail to understand some key biblical truth(s).
- They don't know how to do what is needed. They are not sure what to do or how to do it (For example: share the Gospel with someone, spend time with God in His word and prayer, etc.)
- They are not sure how to become involved in ministry to others.

#### B. New Believers Lack The Will To Obey:

- They are forgetful or are easily distracted.
- They want to obey, but simply forget to do what they should. In the rush of the world around them, they forget their priorities and become preoccupied with other things.
- They understand the truth, but don't really believe it.
- They have allowed love of the world to overcome them or have become slaves of sin.
- They are discouraged and have given up.
- They are disappointed in God or other Christians and now are angry with them.
- Fear is holding them back.
- They lack motivation.
- If they have lost motivation, try to find out why. The cause is usually one or more of the problems mentioned above.

**Table 4.1 Dealing With The Sources Of Spiritual Struggle**

THE PROBLEM	WHAT THEY NEED
<p>They fail to understand some key biblical truth.</p> <p>Perhaps the person fails because he understands neither God nor God's purpose for him, because he doesn't understand what true faith is nor how to live by faith, because he doesn't understand the hope he has in Christ. Perhaps he doesn't understand God's provision for him in Christ and in Christ's Body, because he doesn't understand Christ's love for him nor what it means to truly love God and others, or because he doesn't understand what it means to be part of the Body of Christ, etc.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Correction and instruction which clearly communicates the biblical truth they fail to understand and how it applies to their lives.</li> <li>• Opportunities to study the Scripture in greater depth.</li> <li>• Encouragement to become students of the Word and instruction in the necessary skills.</li> <li>• Opportunities to observe people who demonstrate the meaning of that truth in their own lives.</li> </ul>
<p>They don't know how to do what is needed.</p> <p>They are not sure what to do or how to do it. Perhaps it has to do with their personal walk with God (for example: pray, study the Bible, have a quiet time, etc.). Or, perhaps it has to do with practical ministry to others (for example: teach, encourage, lead a family devotional, give a personal testimony, share the Gospel with an unbeliever, etc.)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encouragement to apply what they are learning.</li> <li>• Opportunities to observe people who are doing what is required.</li> <li>• Instruction and practical training in the required skills.</li> <li>• If needed, help in developing a practical strategy to do what is needed.</li> <li>• Appropriate opportunities to practice what they are learning, with helpful feedback.</li> <li>• Practical advice and support as they develop confidence and skill.</li> </ul>

THE PROBLEM	WHAT THEY NEED
They are not sure how to become involved in ministry to others.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Help to see various ministry opportunities and encouragement to get involved.</li> <li>• People who show genuine appreciation for their efforts.</li> <li>• Others who are willing to let them minister to them while they are developing.</li> </ul>
<p>They simply forget or are easily distracted.</p> <p>They want to obey, but simply forget to do what they should. In the rush of the world around them, they forget their priorities and become preoccupied with other things.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continual reminding to follow through.</li> <li>• Continual stimulus and practical support to do what is needed.</li> </ul>
They understand some particular truth but don't really accept it.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Admonishment for unbelief and encouragement to believe.</li> <li>• Reasons to believe the particular truth they reject.</li> <li>• Opportunities to observe people who wholeheartedly apply these truths in their own lives.</li> <li>•</li> </ul>
<p>They have allowed love of the world to overcome them or have become slaves of sin.</p> <p>The worries of world, the deceitfulness of riches, and the desire for worldly things can often be almost overwhelming. An immature Christian, and even those who are more mature, may not have the strength of will to resist (Gal. 5:17; Mt. 13:22, 1Ti 6:8-10, Jn 2:15-17).</p> <p>Sin results in spiritual death. The Holy Spirit is quenched. The person loses the will to confront his sin. He loses the will to follow Christ. He loses the desire for real spiritual fellowship and is tempted to withdraw from both God and his brothers. The person becomes sin's slave and is no longer willing or able to break free on his own (Jn 8:34, Jas 1:14-15, Heb 3:13).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Practical advice and close support to deal with their particular weaknesses and to avoid temptation.</li> <li>• Help in recognizing their sin or blind spots.</li> <li>• Admonishment and a reminder of the seriousness of their sin.</li> <li>• Encouragement to repent for specific sins.</li> <li>• Practical advice and close support to overcome the sin.</li> <li>• Close support in developing new habits.</li> <li>• After repentance, assurance of forgiveness.</li> <li>• Close support to begin walking again in the Spirit.</li> </ul>

THE PROBLEM	WHAT THEY NEED
<p>They have become discouraged or fearful.</p> <p>In the New Testament discouragement is often the result of suffering (from persecution or loss - Mt. 13:20-21, Heb 12:3). Your people may face opposition from family, friends or the local priest. Fear of rejection or loss may discourage them from following Christ. Discouragement can also result from false expectations of what the Christian life will be like, of what God will do for him, or of what church or Christians are like.</p> <p>Discouragement may also result from his own spiritual failures. As a result, he may begin to doubt that he can make it in the Christian life or may feel that God will no longer fully accept him. He may even begin to doubt his salvation. In the end he may become so discouraged that he simply gives up. Failure in attempts at ministry may cause him to lose motivation.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reminders of God's promises.</li> <li>• Continual assurance of love, acceptance and forgiveness.</li> <li>• Assurance that they are not alone.</li> <li>• Continual encouragement to press on.</li> <li>• Practical help to face their fear and do what is needed in spite of it.</li> <li>• Assurance of God's protection and blessing for faithfulness.</li> <li>• Continual encouragement to hope in God.</li> </ul>
<p>They are disappointed in God or other Christians and now are angry at them.</p> <p>Sometimes new believers have false expectations as to what the Christian life will be like. When their expectations are not met, they become angry with God. Or, when other Christians let them down, they become angry and no longer want to associate with them. Sometimes they may also blame God for what so-called Christians have done.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Instruction to bring their expectations into line with God's Word.</li> <li>• Encouragement to see God's greater purpose in allowing these things in their lives.</li> <li>• Admonishment not to blame God for the failures of Christians.</li> <li>• Admonishment to forgive others as God has forgiven them.</li> </ul>
<p>In all of the above areas:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• They need brothers/sisters who are devoted to them in love (Ro. 12:10).</li> <li>• They need people who will pray for them and with them.</li> <li>• They need people who will hold them accountable before God.</li> <li>• They need people who will help keep watch over their hearts.</li> <li>• They need people who will do whatever it takes to help them overcome their spiritual problems and grow.</li> </ul>

## II. DETERMINE THE SUPPORT BELIEVERS NEED TO OVERCOME SPIRITUAL HINDRANCES

When you have identified their greatest spiritual struggles, you must ask yourself: what kind of support must these people receive in order to overcome these hindrances? What kind of help must they have in order to consistently live lives of love, faith and hope? What must they have to effectively minister to others?

At this point you must be utterly realistic. Every one of your people faces these problems. Few of them will be able to overcome these hindrances on their own. If they do not receive the right kind of support, at the right time, their spiritual lives will come to a standstill. It is your responsibility to make sure they receive the support they need.

Scripture makes it very clear that teaching and preaching are not enough. How many of the common problems noted in Table 4.1 can be overcome with instruction alone? Very few of them. The Bible talks about many other essential ministries within the Body of Christ, such as

- warning, encouraging, helping one another (1Th 5:14),
- correcting and rebuking (2Ti 4:2),
- refuting (Tit 1:9),
- turning one another from sin (Jas 5:19-20),
- speaking the truth in love (Eph 4:15),
- counseling one another (Col. 3:16),
- encouraging and building each other up (1Th 5:11),
- stimulating one another to love and good deeds (Heb 10:24),
- strengthening weaknesses (Heb 12:12),
- comforting and urging (1Th 2:11-12),
- restoring one another, carrying each other's burdens (Gal 6:1-2),
- bearing with one another (Eph 4:2),
- forgiving one another (Col 3:13),
- praying for one another (Eph 6:18, Jas 5:16, 1Jn 5:16),
- confessing sin to one another (Jas 5:16),
- serving one another (Gal 5:13),
- accepting one another (Ro 15:7),
- honoring one another (Ro 12:10),
- doing good to one another (Gal 6:10).

If your disciple has truly set his heart on following Christ, he will welcome this kind of help. Talk with him about this and get his permission to help him in these ways. Thus, when it becomes necessary to help him deal with some issue, it won't come as a surprise.

## QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION, REVIEW AND APPLICATION

- What are some of the most common reasons for the spiritual failure of new believers?
- Why do they fail to effectively minister to others?
- What are the most important truths they fail to understand or believe?
- What are the most important things they fail to do or don't know how to do?
- Which kinds of support are most critical for new believers in light of their most common spiritual hindrances?

## ACTION PLAN

- Read closely Table 4.1 "Dealing with the Sources of Spiritual Struggle."
- Read and reflect on Appendix 4A, "Spiritual Growth Need Evaluation." Complete the evaluation form and answer the questions for yourself and for at least one of your disciples.



# Spiritual Growth Need Evaluation

---

\_\_\_\_\_ (Name of person)

	Not a problem				A major problem
	1	2	3	4	5
1. Fails to understand some key biblical truth					
2. Doesn't know how to do what is needed					
3. Isn't sure how to become involved in ministry to others					
4. Understands some particular truth but doesn't really accept it					
5. Simply forgets or is easily distracted					
6. Allows love of the world to overcome him or becomes slave of sin					
7. Is discouraged					
8. Is fearful					
9. Is disappointed in God or other Christians and now are angry with him					
10. Lacks motivation					
11. Other					

1. If your disciples fail to understand some key biblical truths, which specific truths do they need to learn?
2. If they don't know how to do what is needed, what specific skills do they need to learn?
3. If they understand some particular truths but don't really accept them, which specific truths do they need to believe?
4. What forms of support do your disciples most urgently need?





DISCIPLE MAKING

LESSON 5

# Forms for Disciple Making

## Lesson Purpose

The purpose of this lesson is to enable the trainees to understand some basic “forms” which can be used for making disciples and to start writing a discipleship plan designed for typical new believers.

## Main Points

- Disciple making is not limited to any one model; each has its advantages and limitations.
- The church planter’s main role in disciple making is to disciple leaders who will be able to disciple others.
- Developing a disciple making plan for new believers is critical to the spiritual and physical growth of the church.

## Desired Outcomes

When the content of this lesson has been mastered, each participant should . . .

- Understand four basic forms for carrying out the functions of disciple making.
- Participate in developing a disciple making plan to be used in discipling other believers.

## Appendix

5A Disciple Making Plan

## Suggestions to Trainers

Be sure the trainees understand their “Action Plan” assignment. They must bring their disciple making plans with them to Manual Four training. Complete ahead of time your own copy of Appendix 5A, “Disciple Making Plan” as if for a “typical” new believer. Prepare it to be shown on an overhead projector or poster as an example to the class.

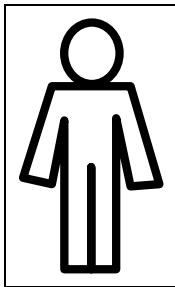
Have trainers share what they have found to be effective from their own discipleship and disciple making experiences. Invite trainees to do likewise.

## INTRODUCTION

Up to now we have focused our attention on the **functions** of disciple making. We have seen that the most important **functions** serve one central purpose: to enable people to live lives of love, faith and hope. Ultimately, such lives are the result of an inner spiritual transformation, a renewing of the heart. This inner transformation manifests itself in a new way of thinking and a new way of behavior. Along the way, new truths must be absorbed and new skills must be learned. At the same time, strong support is needed so that spiritual hindrances may be overcome. Therefore, three disciple making **functions** which are among the most important are: 1) the communication of vital truths, 2) the development of essential skills, and 3) the provision of needed spiritual support.

We now face the question of **form**. What structures and methods should we adopt in order to ensure that the “functions” of disciple making are effectively taking place? There are four basic forms or structures that can be used in disciple making. These forms may be used simultaneously and are not meant to be exclusive.

## I. FORM I: INDIVIDUAL GROWTH



**Example:** Jesus' intercessory prayer in John 17

**Setting:** A disciple works on his own. This includes self-study as well as doing other things on his own, such as witnessing, praying, etc.

**Size:** One person

**Ministry Style:** Self-learning

**Function:** 1) the communication of vital truths, i.e. deepening understanding of truths already touched on in the large group, small group and one-on-one meetings, 2) the development of essential skills.

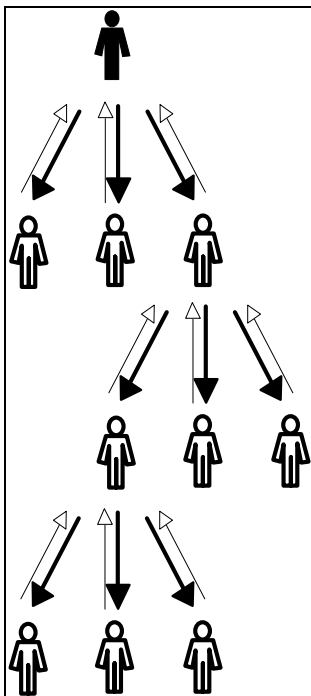
### Advantages:

- A greater amount of knowledge and experience can be more quickly gained.
- Reading can be targeted at the specific needs of the person.
- The leaders are freed to give their time and energy to other ministry needs.
- The disciple can learn at his own pace and take time for reflection and application.

### Limitations:

- Unless tested in some way, there is no way of knowing how much was understood or absorbed.
- There is no opportunity to observe the disciple as he is engaged in ministry so that you may give him helpful advice.
- Other kinds of spiritual support are still needed.
- Impersonal approach which models individualism and not community.

## II. FORM 2: ONE-ON-ONE DISCIPLESHIP



**Example:** We can see Jesus using this form in conversations with Nicodemus (John 3) and the Samaritan woman at the well (John 4).

**Setting:** A leader, or mentor, meets separately with various individuals.

**Size:** 2 people per meeting.

**Ministry style:** Mentoring.

**Functions:** 1) the communication of vital truths, 2) the development of essential skills, and 3) the provision of needed spiritual support.

**Communication:** Two-way communication. The mentor receives feedback from his disciple.

**Who ministers:** Mostly the mentor. However, the mentor should make it a priority to train and involve his disciple in ministry to others.

**Multiplication:** Every mentor should have apprentices who are learning how to disciple others one-on-one as shown in the figure above. These apprentices will learn by "observing" and "doing" under supervision. Training seminars may also be provided.

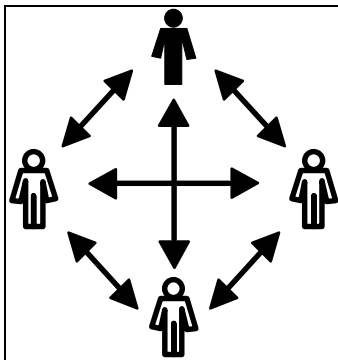
**Advantages:** In many cases, one-on-one contact is the only way you will find out what is happening spiritually within the person. Many new converts will grow only when individual attention is given to them.

- There is maximum opportunity to give the person the support he needs.
- Teaching and training can be targeted to the specific needs of the individual.
- There is maximum opportunity for feedback, to discern how much is understood and absorbed.
- There is maximum opportunity to help him put what he is learning into practice and to help him become involved in ministry to others.
- The leader can easily identify and train those with the potential to do one-on-one ministry with others. This leads to the multiplication of one-on-one ministry.
- This is a wonderful structure for teaching skills.

**Limitations:**

- One person can't meet all the spiritual needs of an individual. However, this can be countered with several different one-on-one meetings.
- A leader can have a one-on-one ministry with only a few people. Multiplication of new mentors becomes critical.

### III. FORM 3: SMALL GROUP MINISTRY



**Example:** We see Christ demonstrating this form in his Upper Room discourse, found in Gospel of John chapters 13-16.

**Setting:** Cell groups, small Sunday school groups, small Bible study groups, Prayer groups, house-church groups, committees, etc.

**Size:** Less than 10-15 people.

**Ministry style:** Facilitation. The leader's goal is to facilitate the others in the group to mutual ministry. Teaching is not the only form of ministry.

**Functions:** 1) communication of vital truths, 2) development of essential skills, and 3) provision of needed spiritual support.

**Communication:** Communication is multi-directional.

**Who ministers:** Everyone in the small group.

**Multiplication:** Every group leader should have an assistant who is being trained to become a group leader. This assistant will learn by "observing" and "doing" under supervision. Training seminars may also be provided.

**Advantages:**

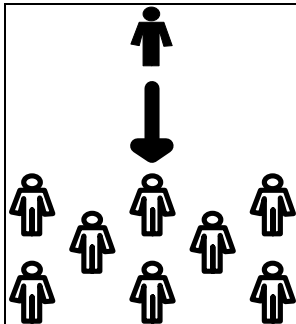
- Less qualified leaders can be used to lead the group.
- Everyone can be involved. Communication is multi-directional. Everyone has the opportunity to use and develop his ministry gifts.
- Those with teaching or other leadership gifts can be more easily identified and developed. This makes multiplication of the ministry easier.
- There is greater opportunity for feedback, to discern how much is understood and absorbed.
- It is easier to focus the teaching and training on the real needs of the group members.
- There is much greater opportunity to understand the deeper spiritual needs of people in the group and to give the kind of support they need. There is greater opportunity to help them put what they are hearing into practice.

**Limitations:**

- Many leaders are needed if a large number of people are to be involved in small groups (This can be offset if the small group is used as a training ground for new leaders.)

- Many people will not share their deepest spiritual needs, even in front of a small group. If the group is mixed (men and women), there may be even less openness.

#### IV. FORM 4: LARGE GROUP MINISTRY



**Example:** An example from the life of the Lord can be found in Matthew chapters 5-7, the Sermon on the Mount. Peter's sermon to the Jews at Pentecost in Acts 2 is another fine example.

**Setting:** Sermons during worship services, Sunday school, large Bible study groups, seminars, etc.

**Size:** 15, 30, even 100 people or more.

**Ministry style:** The leader mostly lectures.

**Functions:** Main focus is the communication of those vital truths that are relevant to most people in the group.

**Communication:** Mostly in one direction—from the leader to the listeners.

**Who ministers:** The leader(s). Ministry flows in one direction—from the leader to the rest of the group.

**Multiplication:** The leaders should be always training new people for this kind of ministry. The trainees will learn by “observing” and “doing” under supervision. Training seminars may also be provided. The most capable may be selected for more formal training.

**Advantages:** Fewer qualified leaders/coworkers are needed to teach a larger number of people.

**Limitations:**

- Few people other than the main speaker(s) have an opportunity to use and develop their ministry gifts.
- This approach is not very useful for developing future leaders. Unless other means are found to develop leaders, it will be difficult to multiply the ministry into a church planting movement.
- To be done well, you need someone who is gifted as a teacher/preacher. Often it is difficult to find enough qualified people.
- A single leader does not have all the gifts necessary to meet all the spiritual needs of the group.
- There is little opportunity for feedback, so it is difficult to know how much is understood and absorbed.
- There is little opportunity to understand the deeper spiritual needs of people in the group and to give the kind of support they need. There is little opportunity to help them put into practice what they are hearing.
- There is a tendency for most of the listeners to become passive.
- No one ministers to the leader(s).
- If this is the primary form of ministry, then most people will not mature spiritually. The leaders often become overworked because there are too few co-workers.

#### V. A REMINDER

As church planters your primary role in the disciple making process is to identify and disciple potential leaders. These will in turn disciple others (2Ti 2:2). As you think about the needs of your disciples, remember that people have different learning styles. For example, some people learn best in a group, others are good self-learners, still others need one-on-one attention. Part of your disciple making plan should be to evaluate how each person learns best and provide discipleship.

## **QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION, REVIEW AND APPLICATION**

- In your context, which “forms” do churches most often use in discipling their people? How effective have these forms been used to provide what young disciples need? What needs are not being met? What forms do you think would be most appropriate for meeting these needs?
- What forms do you feel most comfortable using? What forms do you feel most uncomfortable using? Why?

## **ACTION PLAN**

Using Appendix 5A, “Disciple Making Plan”, prepare a separate disciple making plan for each person that you are discipling in your church planting ministry.

You must bring your completed plans to the next Disciple making lesson, which will take place when you begin Manual Four training.



# Disciple Making Plan

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This appendix provides a means to help you develop a practical plan to help your disciples grow in spiritual maturity. This spiritual maturity is measured by inner personal growth, growth in relationship with God, and growth in relationship with other people. Hopefully, you have already begun thinking about which are the most important truths and skills you need to teach your people, especially new believers. You have also discussed which kinds of support are most critical for new believers in light of their most common spiritual struggles. You must now plan when and how you will teach specific truths and skills during the next twelve months, as well as how you will provide the necessary spiritual support. You will also need to think about the means for multiplying the ministry.

You should make a plan for each person whom you are discipling in your church plant. If possible, those who are on the same church planting team should work together to produce this plan.

Two worksheets for developing a disciple making plan are provided on the following pages. Complete the first worksheet, 5A.1 "What New Believers Need to Know and Do" as a general guideline for new believers in your church planting ministry. The second worksheet, 5A.2 "Individual Disciple Making Plan", is to be used once for each person you are discipling. There will be specific truths and skills that each of your disciples needs to learn. Use worksheet 5A.2 to determine how these truths and skills will be taught, and in what chronological order.

In filling out these worksheets, keep the following factors in mind:

- Determine which forms (large group, small group, one-on-one, individual) are most appropriate for the truth/concept/conviction or habit/skill you want to teach. You do not need to use all four discipleship forms.
- Often it is wise to use repetition. This means the person will be exposed to similar truths or skills several times in various forms. For example, you can preach about a certain truth on Sunday morning and then deal with personal application of that truth in small group and on-on-one meetings.
- Determine the order in which truths and skills should be taught. Often there is a logical sequence which you will need to follow.
- Issues that are most critical for the spiritual survival of each person should be dealt with earlier, rather than later.
- Decide what existing discipleship materials, if any, you want to use. After you have made your selection, you can place the appropriate lesson or chapter titles on your worksheet. In a similar way, list the materials which will be used for individual study.
- Each row in worksheet 5A.2 represents a month. You can list several subjects in one block. For example, in your one-on-one meetings in the first month, you might list a different subject to be covered each week, such as: personal time with the Lord, how to pray and how to deal with sin. On the other hand, during month six, you might decide to spend the whole month on one subject, such as, developing a personal testimony.

With your church planting team, use the following worksheets, 5A.1 and 5A.2, to identify needs and develop a plan for each person you want to disciple in your church plant. Fill in the charts with the truths and skills which will be taught.

### Worksheet 5A.1 - What New Believers Need to KNOW and DO

#### INSTRUCTIONS:

- *List those things which new believers most urgently need to KNOW to successfully live lives of love, faith and hope and to effectively minister to others. What truths or concepts must they understand? Many of these will point beyond intellectual knowledge to convictions they should have.*
- *List those things new believers most urgently need to DO to successfully live lives of love, faith and hope and to effectively minister to others. Many of these items involve habits they should develop. Many will also imply skills they will need to learn.*

	What they need to KNOW (truths or concepts/convictions)	What they need to DO (habits/skills)
To live lives in love and unity with God		
To live lives in love and unity with their families and other believers and build them up in Christ		



	<b>What they need to KNOW (truths or concepts/convictions)</b>	<b>What they need to DO (habits/skills)</b>
<b>To live lives of faith</b>		
<b>To live lives of hope</b>		
<b>To effectively minister to the lost</b>		

### Worksheet 5A.2 – Individual Disciple Making Plan

\_\_\_\_\_ Name of person

Month	Individual	One-on-one	Small groups	Large group
1				
2				
3				
4				
5				

Month	Individual	One-on-one	Small groups	Large group
6				
7				
8				
9				
10				

Month	Individual	One-on-one	Small groups	Large group
11				
12				

Things to think about:

- Who will teach/train/preach on the large group level?
- Who will lead the small group?
- Who will work with the person(s) one-on-one?
- How will you develop leaders so that each of the above ministries may be multiplied?
- List what support other than teaching will be provided (such as encouragement, prayer, accountability, etc.). How will this support be provided? Who will do it?



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# SPIRITUAL WARFARE

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**SPIRITUAL  
WARFARE**

**1**

**LESSON**

# Understanding Worldview

## Lesson Purpose

To help the church planter understand the concept of worldview and to show how deeply one's view of the world affects his own Christian life, how he does ministry, and how he interprets his ministry situation.

## Main Points

- Commonly held worldviews contrast with a biblical worldview.
- Worldview effects church planting.

## Desired Outcomes

When the content of this lesson has been mastered, each participant should . . .

- Be aware of the importance of having a proper worldview.
- Know the scriptural basics about the realms of God, angels, man and nature.
- The church planter will be able to examine his ministry situation in the light of a biblical worldview.

## INTRODUCTION

When we speak of worldview we are speaking of the core beliefs and understandings that a person has about the world. Each person, whether he knows it or not, has beliefs deep in his soul which determine his actions and behavior and help him explain the world around him. Worldview helps people understand nature, other people and the supernatural world. As people grow, their experiences result in the formation of a worldview which may or may not accurately interpret reality.

When we speak of a biblical worldview, we are speaking of what the Scriptures say about the universe, what is real, what is true, what IS. Logically there can be ONLY one reality, one truth or explanation of what IS. We believe that Scriptures present this explanation of the world. And it is by this truth that we seek to measure or check our understanding of the world.

It is very important that church planters have a biblical worldview in order to properly interpret the circumstances of their ministry. This is especially true concerning spiritual warfare. If a person does not have a biblical worldview, he may not recognize attacks from Satan, or he may not know how to respond to the attacks. In this lesson we will explore common worldviews and how the biblical worldview is foundational to understanding spiritual warfare.

## I. COMMON WORLDVIEWS

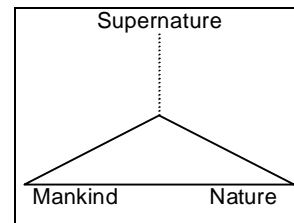
One way to understand worldviews is to look at three components of the universe: supernature, nature and mankind. We will use these three components to explain three common worldviews below.

Let's say that a person is sick. How do we interpret that event? It all depends on worldview. As we describe the worldviews below we will see how each explains this sickness.



### A. Secular Worldview

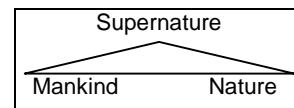
In the secular worldview, the natural world and the realm of mankind are controlled by “natural laws”, which perhaps a creator god established, but which today operate without any supernatural involvement. The existence of the supernatural world, including God and spirit beings, may be denied completely by secular people. Or, if the supernatural exists, secular people assume that it is separate from the natural/mankind world. Whatever connection there may be, it is believed to be a very distant one.



Secular people accept the premise that every phenomenon has a natural or human cause. For the one who is sick, a germ, or mosquito, or other illness infected the body. Everything can be explained scientifically. The person should seek medical treatment to get better, according to this worldview.

### B. Animistic Worldview

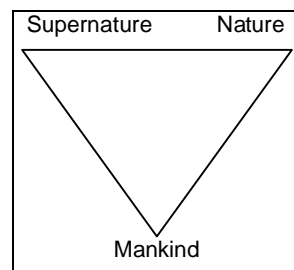
The animistic worldview is nearly the opposite of the secular worldview. In this worldview the supernatural world is extremely close to the natural and mankind realms. Spirits from the supernatural realm may live in natural objects and people and these spiritual beings have power to control things. If a person pleases these spirits he can gain merit, including protection or healing. If a spirit is angry it can cause great harm.



The sick man, according to this worldview, has upset the spirits or a spell has been put on him. In order to be well again this person will need to do something to please the spirits or break the spell. The treatment in this case may even defy medical knowledge, which is not to be trusted in the animistic worldview.

### C. Fatalistic Worldview

The fatalistic worldview is based on the belief that man has no control over the world around him. Supernatural and natural forces direct the track of history, and man lives as best he can in that predestined fate. One Shinto writer put it so well: *“Life is like a leaf floating in a river. The leaf can get stuck in a little whirlpool, or it may flow along peacefully in a quiet stream, or it may come upon rapids, water of great turmoil. The leaf has no control over where it goes. So humans are trapped in their fate.”*



The treatment then for the sick man may be to do nothing. There may be no attempt to treat him as well as no attempt to determine the reason for the sickness.

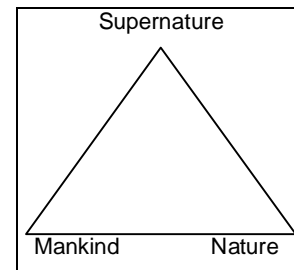
## II. A BIBLICAL WORLDVIEW

The biblical worldview, as we have already said, teaches the proper worldview. The proper worldview sees the three components as they actually interact with one another.

## A. Supernature

### 1. *God the Creator*

The book of Genesis opens with the words, "In the beginning God..." This is our natural foundation for building a worldview. God Almighty, existing out of time, eternal, self sustaining, Creator of heaven and earth, without equal or rival, in His sovereignty controls the happenings of history. In contrast to the secular worldview, Scripture teaches that God is involved in history. For instance



- He directed the history of Israel in preparation for the Messiah.
- Christ came into the world and lived among mankind.
- Christ ascended into heaven and sent the Holy Spirit upon His church.

The Bible affirms the active work of the Holy Spirit in and through the lives of believers. The Holy Spirit is active today. He convicts the world concerning sin, righteousness and judgment (Jn 16:8-11). He gives the believer new life (Ro 8:11). He testifies that we are God's children (Ro 8:16). The Holy Spirit helps us to pray (Ro 8:26) and He teaches (Jn 14:26, 1Jn 2:27).

Scripture does not teach that God and Satan are equal yet opposite forces. According to the biblical worldview, God is self-existent and Satan is created. Satan does not have power equal to God's. God controls Satan as seen in Job chapter 1. Before Satan could do anything to Job, he had to receive God's permission.

### 2. *Created Spirit Beings (Satan and Angels)*

The story of creation continues. Though the Genesis account does not include the creation of angels, we read in Colossians 1:16 that God (in Christ) created all things, in heaven and on earth, visible and **invisible**. Though the New Testament records very little about angels, it is clear that they are active in our world today (Heb 13:2). Many evangelicals believe that Revelation 12:4 refers to the fact that when Satan fell he took one third of the angels with him. These "bad angels" are also known as demons. We know that demons also are active in our world (Jas 3:15, 1Ti 4:1). Again, this is in contrast to the secular worldview but closer to the animistic worldview in that both recognize that there is a battle between God and Satan. In the animistic worldview, the victory in battle depends on whose "god" is stronger. If two tribes war against each other, the tribe with the greater god will be victorious. In contrast, Scripture teaches that God is the victor. A seeming contradiction is found in Joshua 7. There God's people were defeated in battle. A careful look at the text shows that this was not because some other god or spirits defeated God, but because His people suffered the consequence of their sin. God was not defeated. He permitted Israel to be defeated because of disobedience.

Consider your own understanding of angels and demons. To what extent can they act in your daily activities? Are they limited to the level of the intellect and mind? Can they be involved in physical activity? Can we be sure of victory over Satan? We will discuss these ideas in more depth in the following lessons on Spiritual Warfare.

## B. Nature

The creation account continues with how God created the material world. Here also there are many different worldviews or perceptions of the material world. Some say it does not matter—it is just an appearance (fatalistic); some identify with the earth as "mother nature" and maintain a reverent respect for it (animistic); others hold it is something man must conquer and rule over (secular).

According to the Bible, God's creation was designed to declare the glory of God (Psalm 19). Nothing is more awesome, impressive, or beautiful than the world itself—high mountains, crashing waves, waterfalls, underground caves, green fields, frost covered trees, fields of flowers, sunrises and sunsets; God's creation does declare His glory! Satan's goal is to destroy or mar God's creation. If Satan cannot destroy God then he will attempt to destroy that which glorifies God. It is interesting that God's assignment to Adam was to cultivate and keep the garden (Ge 2:15). Our

worldview should reflect God's intention for His creation—that it might glorify Him. Do our activities in the material world glorify God?

### C. Mankind

Finally, we come to the creation of man in the Genesis account. Man was created out of the natural world (that is, the dust) but God also breathed the breath of life into him and created man in His own image. Thus man is a complex being; he is both material and spiritual. This is the teaching of Scripture. Man is not just physical—a mix of chemicals and cells as some hold (secular). Man is not just spiritual, as some fatalistic Eastern worldviews hold. Man has a spirit and a physical body (Ge 3:7). Part of the great mystery of man is that he has a free will. God does not force man into behavior or thinking or program him as a robot. In contrast to the fatalistic worldview, man is not trapped in some "river" of life called fate. He has a will and makes choices. He may choose to love God, and he may choose to reject God (Jos 24:15).

## III. WORLDVIEW AND CHURCH PLANTING

The Scriptures show us that God is not battling Satan. Satan has already been conquered (1Jn 3:8, Col 2:15, Heb 2:14-15). Through the Gospel as it is declared by the Church, God seeks to reconcile man to Himself, while Satan seeks to deceive man (Rev 12:9), devour him (1Pe 5:8), tempt him (1Th 3:5), and accuse him (Rev 12:10).

Spiritual warfare takes place within the realm of man. As the apostle Paul states in 2 Corinthians 10:3-5, this war is for our minds—our worldview:

"For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ."

Note how the apostle Paul makes a connection between destroying strongholds and arguments and taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ. Finally, consider John 8:32, "*You will know the truth and the truth will set you free.*" The more we know the truth and act on it, the more we will be victorious. This will be explained in more detail in the next lesson, "Relationships in Spiritual Warfare."

It is extremely important that we as church planters have an understanding of the world as it actually is—that is, as explained in Scripture. Church planting is spiritual warfare. Satan will attack in any way he can as churches are planted. If we do not have a proper worldview then Satan may attack (for example, through sending sickness) and we may not even recognize it! A correct understanding of biblical worldview helps the church planter to correctly discern what is happening in his life and ministry.

## QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION, REVIEW AND APPLICATION

- As you have been exposed to the truth of this lesson, have you identified any practices in your own life that are inconsistent with the biblical worldview? What about practices of those who are in your target area?
- How do these inconsistencies in your life affect your relationship with God, your spouse, your children or the lost?
- If a church planter becomes very ill, does this mean that Satan is attacking him through sickness? When might this be the case?

## ACTION PLAN

- Meet with another believer and explain the main ideas of this lesson. Share how your behavior is going to change in response to the new truths you have learned.
- Think about the worldview of the people who are in your target area. In what way is their worldview the same as the biblical worldview? In what way is it different? How will this effect your strategy for

evangelism? How and what will you teach new converts in order to bring their worldview more in line with the biblical worldview?

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- Warner, Timothy M. *Spiritual Warfare: Victory over the Powers of This Dark World*. Good News Pub. 1991.
- *Demon Possession*. Edited by John W. Montgomery. Minneapolis, MI: Bethany House, 1976.



**SPIRITUAL  
WARFARE**

**LESSON 2**

# Dynamics of Spiritual Warfare

## Lesson Purpose

The purpose of this lesson is to help the church planter understand the dynamics of relationships between God, man and spirit beings in spiritual warfare, and the position and authority of the believer over Satan in Christ.

## Main Points

- A correct understanding of the relationship between God, man and spirit beings is essential for victory in spiritual warfare.
- The battle for the mind is won by applying God's truth to Satan's lies.

## Desired Outcomes

When the contents of this lesson have been mastered, each participant should...

- Know that church planting is spiritual war.
- Be strong in the Lord and the power of His might by knowing his identity in Christ.
- Be able to defend himself against demonic attacks.

## Appendix

2A Inductive Bible Study: Ephesians 4:17- 5:21

## Suggestions to Trainers

This lesson contains many doctrinal concepts with many verses cited. Please study it carefully before presenting it to the trainees. Select the main points and verses which you might have them look up during the training.

Included in this lesson is a diagram (figure 2.1) showing these relationships. You may want to put this on a transparency or poster to accompany your teaching.

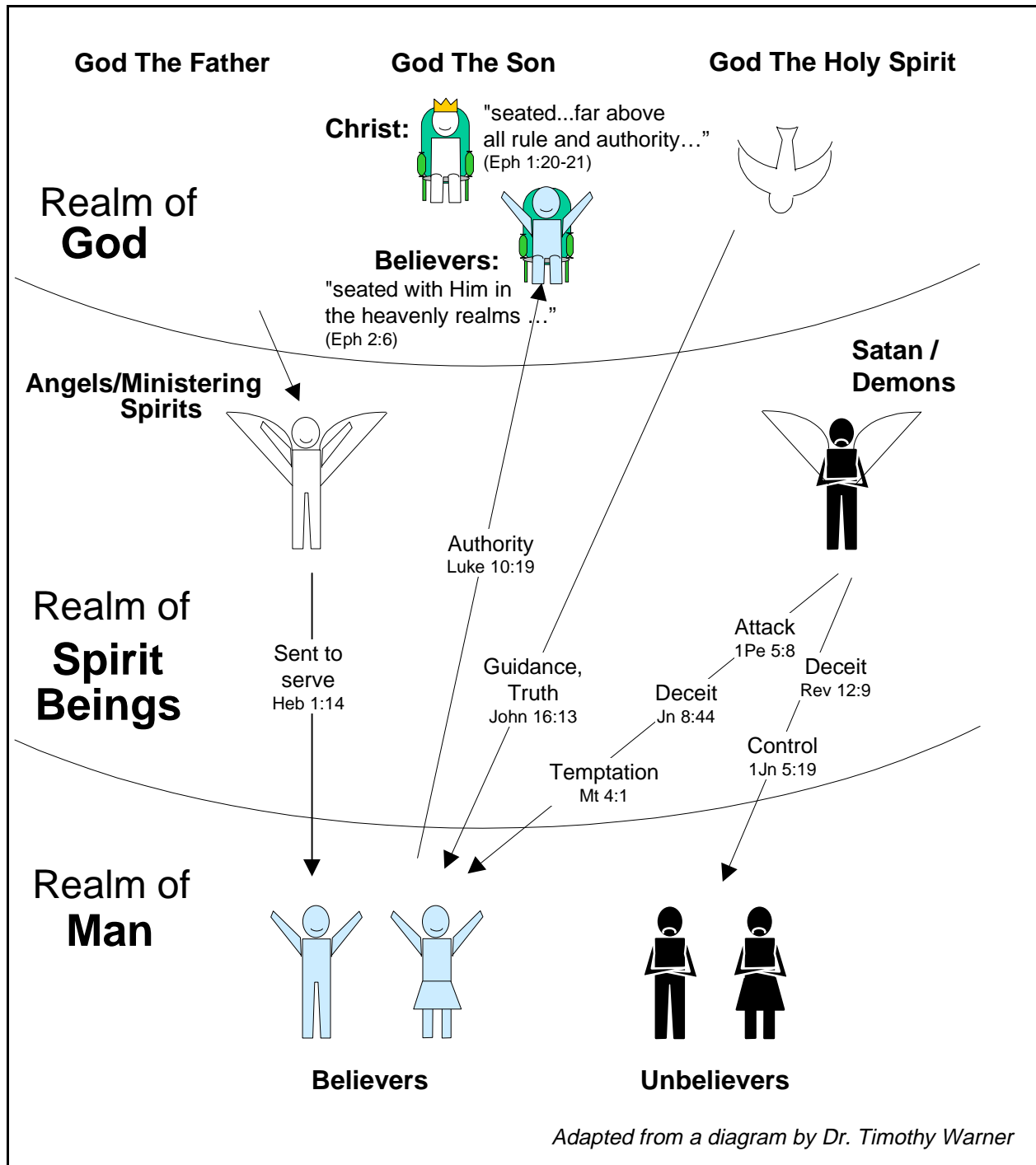
## INTRODUCTION

Church planters who are in the process of building up new congregations of believers find themselves invading enemy territory. Satan, the "prince of this world" (Jn 16:11), does not want the church planter to open the eyes of unbelievers so that they might turn from darkness to light and find forgiveness for their sins (Acts 26:18). There is a real spiritual battle going on, and church planters who do not realize this will find themselves woefully unprepared to deal with the attacks that come their way. Not only must they be personally prepared for spiritual warfare, they must also know how to help the new believers and emerging church stand firm against the enemy.

Every competent general who plans his tactics for battle knows his own strategies, strengths and weaknesses, as well as those of his opponent. He understands how his opponent thinks and acts. The church planter must also know his own strengths and weaknesses, and he must understand the strategies that Satan will attempt to use to attack him. In order to grasp the dynamics of the spiritual battle in which he finds himself, the church planter needs to understand the realm of God, the realm of man, and the realm of spirit beings in this world, and how they interrelate one with another. He must understand and believe the truth of who he is in Christ, as that truth will be the most important weapon he has in the spiritual battles that he will face.

Figure 2.1 shows the interrelationships between the realms of God, spirit beings and man. This diagram will visually help to explain some of the concepts presented in this lesson.

**Figure 2.1. Relationships in Spiritual Warfare: The Realms of God, Spirit Beings, and Man**



## **I. THE REALM OF GOD**

God is the Great "I AM", the eternal, self-sustaining, self-sufficient, non-created Creator of all things and supreme Ruler of the Universe. He is all-powerful, all-knowing, everywhere-present and always Holy, Righteous, Mercy, Love, Truth and Faithful. HE HAS NO EQUAL.

God is a triune God, a unity in diversity. The three members of the Trinity—Father, Son and Holy Spirit—all share the moral attributes of the Godhead. They differ only in their role, but even that is sometimes hard to distinguish. For example, the Father is said to be the Creator (Dt 32:6). But in John 1:3, all things are said to have been created through the Word (the Son).

### **A. God the Father**

For this study, the most important role of God the Father is centered around redemption: He loved the world and sent the Son to be the Savior (Jn 3:16; 1Jn 4:10). He raised Jesus from the dead (Col 2:12). He has "rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son He loves" (Col 1:13) and He protects His children by the power of His name (Jn 17:11).

### **B. God the Son**

The role of God the Son, Jesus Christ, is focused primarily on His entrance into time and space. He was one with the Father (Jn 10:30) who shared in His attributes from all eternity (Jn 1:1,2). He was "the fullness of the Deity in bodily form" (Col 2:9). He came into the world to be "God with us" (Mt 1:23). But when He came into the world, he took on the form of a servant (Php 2:6,7). He always did the Father's will (Jn 6:38). He died on the cross as a sin offering for us (Ro 8:3) and was raised on the third day (1Co. 15:4).

He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of God the Father, where He makes intercession for us (Ro 8:34). He is the giver of eternal life (Jn 17:3). Now in His glory (Jn. 17:24), He has all power (authority) in heaven and on earth (Mt 28:18-20). He is the "head over everything for the church" (Eph 1:22).

With regard to the spirit world, He is greater than angels (Heb 1:5-2:9). He is the head over every power and authority (Col 2:10). Someday, every knee in heaven and on earth and under the earth shall bow before Him (Php 2:10).

### **C. God the Holy Spirit**

The role of God the Holy Spirit is mentioned primarily in relationship to the believer. He is most often called the Holy Spirit, but also the Spirit of truth (Jn 16:13), the Spirit of life (Ro 8:2), and the Spirit of the living God (2Co 3:3).

It is He who gives new life to the believer (Ro 8:11), who controls the believer (Ro 8:9), who testifies that we are God's children (Ro 8:16), who helps us to pray (Ro 8:26-27), and who convicts the world of guilt in regard to sin (Jn 16:8-11). He is our Counselor/Helper (Jn 14:16), and our Teacher (Jn 14:26). He lives in God's children (Ro 8:9), He testifies about Jesus (Jn 15:27), and brings glory to Him. He is greater than the "world" (1Jn 4:4).

## **II. THE REALM OF MAN**

When God created Man, he made Him male and female in His image: two individuals that would be one, thus reflecting the unity in diversity of the Godhead (Ge 1:26,27). With regard to spirit beings, Man was made "a little lower than the heavenly beings" but was "crowned with glory and honor" (Ps 8:5). He was made ruler over the works of God's hands, and everything was put under his feet (Ps 8:6).

However, Man chose to listen to the lies of the devil, sinned against God and fell into sin. So all mankind became sinners (Ro 3:23), dead in trespasses and sin (Eph 2:1), without hope and without God in the world (Eph 2:12) and condemned to death (Jn 3:17; Ro 6:23). Man's right to rule was usurped by the devil, so that now he lives in a world ruled by Satan (Mt 4:8,9).



When a person becomes a believer in Jesus Christ, he continues to live in the world but no longer belongs to it (Jn 15:19). He is delivered by Christ from the power of darkness and translated into the kingdom of His dear Son (Col 1:13). He is hated and persecuted by the world (Jn 16:18-21) and also by Satan and his demons (Eph 6:11). The believer is part of a spiritual war between God and His forces and Satan and His forces (2Co 10:3-5).

### **III. THE REALM OF SPIRIT BEINGS**

#### **A. Angels/Ministering Spirits**

Although the Bible speaks frequently of angels, there is no systematic description of them. We do know that they are created beings (Ps 148:2,5; Col 1:16) who are inferior to God (Heb 1:4), but superior to man (Ps 8:5). They have great knowledge, but are not omniscient (1Pe 1:12). They have great power, but are not omnipotent (Ac 12:7-11). Although usually not seen, when they were seen they were described as “shining” and “white as snow” (Eze 1:13,14; Mt 28:3). They are messengers of God (Ac 7:38) who “always carry out the Father’s will perfectly” (Mt 6:10). In relation to man, they are “ministering spirits sent to serve those who will inherit salvation” (Heb 1:14).

#### **B. Demons/Fallen Angels**

Although nowhere explicitly stated, it is accepted by evangelicals that demons are fallen angels (2Pe 2:4). Evangelicals believe that Revelation 12:7-9 speaks of Satan and his angels being hurled from heaven to the earth. Jude 1:6 speaks of angels who did not keep their positions of authority.

Throughout the gospels we see that one of their weapons is to afflict people with various sicknesses such as blindness, deafness, dumbness, and epilepsy. Satan is their ruler (Mt 12:24). They are so united in their evil purposes that when the disciples reported that they had cast out demons, Jesus said “I saw Satan fall like lightening from heaven” (Lk 10:17,18).

#### **C. Satan**

Who is Satan? He is a created being, probably a fallen angel. He is a sinner whose work Jesus came to destroy (1Jn 3:8). He is called the prince of this world (Jn 16:11) and the “god of this world” (2Co 4:4). Other titles given to him are murderer and liar (Jn 8:44); a roaring lion who goes about trying to devour people (1Pe 5:8; 2Ti 4:17); deceiver of nations (Rev 12:9; 20:3,10); accuser of the brethren (Zec 3:1; Rev 12:10); angel of light (2Co 11:14); ancient serpent, devil, dragon (Rev 12:7,9; 20:2); prince of demons, Beelzebub (Mt 12:24; Lk 11:15).

What does Satan do? He leads the whole world astray (Rev 12:9). Satan has the whole world under his control (1Jn 5:19). He performs counterfeit signs and miracles (2Th 2:9). He roams the whole earth looking for prey to devour (Job 1:7; 1Pe 5:8). He wages war against God’s people (Rev 12:17). He holds the power of death (Heb 2:14).

What are Satan’s limits? He can go no further than God permits (Job 1:12). He is a defeated foe! (Rev 12:7-9). What is Satan’s final destiny? He will be crushed by God (Ro 16:20). God will destroy Satan (Heb 2:14) and will throw Him into the lake of burning sulfur (Rev 20:10).

### **IV. THE REALM OF THE BATTLE**

When we became Christians we were transferred from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of light (Col 1:13). Although we continue to live in the physical world, as citizens of the kingdom of God we are seated with Christ in the heavenlies (Eph 2:6). We are aliens and strangers in the world (1Pe 2:11). As a result, we no longer live by the standards of the world (2Co 10:12). Therefore, the world and its ruler, Satan, hate us (Jn 17:14) and war against us.

In the next Spiritual Warfare lesson “Spiritual Battles” we will look at different arenas where Satan attacks the believer. Here we look at the primary arena; the mind.

“For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds.

We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ" (2Co 10:3-5).

Notice that we are to use supernatural power against arguments and thoughts. Satan's first arena of attack is the mind.

Satan is a liar and the father of lies (Jn 8:44). One of his tactics against believers is to deceive them into believing that lies are really true. The lie may be against the nature of God and His Word, as it was with Eve (Ge 3:1-4; 2Co 11:13). Jesus himself is the truth (Jn 14:6). In His prayer to the Father in John 17, He prayed "Sanctify them by the truth. Your word is truth" (Jn 17:17). We must stand firm on the truths of God's Word.

Satan's lie is often to make us believe that we are not saints saved by grace but sinners who are powerless to overcome our sinful condition. Our defense against this lie is also the truth. Jesus said "And you shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free." When Satan tempts us to think we are nothing, we are helpless, we have no power, etc. We must fight back with truth. In Christ, we have authority over Satan and his demons. The Church, the Body of Christ, already has ultimate victory over the powers of darkness. This is a truth that church planters must live and teach. Below are some verses that tell who the believer is in Christ. Memorize these verses and when Satan tempts you to believe a lie, use these truths against him.

**Figure 2.1 Who I am in Christ**

***As a believer in Christ, I am...***

- **not under condemnation, but have passed from death to life** (Jn 3:18, Ro 8:1)
- **a new creation** (2Co 5:17)
- **set free from law of sin and death** (Ro 8:2)
- **chosen by God** (Eph 1:4)
- **adopted by God. He is my Father** (Eph 1:5)
- **accepted by God** (Eph 1:6)
- **redeemed, purchased, and valued by God** (Eph 1:7)
- **a joint heir with Christ** (Eph 1:11; Ro 8:17)
- **sealed with the Holy Spirit** (Eph 1:13)
- **spiritually alive** (Eph 2:1-7)
- **a recipient of God's grace** (Eph 2:8)
- **His workmanship** (Eph. 2:10)
- **delivered by Christ from the power of darkness and placed in the kingdom of His Son** (Col. 1:13)
- **a temple of the Living God** (2Co 6:16)
- **complete in Him** (Col 2:10)
- **salt and light in the world** (Mt 5:13,14)
- **going to be like Christ when He returns** (1Jn 3:1,2)

## CONCLUSION

The triune God is Creator and Ruler of all things, including mankind and spirit-beings (angels, Satan and demons). He is superior to all of His creation.

When God raised "Christ from the dead, he seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms, far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every title that can be given, not only in the present age but also in the one to come. And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church ... And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms" (Eph 1:20-22; 2:6).

Our identity in Christ is the basis for our authority over those in the realm of spirit beings (Satan and his demons). We are partakers of the divine nature, saints who sometimes sin. We must resist the battle for our mind and hold fast to the truth of the victory that is already ours in Christ. As church planters, we must remember what Jesus said, **"I will build my church and the gates of hell will not prevail against it."**

## **ACTION PLAN:**

- Take time to review this lesson and look up all of the verses cited. Note in your spiritual journal any new truths you learned or ideas that have taken on a deeper meaning for you.
- Read aloud the list "Who I am in Christ" and thank God for what He has done for you. Memorize Scripture verses for areas of your identity in Christ about which you have doubts or fears. As you memorize these Scriptures, the Holy Spirit will make those truths become real in your life.
- Do the inductive Bible study of Ephesians 4:17-5:21 found in Appendix 2A.

## **SOURCES**

- Moreau, A. Scott. *Essentials of Spiritual Warfare*. Wheaton, IL: Harold Shaw Publishers, 1997.
- Anderson, Neil T. *Victory over the Darkness*. California: Regal Books, 1990.



## Inductive Bible Study: Ephesians 4:17 - 5:21

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This inductive study in Ephesians has been started for you. Carefully study what has already been done. Then complete the study, answering all questions, writing summaries when that is indicated, and filling in all spots left blank. Be sure to write out the application.

### I. OBSERVATION

Study Ephesians 4:17-24. Write out the following observations:

#### A. Describe how the Gentiles live (17-19)

- v.17 futility of their thinking
- v.18 darkened understanding
- v.18 separated from the life of God
- v.18 ignorance caused by hardened heart
- v.19 lost sensitivity
- v.19 given themselves over to sensuality
- v.19 indulge in every kind of impurity
- v.19 continually lust for more (impurity)

In a brief paragraph, summarize in your own words how the Gentiles live.

#### B. Describe how you (the Ephesians) have come to know Christ (20 - 23)

- v.21 you were taught in Him in accordance with the truth that is in Jesus
- v.22 to put off your old self
- v.23 to be made new in the attitude of your minds
- v.23 to put on the new self created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness

In a brief paragraph, summarize in your own words how the Ephesians came to know Christ.

### II. INTERPRETATION

Answer the following interpretative questions:

- How are a person's actions determined by his thinking (mind)? (vs.17, 22, 23).
- What place did truth play in changing the Ephesian's actions? (21).
- Describe the "new self" (22). How is this new creation like God's original creation of man? (Compare Ge 1:27).

### III. APPLICATION

Ephesians 4:25-5:21 is Paul's application. List the things he includes in his application. Then write a statement saying how you will apply these things to your life and ministry.

Verse	Application
4:25	Put off falsehood
4:25	
4:26	
4:26	
4:27	How does anger give the devil a foothold?
4:28	
4:28	
4:29	
4:30	Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God (How do we grieve Him?)
4:31	
4:32	
5:1	
5:2	
5:3	
5:4	
5:5	
5:6	
5:7	
5:8	
5:9	
5:10	
5:11	
5:12	

**Application in my life and ministry:**

**SPIRITUAL  
WARFARE**

**3**  
LESSON

# Spiritual Battles

## CHURCH PLANTERS UNDER ATTACK

### ☞ Lesson Purpose

The purpose of this lesson is to help church planters discern and defend against satanic attacks and be able to help people who are suffering from demonic affliction.

### ☞ Main Points

- Satan's attacks may be in the physical, material, mental/emotional or spiritual realm.
- Defending one's self against Satan requires a knowledge of Scripture and spiritual maturity.

### ☞ Desired Outcomes

When they have mastered the content of this lesson, trainees will ...

- Know how to discern when they're under satanic attack.
- Be strong in the Lord and the power of His might.
- Begin learning how to defend against satanic attack and to take steps in offensive warfare.

### ☞ Appendices

- 3A Bible Study: How Did Jesus Deal With Demonized People?
- 3B Case Studies From Around the World

## INTRODUCTION

Spiritual warfare is a reality for every believer in Christ. When a person becomes a believer in Christ, his relationship to everything in the emotional, mental, spiritual and physical realms dramatically changes. The believer is a new creation in Christ (2Co 5:17), a citizen of heaven (Php 3:20), and God's child (Jn 1:12). Because of his new relationship with God, the believer becomes the target of attack by the enemies of God—Satan and his forces who oppose God's person, plans and purposes.

This lesson contains information which is foundational to understanding how church planters can come under spiritual attack, how to defend themselves, and how to help others who have been afflicted by demonic forces. In the ongoing battle between Satan and the forces of God, any time a new church is started Satan realizes that he is losing territory in a world that he desires to control. Because of this, he will viciously attack new churches and new believers, and do all that he can to destroy them.

Church planters must not only be prepared for spiritual battle themselves (both defensively and offensively), but they must also teach the new believers in cell groups and churches about the battle that they are a part of, whether they know it or not. Without a solid biblical understanding of the spiritual warfare that is going on around them, new churches will be more vulnerable to satanic attack that can weaken and even destroy them. Church planters have a responsibility to help prepare God's "army" of believers for the spiritual battles that lie ahead of them.

## I. ARENAS OF SATANIC ATTACK

Satan and his host of demons are in the world, fighting against God's plans and purposes. People may experience satanic attacks in the mental, physical and spiritual realms. In the previous Spiritual Warfare lesson "Dynamics of Spiritual Warfare" we saw that the primary arena is that of the mind. In this session, we will discuss the other realms. Satan and his demons may attack directly, or may use others.

An example of the latter is through persecution from the world. This indirect attack from Satan should come as no surprise to believers, since the apostle Paul wrote to Timothy "...Everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted" (2Ti 3:12). Peter wrote his first epistle to tell believers how to live under persecution. Jesus said the world would hate His followers (Jn 15:18-19). Therefore, believers should not be surprised by persecution, but should realize that is an indirect attack from Satan.

#### **A. Attacks In The Physical Arena**

##### *1. Physical Health*

Not every sickness is a result of satanic attack. However, we do see in the Gospels that there were cases where this was true (Mt 9:32-33; Lk 13:16; Mk 5:1-13). See Appendix 3A, "How Did Jesus Deal With Demonized People?".

##### *2. Physical Desires Like Food And Sex*

God created humans with physical needs and desires. When rightly fulfilled, these are good. However, Satan likes to take that which is good and tempt man to use it in ways that are harmful. In the temptation of Adam and Eve, Satan used something that appealed to the eyes (food) to cause them to sin. The sin was not because they wanted or needed food, but because they misused food—in this case food that had been forbidden by God (Ge 3:1-6). Likewise, after Jesus had been fasting for forty days and nights, Satan tempted Him to relieve His hunger by exercising supernatural power independently of His father (Mt 4:2-4).

Satan tempts people to misuse that which God created to be good. John described as part of the world (controlled by Satan) the lust of the eyes (1Jn 2:15-16). Many recent stories tell about Christian leaders around the world who have fallen into sexual sins. Church planters are on the "front lines" of ministry and as such need to guard themselves carefully against the temptations that Satan will most certainly offer them.

#### **B. Attacks In The Material Arena**

Another arena in which Satan attacks is in creating an unhealthy desire for the good things that God has given us. Satan tempted Jesus in this arena by offering Him all of the kingdoms of the world with their splendor if He would worship him (Mt 4:8).

Closely related to this is the desire for power. In Genesis 1:28-29, God told Adam and Eve that they should rule over all living creatures. But a result of their sin was that the man would rule over the woman (Ge 3:15). Thus began the struggle for power over other humans.

Church planters need to be careful that an unhealthy desire for possessions and power does not cause them to take their eyes off Jesus.

#### **C. Attacks In The Mental/Emotional Arena**

The temptation to be discouraged or to despair may be a direct attack from the enemy. See Mk 5:1-10 and Lk 9:37-42.

#### **D. Attacks In The Spiritual Arena**

Today there is an increasing interest in the occult. Many people are seeking spiritists, mediums, psychic healers, palm-readers, psychic counselors or guides, horoscopes, etc. Through these occult practices, Satan can get a hold on peoples' lives.

Church planters must be careful to avoid these occult practices, and they must teach others in their cell groups and churches the dangers that are involved with these practices. It is very common for new believers to not fully understand the severity of these types of occult practices. They may have visited a fortune teller, a spiritual healer, or someone else involved in occult activity before they became a believer, and do not see the danger of returning to them.

## **II. HOW TO KNOW IF A PROBLEM IS FROM NATURAL CAUSES OR IS A SATANIC ATTACK**

It is not always easy to distinguish the source of problems. For example, it is not uncommon to hear Christian workers relate stories like the following:

*"I was alone in my room, sleeping soundly. Suddenly I was awakened for no apparent reason. The darkness in the room seemed oppressive and I found my heart racing, my breath coming in gasps and my body covered with sweat. Sensing that this was a satanic attack, I sat up in bed, turned on the light and in a loud voice started acknowledging Jesus Christ as LORD and asking for His protection from any evil spirits that might be trying to harm me. As I prayed, the oppression lifted and I lay down and again slept soundly."*

The person relating this story suspected that he was being attacked by Satan and immediately went on a counterattack. Should you suspect you are under satanic attack, here are some biblical principles to consider. They are not listed in any particular order:

- Test the spirits to see whether they are from God (1Jn 4:1-3).
- Seek help from someone in the Body with the gift of distinguishing between spirits (1Co 12:10).
- Trials may be from the Lord to make us mature and complete (Jas 1:2-4).
- Temptations are from the devil; if we allow our own evil desire to cause us to yield, sin results (Jas 1:13-14).
- Satan attacks to cause us to sin, but God brings about good (Ge 50:19-20).
- Satan sends things into our lives which God uses to show His power in our weakness (2Co 12:7-9).

## **III. HOW TO DEFEND YOURSELF AGAINST SATANIC ATTACKS**

### **A. Take Every Thought Captive To The Mind Of Christ (2Co 10:3-5)**

Memorizing and meditating on Scripture allows us to evaluate thoughts and ideas which come into our minds and reject those which are against the truths of Scripture. Scripture memorization also helps to train our thinking patterns so that we become disciplined to think and act more like Christ.

### **B. Renew Your Mind (Ro 12:1-2)**

Ask God to search your thoughts and reveal to you any which are wicked or impure. Confess those to the Lord and turn away from them (Ps 139:23-24). Think about things that are true, noble, right, pure, lovely, admirable, excellent, or praiseworthy (Php. 4:8).

Beware of the deluge of sexual lies and temptations that would fill your mind with godless thoughts. *"Satan has no power over you except what you give him by failing to take every thought captive and thus being deceived into believing lies"* (N. Anderson, *Victory over the Darkness*, pg. 169 & 170).

### **C. Put On All The Armor Of God (Eph 6:10-18)**

Acknowledge your salvation by faith in Christ, your righteousness before God by the blood of Christ, and the peace that you have with God because you are His child. Take time to praise the Father for His victory over the evil one and the fact that through Christ you have victory over the evil one.

The one offensive weapon which a believer has is the Word of the God—"the sword of the Spirit" (Eph 6:17). Believers are admonished throughout the Scriptures to stand firm in the truth of the Word of God (Jn 8:32, 1Pe 5:9).

### **D. Acknowledge The Covering Of The Blood Of The Lamb (Rev 12:11)**

The only basis of victory over the flesh, the world and Satan is the shed blood of Jesus Christ on the cross. His sacrifice broke the power of Satan and allowed man to enter into fellowship with God. It is important that believers realize that they cannot overcome Satan in their own power, but only through the shed blood of Jesus Christ.



### **E. Do Not Let Sin Reign In You (Ro 6:12)**

Believers are admonished to physically remove themselves from situations which can result in their yielding to sin (2Ti 2:22). Also, believers should “avoid any appearance of evil” (1Th 5:22; Eph 5:3).

## **IV. GUIDELINES FOR DEALING WITH DEMONIC AFFLICTION**

Throughout the New Testament and in examples from around the world (see Appendix 3B, “Case Studies From Around The World”), we see people who are demon-possessed. Demonic possession is a reality in the world in which we live.

It is also very clear from Scripture that believers can open themselves to demonic oppression, or demonic influence. Ephesians 4:27 speaks of believers not giving Satan a “foothold” in their life. 1 Peter 5:8 was written to believers and tells us that we have an enemy who prowls around looking for someone to devour. In 2 Corinthians 2:11 Paul tells us that Satan is scheming against us, and that he wants us to fall into his trap so that he can obtain the right to afflict us with his demons.

Every Christian should be able to defend himself from satanic attack, since God has given us clear guidelines from Scripture how to live and how to wear His armor as defense. Obviously, unbelievers do not understand how to defend themselves, and they do not have the power of the Holy Spirit in their lives to give them the strength to do it. Unfortunately, there are also some believers who for various reasons choose to open themselves up to demonic influence in their lives.

Because of this, the essence of working with people who are suffering from demonic oppression and possession is a **truth** encounter, not a **power** encounter. Some Christians incorrectly believe since God is more powerful than Satan, that in Jesus’ name they can remove all demonic influences in the life of someone who is suffering. While God is all-powerful and Satan is not, God has given man a free will to choose whether or not he will allow the “prince of this world” (Jn 16:11) to have influence in his life. God has given us all that we need to defend ourselves against the schemes of the Devil, but we can still choose to ignore these things and allow Satan to have some amount of control in our lives. It is the realization of the truth of the believer’s identity in Christ that gives him the ability to choose to refuse the sinful activities that would otherwise give Satan the right to torment him.

The following guidelines can be used to minister to those who are suffering from some type of demonic influence in their lives.

### **A. Pray And Seek Wisdom From The Holy Spirit**

Dealing with demonic influences requires great spiritual wisdom and dependency on the Holy Spirit. Satan is a powerful foe and confrontation with him or his forces should not be entered into lightly. The need for guidance and leading from the Holy Spirit cannot be overemphasized, since there is not a “formula” for working with people who are suffering from demonic activity in their lives. Every person is unique, every situation is different, and although there are general principles involved, each situation requires dependence on and wisdom from the Holy Spirit. Time in prayer should be spent before any type of ministry involving demonic affliction.

### **B. Work With Others**

This type of ministry should always be done with at least one or more mature believer in Christ. If possible, have people present who have the gift of discernment and who have had prior experience with demonic oppression/possession. Take time together as a group to pray (and fast, if necessary) as you deal with the person who is suffering. If at all possible, church planters and other Christian workers should avoid doing this type of ministry by themselves.

### **C. Determine The Cause**

Sometimes demonic manifestation will occur unexpectedly in public places such as a worship service, Bible study, cell group meeting, or other corporate setting. In these cases the Christian leaders who are present may have no choice but to deal immediately with the situation, relying on the power and presence of the Holy Spirit to guide them.

However, it is much more common that demonic influence manifests itself over the course of time in the life of a person, and in such a way that the problem is evident to them and others around them. In these instances, it is necessary to set up a meeting between this person and those in the church who are able to help him become free from the demonic influences in his life. The purpose of the meeting is to try and understand what has happened in this person's life that may have given Satan the right to afflict him. It is also a time to determine whether the problem is demonic, or if there are other natural causes involved.

There are many ways that people can open themselves up to Satan and give him the opportunity to torment them. Some of the more common areas include:

- Occult activity: idolatry, Eastern religious practices (such as transcendental meditation), spiritism, secret "blood" pledges, participation in cults, astrology, fortune telling, some types of hypnosis, psychic healing, out-of-body experiences.
- Witchcraft and Satanism: incantations, spells, satanic rituals, dedication of children to Satan, ritual abuse, magic (white and black).
- Willful, ongoing and unconfessed sin: drugs, addictions, anger, sexual sins, hatred, an unforgiving spirit, etc.

It is vitally important that people who are suffering be completely honest with the believers who wish to help them. Are they currently, or have they in the past, been involved in the occult? How about their parents or other relatives? If they are believers, do they have some "hidden" sin in their lives that they do not want to confess? As much as possible, determine everything that could contribute to the demonic manifestation in their life.

#### **D. Deal With Sin Issues**

Whether or not the person being afflicted is a believer, he must want to be free from the demonic influence. Based on what was learned about previous or current occult activity, unconfessed sins, etc., this person must repent of these sins and each activity that may have given Satan a foothold in his life. Each item should be confessed out loud, and forgiveness asked for from God. The person should refute any past satanic practices and the stronghold(s) that these gave Satan in his life.

It is important to understand that this person does not need to be a Christian in order to be freed from the demonic forces in his life. However, without the protection and position that a believer has in Christ over Satan, this person is open to renewed demonic activity in his life, sometimes with even greater intensity (see Mt 12:43-45). As sin issues are dealt with, the Gospel should be clearly presented and the opportunity given for this person to accept Christ as Savior.

Regardless of the spiritual condition of the person, he must understand that if he returns to occult practices or willful sin, he opens himself up again to Satan's demonic activity in his life.

#### **E. Deliverance**

At this point, the believers involved should pray and ask the Holy Spirit to show them how He wants to deal with the demonic activity in this person's life. This may be as simple as casting out the demon(s) in the name of and by the authority of Jesus Christ. Other times, extended prayer and fasting may be required to break through the spiritual resistance of the demonic forces involved. Sometimes in cases where the person being afflicted is a believer, the Holy Spirit will lead them to acknowledge their position in Christ, repent of the sins that resulted in demonic oppression, and refute Satan themselves.

Note that during the process of freeing someone from demonic affliction, it is best not to communicate in any way directly with the demon(s) involved. John 8:44 tells us that the devil is a liar and the father of lies, and there is no reason for the demons to say anything less than half-truths. Many Christians in ministry with oppressed people have found that talking with demons and asking them to manifest themselves causes much more profanity, physical aggression, violence, and greatly prolongs and complicates the process of freedom from the demons involved.

In the same way that there is no "magic formula" for releasing someone from demonic influences in his life, there are also no guaranteed results from a time of intercession and deliverance ministry.

Sometimes an afflicted person will be completely and totally delivered from all demonic activity. Other times there will be little or no deliverance. Sometimes the Holy Spirit desires that several problem areas in the life of the afflicted person be resolved one by one over a period of time. Sometimes more prayer and fasting is needed. In all cases, the believers should pray and ask for continued leading and direction from the Holy Spirit.

#### **F. Follow-up**

If possible, one mature believer should be assigned as a counselor for this person to answer questions that he might have and to "watch over" him for several months. In instances where complete deliverance was not obtained, the counselor can continue to work with this person to look at areas in his life where there might still be unconfessed sin, occult practices, etc. Although demonic manifestation may decrease for a time after intercession or casting out of demons, if all the areas which gave Satan a foothold in the first place are not dealt with, sooner or later the demonic oppression will continue and make itself known again.

If the person received Christ as Savior during the deliverance process, the counselor can also help with discipling this new believer and reminding him of the truth of his identity in Christ. If other signs of demonic activity are noticed, the deliverance process should be repeated, looking for other "ground" that this person has given to Satan in his life. Ultimate freedom will be obtained when all of the footholds have been given up, when the person understands who he is in Christ, and when Christ has been given complete control over every area of his life.

### **ACTION PLAN:**

- In your life and ministry as a church planter, are you experiencing anything that you think might be a direct attack of the evil one? If so, list ways from this study that indicate what you should do to stand against these attacks. Share this with a mature Christian who will pray with you.
- Complete the table in Appendix 3A.
- Read the case studies in Appendix 3B.

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**SPIRITUAL WARFARE  
APPENDIX**

**3A**

# Bible Study

## HOW DID JESUS DEAL WITH DEMONIZED PEOPLE?

The following chart lists the places in the Gospels where Jesus dealt with demonized people. Complete the chart, and then write down how these truths apply to your life and ministry. Some of the work has been done for you.

Reference	Background & Demonized person	How did Jesus respond?	What were the results?	Interpretation:
Mt 4:24-25	From "...all over Syria people brought to him...the demon possessed."	He healed them	Large crowds followed Him.	
Mk 1:21-28	In Capernaum on Sabbath. In synagogue man – "What do you want with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are – the Holy One of God"	Ordered demon to "Be quiet! Come out of him!"	Evil spirit shook the man violently and came out.	Jesus gives orders to evil spirits & they obey Him. Demons know Jesus is God and that He has power to destroy them. When He spoke, the demons obeyed. When His children speak under His authority, the demons also obey.
Mk 1:32-39 (Lk 4:40 – 41)	Same day as above. Evening; home of Simon & Andrew. People brought demon possessed to Jesus	Drove out many demons but would not let them speak because they knew who He was		Jesus did not want people to follow Him as Messiah without first accepting Him as Savior.
Mk 3:15; 6:7 (Mt 10:2-4) (Lk 6:14-16)		Jesus chose 12 apostles; gave them authority to drive out demons		
Mt 8:16-17		He drove out the spirits with a word.		
Mt 8:28-34	2 demon -possessed men came from tombs were violent and shouted to Jesus, "What do you want with us, Son of God?"...Have you come to torture us before the appointed time?"			Jesus will judge demons. They will be cast into hell.
	Begged Jesus, "If you drive us out, send us into the heard of pigs	Said, "Go"	Demons entered pigs; whole town went out to meet Jesus; pleaded with Him to leave their region.	

Reference	Background & Demonized person	How did Jesus respond?	What were the results?	Interpretation:
Mk 5:1-17	One demon possessed man broke chains & ankle irons  No one strong enough to subdue him  Night and day cried out & cut himself			
	Demons begged Jesus not to torture him.	"Come out of this man, you evil spirit"		
	"Legion, for we are many"	What is your name?"		
	Begged to be sent into pigs	Gave them permission to go into pigs	Pigs ran into lake and were drowned	
	Man begged to go with Jesus	"Go home to your family and tell them how much the Lord has done for you and how He has had mercy on you.		
Lk 8:26-37	For a long time had not worn clothes or lived in a house		After demons driven out, man was dressed and in his right mind	
	Begged Him repeatedly not to order them to go into the Abyss.			Demons realize that Jesus has power to send them to the Abyss.
Mt 12:22-28	Mute & blind	Jesus healed him so that he could both see & talk	People astonished "Could this be the Son of David?"  Pharisees: He does this by power of Beelzebub.  Jesus' teaching followed: Mt 12:25-29 Mk 3:23-30 Lk 11:14-26	
Mt 15:21-28	Jesus withdrew to Tyre & Sidon;  Canaanite woman: "Lord, Son of David, have mercy on me! My daughter is suffering terribly from demon possession"	"I was sent only to the lost sheep of Israel."		
Mk 7:24-30	Lord, help me.	"It is not right to take the children's bread & toss it to their dogs."		

**Application in my life and ministry:**

SPIRITUAL WARFARE  
APPENDIX

3B

# Case Studies From Around The World

---

*The following are case studies showing how some missionaries have dealt with demons in ministries. Except for the missionary in study one, all names have been changed. These can help you face similar situations that you might encounter as you are engaged in the advance of the Church.*

## I. CASE STUDY ONE: DICK HILLIS RECOUNTS THE FOLLOWING STORY FROM CHINA

*A young soldier brought his wife to me to cast out a demon, saying, "My wife is in the courtyard, and she is demon possessed. Twice the demon has ordered her to kill herself, once by hanging and once by jumping in the moat. Both times she obeyed him, but I was able to rescue her."*

*"We went to the compound to pray that the woman would be delivered. I confess that I prayed in doubt, wondering if I would need some special gift of healing. As we prayed, the demon-possessed woman would take words from our prayers and make ridiculous poems out of them. She would scream and yell and make fun of what we were doing. Apparently, our prayers were of no avail."*

*This continued for three days. We told the soldier to destroy any idols in their home, which he did. Still the demon did not leave. Then God showed my wife that we needed to acknowledge our position in Christ and command the demon to leave. When we did this, she was instantly delivered.*

**His conclusion was, "We learned further that it is not enough to pray or sing, though I believe that Satan hates both prayer and song. We must resist the devil and command that he depart" (from *Demon Experiences in Many Lands*, p 37-39).**

## II. CASE STUDY TWO: A MISSIONARY COUPLE TELLS THE FOLLOWING STORY FROM A COUNTRY IN CENTRAL/EASTERN EUROPE

*Fatima, a mother of four, came from a family with many problems, the majority of which seem to have their roots in demonic activity.*

*At 15 she married Hysen, a man whose father was mentally ill. After several years of marriage, he also became mentally sick. He could be kept calm only with medication. Although still a Muslim, he requested prayer in the name of Jesus for deliverance from curses his family had put on him.*

*Fatima's mother-in-law had put a curse on her "that she would die before her time." Now at 39, she was dying of cancer. The missionary said, "When I went to see her, she told me that she had been having unbearable pain all day. When the pain gets very bad she sees her now-dead mother-in-law dressed up like a witch with a rod in her hand." Although now a Christian, she was terrified. The missionary decided he should take authority in the name of Jesus, which he did. Fatima was instructed to pray likewise. She improved spiritually, but the physical pain continued.*

*In spite of the prayers, Fatima died. At her funeral, Hysen's brother took charge. This brother is involved in occult practices (fortune telling, making magic charms, etc.). He brought in a Muslim priest who is somewhat of a magician to perform rituals.*

*A week after the funeral, the missionary's wife went with other women to visit the grave. Afterwards, she was invited to the family's home for dinner. Fatima's older daughter, a believer, asked her to pray because she had seen some relatives putting soil from the grave in the family's food. According to tradition, this will cause the same curse that fell on Fatima to fall on her family.*

**If you had been the missionary in this study, how would you have helped this family as they went through this crisis?**

### III. CASE STUDY THREE: A MISSIONARY COUPLE TELL THE FOLLOWING STORY FROM ROMANIA

*A couple in their late thirties told the missionaries how they had been placed under a curse. When they were married, the husband's sister (a white witch) had sewn small slips of paper with curses on them into their clothing. The curse was that they would never be able to have children. Although they had destroyed all of the paper, they still were childless. Now nearing the end of their child-bearing years, the couple sought help. They reported that they were not able to have normal relations because every time they began to do so they heard mocking voices telling them they could not.*

*The missionaries read with them verses showing them that they could be free from this curse by the power of Christ. Claiming their authority in Christ, they denounced the work and power of Satan in their lives and asked God for deliverance. The next time they talked with the missionaries, they said they had been claiming this authority and had heard no more voices. Their marriage was much stronger. They thought the woman was pregnant, which proved to be incorrect.*

**If you had been the missionaries in this story, would you have done anything differently? What would you have said when they reported that they could still not have children?**

### IV. CASE STUDY FOUR: A YOUNG MISSIONARY IN AFRICA HAD THIS EXPERIENCE OF SPIRITUAL WARFARE

*In 1986, I went on a short term missions trip to Senegal, West Africa. My second night in the country was enough to teach me that we indeed are in a battle against the powers of darkness.*

*I was staying with missionaries who lived in Ouakam, a village known for its spiritual darkness. After the morning service in another city the day after I arrived, we decided to hold the first-ever worship service in Ouakam that same night. It was a blessed time, and afterwards, we talked late into the night. The rest of the family went upstairs to bed, and I prepared for bed downstairs.*

*I tossed and turned until 3:00 a.m., then finally fell into a deep sleep. It was hot and muggy and I had a fan blowing across the bed. After a short time, I became extremely cold. But when I tried to get up to shut off the fan, I couldn't move. My mind was very alert, but my body was paralyzed. I tried to cry out for help, but my tongue was swollen in my mouth.*

*Since this was during the Muslim fast of Ramadan, it was noisy outside. Witch doctors were casting curses and shamans were praying to evil spirits. It was known that the house where we lived had been visited by a witch doctor who had tried to put curses on it to make the missionaries leave the village.*

*I heard the footsteps of someone coming down the stairs, but no one ever came around the corner. I saw a shadow coming toward me from the far side of the room. It looked like the outline of a man wearing a dark cloak. Then I heard the sound of an animal ripping apart flesh with its teeth.*

*The fear that was growing in my heart was settled by one thought: "This is the work of the evil one and Jesus is my protection." So I tried to cry out the name of Jesus. I said it once, twice, and on the third time, my mouth was loosened, the shadow disappeared, the noise stopped, and I sat up in bed free from the invisible power that held me. I bolted upstairs, awakened the older missionary and explained what had happened. She asked if I had been dreaming. I assured her that it was not a dream. We prayed for 30 minutes before I was ready to rest.*

*From that night on, I could sense evil in the room on many occasions, but when I would put on the armor of God and tell the spirits to go away in Jesus' name and by His authority, I could sleep in peace.*

*I now understand God's power in the midst of darkness. I know we are in a spiritual battle for the souls of men and women, but I am assured that He who is in us is greater than any spirit. Jesus in us is the hope of glory.*

**If this experience had happened to you, would you have known about the authority you have to rebuke demons? What does this say about the power of prayer?**

# *Omega Course:*

Practical Church Planter Training

## **Manual Four**

By

*The Alliance for Saturation Church Planting*

In cooperation with

Peter Deyneka Russian Ministries



**Omega Course:  
Practical Church Planter Training  
Manual Four**

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# MANUAL FOUR

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# PREFACE

## THE PURPOSE OF THIS MATERIAL

Church planters are often recruited and sent out with little or no training for the task that is before them. Church leaders who are overwhelmed with ministry difficulties often lack a clear vision of what God desires to accomplish through them. Both church planters and church leaders need training and vision, but Bible schools and seminaries are not realistic options for many.

This material is designed to provide not only vision for the church planter and church leader, but also the biblical foundation and practical ministry skills in order to see that vision become reality. It is not an educational "program." Rather, it provides necessary biblical and educational foundations, as well as practical ministry skills, which are required for church planting. Although the *Omega Course* was designed for Central/Eastern Europe and the Former Soviet Union, we've been encouraged by reports that it is already being found useful when adapted for use in other contexts.

This curriculum has been designed to accomplish two goals:

1. To provide the necessary training for churches to be planted.
2. To encourage mobilization in the whole Body of Christ toward a church planting movement.

Today we see church planting movements taking place in many countries throughout the world, including Brazil, Romania, the Philippines, Nigeria, and others. We believe that the local church is God's primary instrument for world evangelization, and that church planting based upon multiplication principles is the most effective means of working towards the completion of the Great Commission. New churches must be planted with a vision for multiplication and the ability to plant other new churches. When this happens, there is potential for a movement of churches which is able to sweep across a nation and transform the lives of people throughout the land.

A church planting movement needs people involved in all levels of the church planting task, from young believers who are excited about their new faith, to leaders of denominations. Church planters by themselves can never be the catalysts for a church planting movement. This material is applicable and has much benefit for all levels of church workers and church leaders who can directly and indirectly support the efforts of church planters as they strive to fulfill the ministry to which God has called them.

## CURRICULUM OVERVIEW

This manual is one of five manuals, each of which contains approximately 26 one-hour lessons. In order to accomplish the goals stated above, the curriculum covers a wide range of subjects that are necessary for the church planting task. These include SCP vision, cell group ministry, discipleship, Church, evangelism, inductive Bible study, leadership, prayer, spiritual character and more.

The curriculum was divided into five manuals in order to provide an ever-expanding approach to the learning process. As each participant completes a manual, he or she spends time before the next manual putting into practice the principles that have been learned. Therefore many of the later sessions build upon principles and skills which have been learned and practiced in earlier lessons.

In other words, the curriculum has been designed to be learned and used in parallel with the actual planting of churches. As the participant actively works towards starting a new church, he or she will need certain skills and knowledge, and will encounter various problems along the way. The skills and knowledge needed at the beginning of the church plant are provided in the first manuals, while the activities and principles needed at a later stage in a church plant are presented in the later manuals. Each manual has been designed to provide skills, answer questions, and discuss potential problems that relate to the corresponding phase of church planting in which the participant is actively working. After this Preface you will find a list of key development activities or "thresholds" that trainees are prepared for and expected to apply between training seminars.

The lessons are grouped by subject, and each of the five manuals includes lessons from some subjects. Some of the themes, such as "vision" and "church" are included in all five of the manuals. Others, such as "discipleship" occur later in the curriculum, when the participant is at the point in his or her ministry when these themes are necessary. A curriculum overview containing a list of the lesson titles for each of the five manuals is included later in this section.



## **USING THE MATERIAL**

### **Advice for the Participant**

Much time, prayer and effort has been put into the preparation of all five of the manuals in this curriculum. Each manual is designed to address specific ministry skills and knowledge that are required during the process of starting a new church. Therefore it is highly recommended that you begin with the first manual, and not with one of the later manuals. In the same respect, each lesson has been carefully chosen and crafted to be useful, applicable and indispensable for the church planting task. It is to your benefit not to skip lessons.

Be aware that real learning takes place when you apply the concepts presented in these lessons to your personal life and ministry. Most lessons include an action plan at the end. These action plans are designed to help you apply the ideas in the lesson and should be completed before you begin working with the next manual. It can be extremely helpful to have a mentor to encourage and advise you as you apply yourself to church planting. A mentor can also serve your need for accountability as you apply the concepts being learned to your life and ministry. Having someone to come alongside you is not only effective pedagogy, but many church planters testify to the help this provides in their life and ministry. Therefore, we strongly encourage you to prayerfully seek some form of mentoring to enhance and strengthen your church planting ministry.

### **Advice for the Trainer**

This material can be used in a variety of settings such as a Bible school, seminary or a church-based seminar. However this is not primarily educational material. It is training material. Education focuses on knowledge and information. The intent of the material is not merely to impart knowledge, but to motivate toward action employing biblically sound ministry skills. This manual is for 'doers.'

Although the method you choose to teach the lessons for each manual will depend on your particular context, each manual can be taught in a weeklong seminar. From this ideal, many training locations have successfully used other arrangements that fit better with the flow of life and existing ministries. They have sometimes opted for two intensive weekends or regular weekly sessions. It is recommended that the action plans at the end of each lesson be emphasized so that they are completed before the next seminar. Four to six months is a reasonable time to expect between seminars. The advantage of this type of training method is that it combines principles learned in the seminar with hands-on practice between seminars.

During seminars it is not necessary to teach every point of every lesson since participants can read the material on their own. Sometimes having trainees read the lesson and interact on how it relates to their own experience is a good method. At other times, a lecture from someone who is an expert in the subject being covered may be the best way to impart the concepts. But **DO NOT DWELL ON THE LECTURE APPROACH**. Be creative as you try various methods to convey the principles and skills contained in the lessons. Other trainers have found variations such as discussion groups, workshops and role playing to be helpful and interesting.

You have a sacred trust. The Lord of the Church wishes to disciple the nations, and leaders are needed. You have the awesome potential of helping to equip many who could foster church planting movements and to facilitate others in ministries of church multiplication.

### **Further help**

Do not hesitate to contact us if we can be of further assistance to you in spreading the vision of saturation church planting or practically equipping church planters.

Jay Weaver, General Editor  
Budapest, Hungary, January 2000  
JayWeaver@compuserve.com

## ABOUT THE ALLIANCE

This curriculum has been prepared by *The Alliance for Saturation Church Planting* in cooperation with Project 250 of Peter Deyneka Russian Ministries. *The Alliance* is a partnership of churches and mission agencies committed to mobilizing believers to saturate each country in Central/Eastern Europe and the Former Soviet Union with evangelical churches. Saturation Church Planting is a strategy that seeks to establish local churches in every town, village and neighborhood so that those who accept Christ will have a local fellowship in which to grow in Christ and be equipped for ministry. *The Alliance* is built on the premise that joining forces will increase effectiveness, reduce duplication, and demonstrate unity within the body of Christ.

### WHAT WE BELIEVE:

- The local church is God's primary tool for evangelism and discipleship.
- Partnership with churches and mission organizations is crucial for the multiplication of local churches and the development of saturation church planting movements.
- Training leaders is essential to church planting and church growth.
- The Lausanne Covenant is the statement of faith for *The Alliance*.

### WHAT WE DO:

#### Church Planter Training and Mentoring

*The Alliance* provides skill-based training in seminar fashion with practical ministry assignments geared towards starting reproducing churches.

#### Information Gathering

Accurate information leads to good decisions in the church planting task. *The Alliance* can help with training and consultation for your information gathering needs in the areas of church planting and church growth.

#### Prayer Movement Consulting

A church planting movement starts with vision, which is discovered and refined through seeking God's heart in prayer. *The Alliance* can help you better understand the role of prayer movements in the church planting task, and how you can facilitate a prayer movement in your region.

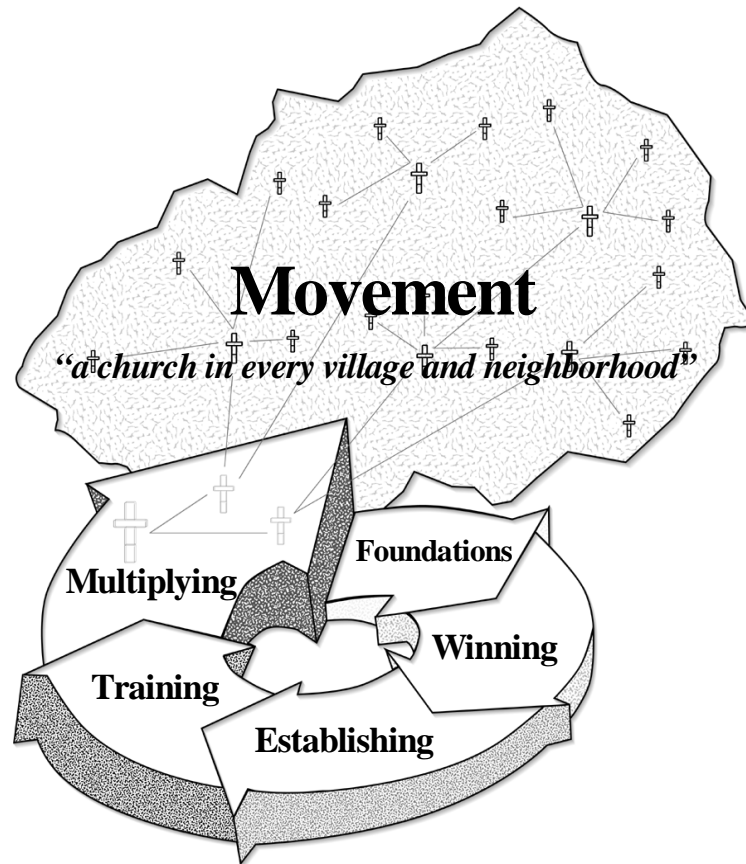
#### Vision Casting

What does God want for your country? He wants churches everywhere! *The Alliance* can help foster a vision for new churches with conceptual seminars on the principles of saturation church planting.

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## THE CHURCH PLANTING CYCLE



Church planting is not a randomly connected series of events and activities; it is a goal-driven process. This process requires the coordination of activity, the combination of skills, a commonality of philosophy, and competence in leadership. Development in these critical areas is the goal of church planter training. The "Church Planting Cycle" is a diagram of the church planting process that visualizes, from a particular point of view, the interrelationship of the key principles and practices at work within that process. This represents a kind of 'roadmap' for the church planter, allowing one to always determine from where they've come and where they are headed.

# THRESHOLDS

## For the *Omega Course* Church Planting Curriculum

**Thresholds** are concrete ministry activities which have been incorporated into this curriculum. Each threshold can be thought of as an individual stepping stone within the larger process of starting new congregations. The thresholds provide concrete action points which help the trainee to practically apply the concepts contained in the *Omega Course*. They are both milestones that indicate progress, as well as signposts which help give further direction. Following is a list of thresholds and emphases in the *Omega Course*.

### **MANUAL ONE: Emphasis On SCP Vision, Purpose Of The Church, Inductive Bible Study, and Research**

#### **Specific action items:**

- Examining the purpose of the Church in light of the Great Commission
- Developing an overall ministry strategy based on "Z-thinking" vision
- Investigating "form and function" in the early Church and in today's Church
- Learning and practicing inductive Bible study
- Writing and sharing a personal testimony
- Initiating prayer support groups for evangelism and church planting
- Completing a comprehensive research project for the target area

### **MANUAL TWO: Emphasis On Evangelism and Cell Groups**

#### **Specific action items:**

- Sharing of findings from the research project with others in the target area
- Writing a church purpose statement
- Developing a philosophy of church planting ministry
- Developing a personal evangelism strategy, including one-on-one evangelism
- Beginning cell groups with an emphasis on evangelism
- Using inductive Bible study personally and in the cell groups

### **MANUAL THREE: Emphasis On Discipleship, Spiritual Warfare, Teams and Teamwork**

#### **Specific action items:**

- Identifying and training potential leaders for cell groups
- Spending time in prayer and fasting
- Evaluating the worldview of the church planter as compared to the biblical worldview
- Using scriptural truths to withstand spiritual attack in the life and ministry of the church planter
- Creating individual disciple making plans for the people involved in the church planting ministry
- Performing team development and evaluation activities
- Analyzing the spiritual gifts of the church planter and the church planting team

### **MANUAL FOUR: Emphasis On Leadership and Stewardship**

#### **Specific action items:**

- Evaluating the strengths and weaknesses of the church planter's leadership style, with an emphasis on methods of personal interaction with others
- Incorporating principles of servant leadership into the life and ministry of the church planter
- Tracking the use of time in the life and ministry of the church planter, setting priorities, making schedules
- Evaluating the financial giving of the church planter, as well as that of the church plant itself
- Reviewing the biblical roles of a husband and wife and the responsibilities that church planters have to their families
- Leading existing cell groups through the process of multiplication
- Preparing a strategic plan for working towards saturation in the church planting ministry

### **MANUAL FIVE: Emphasis On Multiplication, Mobilizing Others, and Promoting SCP Movements**

#### **Specific action items:**

- Initiating ministry cooperation with other evangelical groups in the target area
- Planning and implementing a supervisory structure for cell groups that will promote ongoing growth and multiplication
- Teaching people to pray for saturation church planting; mobilizing prayer at a city, regional, and national levels
- Developing and implementing a plan for the church planter to train and mentor new church planters
- Empowering and releasing new leaders for church planting ministry
- Promoting a vision in new churches for missionary involvement not only in their target area, but also to "the ends of the earth"

## CURRICULUM OVERVIEW

### MANUAL ONE Overview

Addresses primarily the **FOUNDATIONS** phase of the Church Planting Cycle

SCP Vision (VI)	The Church (CH)	Spiritual Character (SC)	Prayer (PY)	Bible Study Methods (BS)	Evangelism (EV)
<b>Lesson 1:</b> "Z" Thinking  <b>Lesson 2:</b> The Great Commission and Church Planting  <b>Lesson 3 (3A):</b> Church Planting Cycle 3A: Church Planting Models  <b>Lesson 4 (4A,4B):</b> Principles of Research 4A: Understanding Your Target Area 4B: Sample Questionnaires	<b>Lesson 1:</b> Biblical Foundations for the Church  <b>Lesson 2 (2A):</b> The Purpose Of The Church 2A: Great Commission Worksheet  <b>Lesson 3 (3A):</b> Form And Function 3A: Form & Function Applied  <b>Lesson 4:</b> Defining The Local Church	<b>Lesson 1 (1A):</b> Justification by Faith  <b>Lesson 2:</b> Living by the Gospel  <b>Lesson 3:</b> Christian Growth  <b>Lesson 4:</b> The Transforming Power of the Gospel  <b>Lesson 5:</b> Keeping a Spiritual Journal	<b>Lesson 1, 2:</b> Concert of Prayer: Praying for Revival  <b>Lesson 3 (3A):</b> How To Facilitate Prayer 3A: Prayer Triplets	<b>Lesson 1 (1A):</b> Intro to the Inductive Bible Study Method 1A: How We Got The Bible  <b>Lesson 2 (2A):</b> Observing God's Word 2A: The Language of the Bible  <b>Lesson 3:</b> Observation Workshop  <b>Lesson 4 (4A):</b> Interpreting God's Word 4A: Bible Charts  <b>Lesson 5:</b> Interpretation Workshop  <b>Lesson 6:</b> Applying God's Word  <b>Lesson 7 (7A):</b> Application Workshop 7A: Ephesus - an I.B.S.	<b>Lesson 1:</b> Introduction to Evangelism  <b>Lesson 2, 3:</b> Developing Your Personal Testimony
4	4	5	3	7	3

Numbers in brackets ( ) refer to appendices

Addresses primarily the **WINNING** phase of the Church Planting Cycle

## MANUAL TWO Overview

SCP Vision (VI)	The Church (CH)	Spiritual Character (SC)	Prayer (PY)	Leadership (LD)	Cell Groups (CG)	Bible Study Methods (BS)	Evangelism (EV)
<b>Lesson 5:</b> Biblical Foundations of Saturation Church Planting  <b>Lesson 6:</b> Research Workshop  <b>Lesson 7:</b> Mobilizing Resources through Research	<b>Lesson 5:</b> The Nature of the Church  <b>Lesson 6 (6A):</b> Corporate Functions of the Church 6A: <i>Baptism in the New Testament</i>  <b>Lesson 7:</b> Developing A Church Purpose Statement  <b>Lesson 8 (8A):</b> Philosophy of Church Planting Ministry 8A: <i>Developing a Philosophy of Church Planting Ministry</i>	<b>Lesson 6:</b> Living Like Sons Instead of Orphans  <b>Lesson 7 (7A):</b> Learning to be Sons 7A: <i>Orphans vs. Sons</i>	<b>Lesson 4:</b> Concert of Prayer: Worship and Meditation	<b>Lesson 1 (1A):</b> Biblical Principles of Leadership 1A: <i>Leadership Case Studies</i>  <b>Lesson 2 (2A):</b> Profile of a Leader 2A: <i>The Leader</i>	<b>Lesson 1:</b> Functions and Benefits of Cell Groups  <b>Lesson 2 (2A, 2B):</b> Principles of Cell Group Leadership 2A: <i>Cell Grp Ice Breakers</i> 2B: <i>Sample Activities</i>  <b>Lesson 3 (3A):</b> Starting a Cell Group 3A: <i>Planning Worksheet</i>  <b>Lesson 4 (4A):</b> Cell Group Evangelism 4A: <i>About "Oikos"</i>  <b>Lesson 5:</b> Cell Group Demonstration  <b>Lesson 6:</b> Philosophy of Cell Group Ministry	<b>Lesson 8 (8A):</b> Various Ways to Use Inductive Bible Studies 8A: <i>Biographical Study - Barnabas</i>  <b>Lesson 9 (9A, 9B):</b> Leading Inductive Bible Studies 9A: <i>Study of Mt 20:17-28</i> 9B: <i>Study of Lk 15: 1-7</i>  <b>Lesson 10,11 (10A):</b> Workshop Leading Inductive Bible Studies 10A: <i>Passages for IBS</i>	<b>Lesson 4 (4A):</b> Evangelism and Church Planting 4A: <i>Evaluating Evang Strategies</i>  <b>Lesson 5 (5A, 5B):</b> Barriers to effective Evangelism 5A: <i>"A Church in Every People"</i> 5B: <i>Answering Common Objections</i>  <b>Lesson 6, 7 (6A, 6B, 6C):</b> The Process of Conversion 6A: <i>Profile of persons to Evang</i> 6B: <i>Three Principles</i> 6C: <i>Examining Jesus' Approach</i>
3	4	2	1	2	6	4	4

Numbers in brackets ( ) refer to appendices

Addresses primarily the **ESTABLISHING** phase of the Church Planting Cycle

## MANUAL THREE Overview

SCP Vision (VI)	The Church (CH)	Spiritual Character (SC)	Prayer (PY)	Leadership (LD)	Cell Groups (CG)	Evangelism (EV)	Disciple Making (DI)	Spiritual Warfare (SW)
<b>Lesson 8:</b> The First Advance  <b>Lesson 9:</b> Elements of Church Planting Movements	<b>Lesson 9, 10:</b> The Church and Spiritual Gifts  <b>Lesson 11:</b> Social Dynamics of the Church	<b>Lesson 8,9:</b> The Law and The Gospel  <b>Lesson 10 (10A):</b> Repentance as a Way of Life 10A: The Sinner's Place	<b>Lesson 5:</b> Prayer and Fasting  <b>Lesson 6, 7:</b> Concert of Prayer: Praying to Spread the Gospel	<b>Lesson 3:</b> Spheres of Leadership  <b>Lesson 4:</b> Introduction to Team Work  <b>Lesson 5:</b> Team Development	<b>Lesson 7 (7A):</b> Cell Group Discussion Dynamics 7A: Discussion Questions  <b>Lesson 8:</b> Caring for People in a Cell Group  <b>Lesson 9:</b> Training New Cell Group Leaders	<b>Lesson 8:</b> Relational Evangelism	<b>Lesson 1:</b> Introduction to Disciple Making  <b>Lesson 2(2A):</b> Your Role in Making Disciples 2A: Character-istics of Christian Love  <b>Lesson 3(3A):</b> Know Your Goal, Know Your People 3A: Faith, Hope & Love  <b>Lesson 4(4A):</b> Helping Disciples Grow Spiritually 4A: Spir Grth Need Evaltn  <b>Lesson 5(5A):</b> Forms for Disciple Making 5A: Disciple Making Plan	<b>Lesson 1:</b> Understanding Worldview  <b>Lesson 2 (2A):</b> Dynamics of Spiritual Warfare 2A: Study of Eph. 4:17-5:21  <b>Lesson 3 (3A, 3B):</b> Spiritual Battles 3A: Bible Study 3B: Case Studies from Around the World
2	3	3	3	3	3	1	5	3

Numbers in brackets ( ) refer to appendices



Addresses primarily the **TRAINING** phase of the Church Planting Cycle

## MANUAL FOUR Overview

SCP Vision (VI)	The Church (CH)	Spiritual Character (SC)	Prayer (PY)	Leadership (LD)	Cell Groups (CG)	Disciple Making (DI)	Stewardship (ST)	The Family (FA)
<b>Lesson 10 (10A,10B):</b> Strategy Components for a Church Planting Movement <i>10A: Faith and Obedience Vs Fear and Unbelief</i> <i>10B: Things that Promote Natural Growth</i> <b>Lesson 11:</b> Signs of a Movement <b>Lesson 12:</b> Shepherding within a Movement	<b>Lesson 12:</b> Dynamics of the Emerging Church <b>Lesson 13:</b> Characteristics of Growing Churches <b>Lesson 14:</b> Church Government And Church Offices	<b>Lesson 11:</b> Love as the Foundation for Ministry <b>Lesson 12:</b> Understanding the Father's Heart <b>Lesson 13:</b> Grace is for the Humble	<b>Lesson 8,9:</b> Concert of Prayer: Praying Biblically	<b>Lesson 6 (6A):</b> Servant Leadership <i>6A: The Leaders Checklist</i> <b>Lesson 7:</b> Leadership Dynamics <b>Lesson 8:</b> Styles of Interaction <b>Lesson 9:</b> Leadership Needs <b>Lesson 10 (10A):</b> Training New Leaders <i>10A: Qualities to Encourage in a New Leader</i>	<b>Lesson 10:</b> Discussion of Cell Group Questions and Problems <b>Lesson 11:</b> Cell Group Multiplication	<b>Lesson 6:</b> Disciple-making Workshop	<b>Lesson 1:</b> Introduction to Stewardship <b>Lesson 2:</b> Financial Stewardship <b>Lesson 3:</b> Time Management <b>Lesson 4:</b> Strategic Planning Process <b>Lesson 5:</b> Strategic Planning Process Workshop	<b>Lesson 1:</b> Biblical Roles in the Family <b>Lesson 2:</b> Parenting
3	3	3	2	5	2	1	5	2

Numbers in brackets ( ) refer to appendices

Addresses primarily the **MULTIPLICATION & MOVEMENT** phases of the Church Planting Cycle

## MANUAL FIVE Overview

SCP Vision (VI)	The Church (CH)	Spiritual Character (SC)	Prayer (PY)	Leadership (LD)	Cell Groups (CG)	Preaching (PR)	The Family (FA)
<b>Lesson 13:</b> Vision and Telescoping <b>Lesson 14:</b> Mobilization <b>Lesson 15:</b> Next Steps <b>Lesson 16:</b> Training As Part Of A Church Planting Movement <b>Lesson 17:</b> Mobilizing Leaders Through National Initiatives	<b>Lesson 15:</b> Church Discipline <b>Lesson 16:</b> Corporate Worship In The Local Church <b>Lesson 17:</b> How To Lead Corporate Worship <b>Lesson 18:</b> The Local Church and the Bigger Body of Christ <b>Lesson 19:</b> The Historical Impact of the Church in _____ (History of the Church in country context)	<b>Lesson 14:</b> Reconciliation Ministry <b>Lesson 15:</b> Moral Integrity of Church Planters	<b>Lesson 10:</b> Facilitating Prayer for a Church Planting Movement <b>Lesson 11, 12:</b> Concert of Prayer: Thanking God for His Faithfulness	<b>Lesson 11:</b> Releasing Leaders <b>Lesson 12:</b> Movement Leadership 12A: <i>Movement Leaders</i>	<b>Lesson 12:</b> Cells That Saturate Through Local Churches <b>Lesson 13 (13A):</b> Supervising Cells 13A: <i>Final Step</i>	<b>Lesson 1:</b> Biblical Preaching I: Understanding the Message <b>Lesson 2:</b> Biblical Preaching II: Understanding the Audience <b>Lesson 3:</b> Biblical Preaching III: Understanding Yourself	<b>Lesson 3:</b> Ministry to the Family
5	5	2	3	2	2	3	1

Numbers in brackets ( ) refer to appendices

**TOTAL CURRICULUM HOURS: 127**

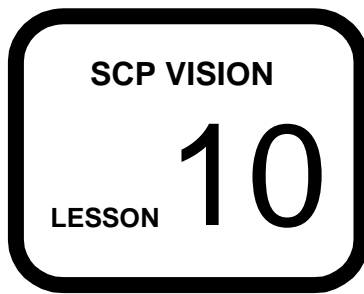


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# SCP VISION

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# Strategy Components for a Church Planting Movement

## ☞ Lesson Purpose

The purpose of this lesson is to show how to work strategically toward a church planting movement.

## ☞ Main Points

- Strategy is simply the effective method for accomplishing a task.
- Certain ministry strategies promote church planting movements.

## ☞ Desired Outcomes

When the content of this lesson has been mastered, each participant should . . .

- Understand how to work strategically toward church planting.
- Know what changes need to be made in his region in order to see a movement.

## ☞ Appendices

10A Faith & Obedience vs. Fear & Unbelief

10B Things that Promote Growth

## ☞ Suggestions to Trainers

These strategies, although biblical, are not absolute commands. Rather, they are useful strategies and examples of what the apostles did in situations similar to those that church planters may face.

## INTRODUCTION

Strategy is the effective method for accomplishing a task. It has been said that valor and bravery have won many battles, but that strategy has won more. This is illustrated best for us in the book of Joshua. The conquest of the land of Canaan under the command of God's servant Joshua was indeed strategic. With three swift campaigns, one through the interior, one to the south and one against the united forces of the north, the Israelites gained control of the land in spite of the fact that the enemy remained. Joshua's army was not better equipped, stronger or more numerous than the Canaanites. But with God's help they were able to strategically overtake the enemy. Strategy has a legitimate and important place not only in natural warfare, but also in the spiritual conquest of the world (Berkhof, p. 25). In this lesson we will examine several strategies that can be used to work towards a Saturation Church Planting movement.

## I. BUILD FAITH IN THE VISION

The most important characteristic for a saturation church planting movement is vision. Not everyone will immediately accept a vision to see churches planted within access of everyone. Some will oppose it and others will defer if they know it is true but won't join in heart and soul. But there will be still others whose hearts have been longing to hear what God wants to do through His church and they will come along.

### A. Mobilize for Prayer

If you want to overcome resistance and see a saturation church planting movement in your region, you must seek God's desire for the region. This is best done through prayer. Aggressive prayer in search of wisdom concerning what God wants for the region is an effective way to unite people and

instill vision concerning the fulfillment of the Great Commission. People who pray rarely have a problem accepting God's vision for saturation church planting. Prayer brings together those who have been longing for a great movement of God to impact their nation, people, and region.

A church planting movement can only go on if fueled by prayer. From the beginning, the early church dedicated itself to prayer (Ac 2:42), and even when persecution pressed hard, the believers held a prayer meeting (Ac 4:23-31). In the face of great opposition, they prayed for boldness to fearlessly and shamelessly proclaim their faith.

Paul stated the classic church planter's prayer request in Ephesians 6:19-20. He asked twice for boldness to proclaim the Gospel. Paul also asked that they pray for the right words, to be given to him, words that move peoples' hearts to a decision for Christ, and that he'd have no fear.

Those who pray contribute toward the success of those who plant churches. If you want to see a church planting movement in your region, one of the most strategic things you can do is encourage aggressive prayer.

## B. Ask "What Does God Want?"

Another way to build conviction and vision is to constantly ask the "Z" question—"What does God want?" This should be the topic of prayer, Bible study, sermons and ministry planning.

In answering the question, we learn that the Bible makes it clear that God works his plan to redeem the world through his people. This is clearly seen in the life of Abraham the Patriarch. Abraham was blessed so that he would bless others (Gen 12:1-3). This was the purpose of Israel. The purpose of the Church is the same. Jesus said we were chosen "... to bear fruit" (John 15:16). We are to witness in such a way that the unbelieving world is impacted.

Studying the history of God's people reveals two succinct and quite different responses to God's will. The first response is one of doubt and disobedience; the second comes from faith and results in obedience.

### 1. *The Response of Doubt and Disobedience*

God's ultimate desires are clear. But many will respond with skepticism concerning the reality of its achievement. The best biblical example of this is found in Numbers 13:26-33 when the 12 spies returned from the land of Canaan that God had promised them. Ten spies, having seen the difficulty of the task, concluded, "We cannot attack those people for they are stronger than we are" (Nu 26:13-31). Their unbelief produced disobedience, for which the Israelites were punished.

### 2. *The Response of Faith and Obedience*

Caleb, also one of the 12 spies, saw all the challenges associated with conquering the land. But Caleb, a man of faith, said, "We should go up and take possession of the land, for we can certainly do it" (Nu 13:30). Caleb's faith resulted in a desire to obey God.

As the writer of the Hebrews says, "without faith it is impossible to please God" (Heb 11:6). In the same chapter we read of the great Old Testament heroes—those "who **through faith conquered kingdoms**, administered justice and **gained what was promised**" (Heb 11:33). Faith is essential to see what God wants. In order for a church planting movement in your region to be a reality, you must build faith in the vision. Responses by faith will be blessed by God! (See Appendix 10A).

## II. SET GOALS BASED ON FAITH

When God's people set goals, they are to be tangible expressions of the vision. Remember, when setting goals there are things you can plan to do and there are things you can hope to see happen. For example, a church planter may have a goal to win 10 people to Christ in a particular target region in a year. This is a goal that the church planter hopes to see realized. Since conversion involves the willing participation of other people, the church planter has only a certain amount of control over the outcome.

Coupled with the above goal, the Church planter may have a goal to share Christ with 100 people in the target region this year. This goal has more to do with conduct and activity than results, and the church planter can achieve this one. It can be very frustrating for people to set a goal such as the first one, but not have a plan to see it achieved, such as the second goal provides.

#### EXAMPLE

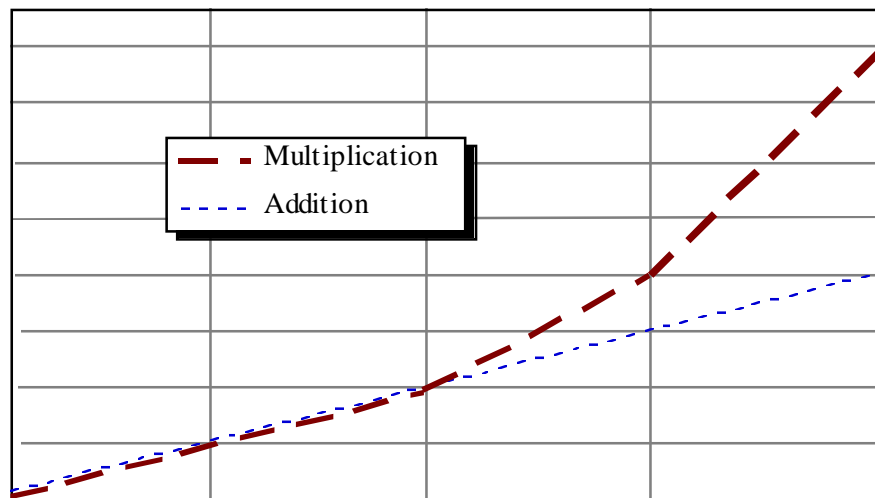
The Muria Church in Indonesia has grand growth plans. In the mid-1980's they had about six congregations with a combined membership of just over 500. The leaders set a goal to have 10,000 members by the year 2,000. This goal may have seemed completely unrealistic, yet today they are ahead of schedule. They are reaching the goal by breaking it down into mini-goals. Each person is to lead another person to Christ every three years, while each congregation is to plant another congregation every three years. Growing from 500 to 10,000 in 15 years does not happen just because such a goal is set (Shenk, p. 66-67).

### III. PRACTICE MULTIPLICATION INSTEAD OF ADDITION

Addition is the common approach to ministry. We think about adding one new church, starting one more new small group, leading one more person to Christ. These are good intentions. But God's way is not addition—it is multiplication (2Ti 2:2).

The multiplication principle applies to evangelism, discipleship, cell groups, church planting, leadership development and more. New converts should be taught to find other converts, cell groups should multiply regularly, churches should reproduce and plant daughter churches. Leaders should train other leaders to train still others. All this is multiplication. In practice, the principle of multiplication means we should employ ministry methods and models that are reproducible within the culture. Church planting models that depend heavily on foreign support or expertise may not be reproducible. Training programs that require long term residential study are also difficult to reproduce.

Figure 10.1. Multiplication vs. Addition



### IV. WORK FROM A STRATEGIC CENTER RATHER THAN A REMOTE LOCATION

Every church planter has a starting point. We have already seen how Paul selected strategic starting points in which to plant churches so that they multiplied to saturate the surrounding region (Manual Three SCP Vision lesson 8). Cities of commerce and transportation centers can be used to promote the Gospel.

Selecting strategic centers is an ongoing process. In the beginning of the New Testament Church, Jerusalem was the strategic base from which the church went out. The next strategic center was the church in Antioch. From there, as the Antioch church leaders worshipped and sought God, the Holy



Spirit sent out Barnabas and Saul to take the Gospel to the Gentiles (Ac 13:1-3). The next strategic center was Ephesus, the gateway to Asia and central to the four provinces (Galatia, Asia, Macedonia and Achaia) in which Paul invested most of his church planting ministry. Eventually Rome, the capital of the empire became the strategic center for the advance of the Gospel.

Working from a strategic center applies to evangelism as well as training. Intensive training in a strategic location allows church planters to fully absorb ministry skills and models so that they can effectively reproduce those skills and models in the lives of a multiplied number of disciples from a larger, targeted region.

Developing a geographic strategy for the training can result in more people being equipped. Find strategic areas in the country where there is receptivity to church planter training. Local leaders who are active in church planting and want to mobilize others in their region can carry out the training for church planting with your help. This will help the training multiply and will be a positive step towards a movement.

#### **EXAMPLE**

Project 250, with its main offices in Moscow, is a ministry that seeks to fulfill the Great Commission in the Former Soviet Union through church planting. The strategy is to train and mobilize 250 church planters in 250 strategically located centers throughout the FSU resulting in 62,500 new churches by the year 2020. This decentralized strategy maximizes local involvement and ownership.

### **V. DEVELOP MOBILE FACILITATIVE TEAMS**

The New Testament reveals the emergence of a mobile community of missionary teams including Barnabas, Paul, John Mark, Silas, Timothy, Epaphras, Priscilla and Aquila, Apollos, Luke, Demas, Titus, Epaphroditus and others. These workers planted, strengthened, and led new churches from Galatia to Rome. The question is, why were these mobile facilitators necessary? The eleven apostles dedicated themselves to prayer, oversight, and teaching, which limited their church planting ability. They were going deep into the knowledge of God to counteract the heresies and controversies of that day. On the other hand, the new churches were made up of local people rooted in their communities. Often the local people lacked the mobility to move to where new churches needed to be planted. Thus, mobile, trained leaders worked as church planters, teachers, leaders, encouragers, problem solvers and messengers for the new congregations.

Established local church leaders may be too occupied with oversight and pastoral duties to actively plant new churches. A church planting movement requires that a missionary community of mobile leaders be mobilized, trained, and sent out. These leaders then act as a bridge between national leaders and local churches to more rapidly expand the Gospel by planting new churches.

The development of such a team in your country could be a necessary strategy for advancing the Gospel in your entire region. Members of a facilitative team should be respected workers who possess the SCP vision and can train, equip and mobilize others. As a team, they can assist church planters and challenge others to get involved in church planting. They can do these things best when they are not tied down to a particular local church for an extended period of time. This gives them the freedom to travel and get an overview of what God is doing in the region while also allowing them to be an objective voice to the believers.

### **VI. EMPOWER PEOPLE**

A saturation church planting movement requires people full of conviction advancing the cause of the Gospel through starting new churches everywhere. As these people emerge, the movement is best served by developing them in their area of giftedness. Empowering others with a vision and encouraging them to fulfill their ministry will serve the Gospel much better than forcing others to complete a program.

### EXAMPLE

George Whitefield and John Wesley were both leaders in the 18th century spiritual revival of England. Whitefield preached before audiences of sixty to eighty thousand at a time and was considered to be a better preacher than Wesley. Yet the strategic nature by which Wesley worked led to a greater impact. Wesley believed that the laity were the key to the spread of the Gospel. He understood the power of small units and he knew how to harness manpower. He wisely gathered his converts into 'classes' which we would today call 'cell groups.' Several classes in a region then constituted a 'society.' Some 100,000 people gathered in 10,000 'classes' at the height of the movement. Wesley's role as a leader in the movement was as a traveling facilitator who preached, but most of all empowered the leaders of the societies (Miller, "John Wesley" and Comiskey, "Home Cell Group Explosion").

How can we empower others? Empowering people toward a church planting movement requires:

- Mentoring people more than managing them.
- Equipping people more than controlling them.
- Investing in people more than demanding from them.
- Challenging people more than pushing them.
- Encouraging people more than criticizing them.
- Convincing people more than commanding them.
- Training people more than lecturing them.

## VII. DEVELOP NETWORKS

As entities with the same purpose of church planting (and especially saturation church planting) agree to work together, the movement will accelerate rapidly as organizations as well as individuals are mobilized for the task. Sometimes inter-agency partnerships or the development of new organizations allow groups to work together more smoothly.

### EXAMPLE

*The Alliance for Saturation Church Planting* is committed to facilitating church planters in the 27 countries of the former Communist world in Eastern Europe and Central Asia. *Alliance* personnel are not responsible to plant churches, but through *Alliance* efforts to facilitate nationals to plant new churches over 2000 new churches have been started. Rather than only giving fish (i.e. missionaries *doing* church planting), *The Alliance* prefers to teach people how to catch their own fish. This requires helping leaders catch the *vision* for SCP, encouraging *prayer* movements for SCP, *training* church planters, helping initiate *research* and sponsoring conferences on SCP related issues.

### A. Build Communication

Like all movements, a saturation church planting movement relies on communication among those in the movement to go the same direction, clarify and advance the cause, and legitimize. Good communication also helps to build and deepen important relationships between people in the movement.

The production of literature and communication media such as newsletters, and in some cases web sites, can accelerate and legitimize a movement. Literature and media production should be of sufficient quality that people will accept it as being done well for their context. It should be accessible in both price and the ability to obtain it. It should be of an intellectual level that honors the intelligence of leaders in the movement but relevant and simple enough for all to grasp.

### B. Sponsor Conferences

In a movement, leaders have to see each other face to face. Getting people together through conferences, congresses and consultations is also necessary for a movement to keep its momentum. Nothing can stir up potential like a room filled with like-minded leaders. Large

gatherings like congresses inspire and motivate people. Smaller events like consultations allow leaders to work through difficult issues and clarify directions that they should pursue within a movement.

#### **EXAMPLE**

AD 2000 and Beyond is a movement that keeps Christian leaders all over the world in touch with each other. They share common goals, dreams, and plans to advance the Gospel. Through events like congresses and consultations, they keep in touch. Through this movement and other things that God is doing today, ministries cooperate together to reach the world for Jesus like never before.

## **VII. SEEK GOD'S GUIDANCE AND TIMING**

Church planting movements depend on God's sovereign timing more than any strategic factor. For this reason it is impossible to **make** a movement happen. However, it is possible to create the conditions in which a movement **can** happen. We see this principle described in Paul's description of the planting of the Corinthian Church. *"I (Paul) planted the seed, Apollos watered, but God made it grow"* (1Co 3:6). Paul and Apollos (and we can assume others) through their obedience did their part in creating the conditions so God would be glorified through His growing of His Church.

Just as no one can make God work in any certain way, no one can stop God if He sovereignly chooses to work in an unusual manner. Let's look at ourselves and our theologies. Do we sometimes try to force God to do things? In such a case, it seems that it would be better to find out what it is that God wants to do and join in. Then we can rejoice in however He chooses to show Himself to the people He has sent us to reach. He will show His power in the way He alone chooses when He works to reach a nation.

## **CONCLUSION**

The strategies we have studied are the kind of methods that are used in parts of the world where church planting movements are flourishing. "Ministry as usual", which focuses on maintaining and controlling, does not lead to the releasing of the power of God to work through His people. Are any of the strategies above helpful for your region?

## **QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION, REVIEW AND APPLICATION**

- What is a strategy?
- Why is vision so important in church planting movements?
- Why is multiplication so important in church planting movements?
- Of the strategies discussed in this lesson, which ones may apply to your current situation? How can they help you to progress in your church planting efforts?
- How would the concept of a facilitative team work in your church planting context? Where would this team go and how would they be used?

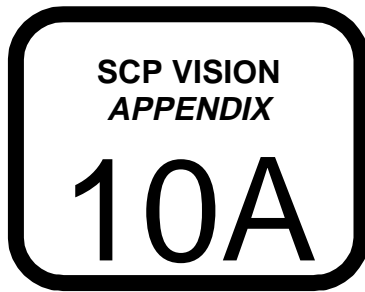
## **ACTION PLAN**

- Choose and apply at least one of the church planting strategies discussed in this lesson and share the results with your trainer or mentor.
- See Appendix 10A. Compare the list to your ministry situation.

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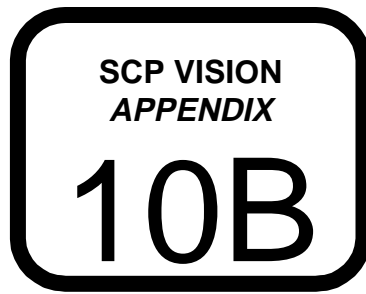
## Faith and Obedience vs. Unbelief and Fear

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The following fears are common objections to church planting. These fears have no basis in truth. In fact, they are simply lies of Satan.

<b>"The Lies"</b> <b>Believing the lies leads to fear</b>	<b>"The Truth"</b> <b>Faith in the truth leads to obedience</b>
We need to take care of the home church first.	Just as Abraham was blessed to bless others, so the purpose of the church always exists outside of itself. The truth is that in God's economy, there is enough to take care of existing churches if we will be faithful to God's mission.
We do not have enough trained leaders.	We often do not have enough leaders because we place barriers of education and time on men's lives. It is a form of control resulting from distrust of the Holy Spirit to lead and teach others.
We do not have enough money.	God provides enough money to see His will done. Luke 6:38 clearly shows that if we give, we will have more than we could hope for. Throughout the history of the church, men of faith have been provided for by the Father.
One church is enough for this city.	Saturation means a culturally relevant witness within access of every person. If God expects the great commission to be fulfilled through the church, this is what God wants.
We will divide the church.	Multiplication of the body of Christ is God's natural way to fill the earth for His glory. The Holy Spirit is one and can not be divided.
We will lose the standards of our morals.	Fear not, for the Holy Spirit will lead in truth and righteousness. He will purify the bride of Christ.
We can't do this without outside help.	There is not a people on the face of the earth who do not have the resources for their own spiritual work. This attitude has often produced unhealthy dependence and created complex church structures which can not be reproduced or multiplied.
We shouldn't work with 'them.'	Disunity and anger within the body of Christ is Satan's greatest weapon to keep the Church from completing God's mission.  Ephesians 4:26,27

Adapted from: Correll, Richard C. *The Glory of God among the Nations*. Grand Rapids: Church Planters' Training International.



# Things that Promote Natural Growth

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Things that Promote the Natural Spread of the Gospel	Things that May Not Promote the Natural Spread of the Gospel
The establishment of churches	The establishment of missions
Self-governing churches	External control of churches
Self-reproducing churches	Stagnant churches
Self-supporting churches	External dependence
The multiplication of leaders	The addition of leaders
Training while in ministry	Training prior to ministry
Early departure	Stay forever
National ownership	Dependence on foreign leaders
"Z" thinking	Maintenance orientation
Cooperation/coordination/unity	Division
Local initiative and ownership	Central bureaucracy
Church based training	Institutional education

Adapted from: Correll, Richard C. *The Glory of God among the Nations*. Grand Rapids: Church Planters' Training International.





# Signs of a Movement

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## ☛ Lesson Purpose

The purpose of this lesson is to show that church planting can turn into a movement.

## ☛ Main Points

- A movement is a social phenomenon in which what was once rare is becoming more common.
- There are certain signs of a movement that can help the church planter discern what God is doing in the region.

## ☛ Desired Outcomes

When the content of this lesson has been mastered, each participant should . . .

- Understand how to recognize the signs of a movement.
- Know the principles of ministry that lead toward a movement.
- Participate not only in planting churches, but work toward a church planting movement.

## ☛ Suggestions to Trainers

To introduce this lesson, have the trainees discuss movements from their history, both secular and spiritual. Talk about movement principles from these examples.

This lesson discusses six "signs" for discerning a movement. Choose at least one example from each of the six areas and discuss it with the trainees in class. If you have extra time, you can choose several others to work through with trainees. When selecting examples, keep in mind the specific cultures and contexts of the trainees. Stress the principles used in each example which contributed toward facilitating biblical and healthy church planting movements with sound doctrine and practice.

## INTRODUCTION

A movement is a social phenomenon. One way to describe a social movement is to say that, "What was once rare is becoming more common." It involves a growing number of people who are convinced about a common cause, an opportune time, and leaders who desire to make radical changes to the **status quo**. Special leaders emerge to inspire, motivate and lead their respective groups toward that cause. Movements motivate new events and activities. Simply put, it means that something that only a few people did is now being done by more people. It means that something that people did rarely, they now do commonly. It has enough of an impact on a group of people that it even changes their thinking, but not without conflict in the process.

The democratic movement in Eastern Europe that began in 1989 is an example of a secular movement. As a vision for political change swelled in the hearts of common people, revolutions came in a swift, spontaneous, and dramatic way that few could have predicted. The spread of the Gospel in the New Testament, the Protestant Reformation, the Wesleyan revival and the contemporary church planting movements are all examples of spiritual movements.

The clear goal of this church planter training is to help a church planting movement get underway in your region. When there is a movement of God in a nation, believers will have a renewed passion for the Gospel that should lead them to the spread the Gospel through spontaneous planting of churches and cell groups.



## I. SIGN 1: A SPECIAL TIME

When the time is right, God moves and accelerates what He's doing in a nation! God is never early and He is never late—He always does what must be done at exactly the right time.

For a movement to happen, there is a delicate sense of timing. Within a nation or ethnic group, events, conditions, and expectations come together in a certain moment of history to form raw ingredients of a massive movement. In the Bible, timing is so important that God Himself ordained the time for movements. In the book of Exodus, it took four hundred years for the people of Israel to be ready to move out of Egypt, but what a movement it was! Two million people walked out of a devastated Egypt as the cloud led them by day and the fire by night. Daniel noted that God's time of seventy years had come as he prayed for Israel to move back to the promised land from captivity under the Persian Empire (Da 9:2). As God heard Daniel, waves of Jews returned to Jerusalem. They rebuilt the temple and the city walls and the desolate city came to life once again.

Galatians 4:4 says that, "At the right time God sent His Son..."

In the New Testament, timing is also a factor in starting and mobilizing the church. The disciples of Jesus were told to wait till they received the Holy Spirit. They waited until Pentecost (Ac 1:4; 2:1). The church was begun on that day, and a great movement in Jerusalem followed. Home meetings spread across the city, teaching God's Word. Believers also met publicly. In addition to teaching, there was fellowship, eating together, and people praying with one another (Ac 2:42-47).

Another great movement of the Church recorded in the New Testament is the great advance of the Gospel in Asia Minor. Acts 19:10 states that, "everyone in Asia Minor heard the word of the Lord, both Jew and Greek." God's timing was so critical in that movement that God would not even let Paul enter the region a few years before! Acts 16:6 describes Paul and his companions as "having been kept by the Holy Spirit from preaching the word in the province of Asia."

It appears that timing is extremely important. God brings people to a point of receptivity to the Gospel, the message of a church planting movement, and mobilizes the Church to preach that same Gospel and plant more churches. A receptive population and a mobilized Church combine to form great advances of the Gospel. These movements will also leave their mark on history. If it is not God's time for a *massive* movement, do not be discouraged—You can still join in where God is moving even in a small way. Like the parable of the mustard seed demonstrates, God starts great things from a very small beginning. What evidences do you see in your target area that God is working? How can you join in there with a vision for a church planting movement—even if it is a tiny, seemingly microscopic mustard seed beginning? *Look at what God is doing and where He is working in your region and join in working there toward a church planting movement.*

### EXAMPLE:

Argentina had always been known for the pride of its people. After losing at war to the British in 1982, the nation was humbled. This brought on a special timing for the advance of the Gospel because more people recognized their need for God when they experienced such a national tragedy. Within five years, the *Vision of the Future* cell group church planting movement swelled to 100,000 people.

## II. SIGN 2: EMERGING LEADERSHIP

Many times in history when it seems that the kingdom of darkness is certain to overcome the forces of righteousness, God calls leaders who "understand the times" and know what God's people "should do." At just the right time, not too late and not too soon, God releases a blow through these leaders which brings the kingdom of darkness to its knees. So it was with Moses, David, Nehemiah, John the Baptist, the Apostle Paul, Martin Luther, John Wesley and others.

**EXAMPLE:**

The 18th century preacher, John Wesley, was such a leader. They called him “the most useful Saint in the British Empire” (Miller p. 63). The revival led by him and George Whitefield in England began at a spiritual low point when churches seemed powerless to impact society for Christ. Wesley’s ministry resulted in the conversion of hundreds of thousands and had a social impact that helped avert a revolution like the one in France. The Wesleyan revival spilled over into America, and led by Jonathan Edwards and Francis Asbury, resulted in saturation church planting of Congregational and Methodist churches.

Movements are all about leadership. For a saturation church planting movement to happen, leaders must emerge. They must promote the vision, develop new leaders, and convince existing leaders to support and join the movement. As the movement takes momentum, new leaders start emerging to carry it forward.

Like a rowboat heading upstream in strong current, these leaders will usually face some opposition. Usually, when directing a change in the *status quo*, those who lead a movement at its very beginning are more radical. This radical element can be like a new stallion in a herd of horses, challenging all of those who have been in the herd a while—they cause friction. Hooves may fly as leaders rear up and react! People will react to what leaders in a movement stand for—some positively, some negatively.

Movements can actually gain momentum from opposition as the resistance forces leaders to modify, solidify, and develop their sense of direction and convictions. Hopefully, if leaders of Christian movements hold radical opinions that are not biblical, they will modify their directions and convictions toward a biblical position.

Some leaders cast vision and ideas (such as the prophets, from Isaiah to John the Baptist). They demand change, but motivate it by reaching deep into the longing of people’s hearts for God to work among them. As they proclaim God’s intentions for His people, they work to convince them to depart from the *status quo* and follow God’s plan. *A church planting movement needs leaders who will plead the cause of saturation church planting to other leaders who may be reluctant to accept this vision.*

The Apostle Peter did this excellently in a public sermon as he focused on the hopes and dreams of the Jewish heart. He quoted his and their Scriptures from the prophet Joel. His message provoked their longing for God to send His Spirit to once again bring a prophetic word. But instead of speaking about the Spirit coming upon some distant, exalted prophet, he overwhelmed their expectations by quoting Joel and saying that their own sons and daughters would prophesy! What could be described as a spiritual movement followed (Ac 2). But opposition also followed his message. *A church planting movement needs leaders who draw out the longing in peoples’ hearts for God to work through them, advancing His Gospel by multiplying churches in the land.*

Paul was a leader who took action. If Christ was not preached somewhere, he would go there to do it (Ro 15:20-21). He set an example for others in ministry. In spite of hardships, persecution, and even destitution, (2Co 11:23-27) he planted churches! Others followed him in this example (2Ti 2:3). This is obvious, but must be said: *A church planting movement needs leaders who will lead teams to plant churches!*

Barnabas was a leader who developed other leaders even when they were considered a risk to the cause of the Gospel. He stood beside Paul when there was great doubt over whether his conversion was sincere and genuine (Ac 9:26-27). While Paul was alone in Tarsus, Barnabas called him over to Antioch and released him into his teaching ministry (Ac 11:25-26). It was from his ministry at Antioch that Paul went on to become a recognized apostle and church planter.

Barnabas also faced opposition when Paul refused to take young Mark with them again after he had failed on his first trip. Barnabas split from Paul to restore Mark to useful service (Ac 15:36-39). After time, not only did Paul himself say that Mark had become useful, but he became as a son to Peter and even wrote a Gospel! See for yourselves in 2 Timothy 4:11, Colossians 4:10, and 1 Peter 5:13 and read them aloud.

**EXAMPLE:**

The greatest ministry of J. Christy Wilson may not be that he was the first person in 1500 years to plant an Evangelical church in Afghanistan, but that he has inspired many other Christian leaders for missions, both on the foreign mission field and in pastoral ministry. He himself does not lead any organization. Bill Bright, leader of one of the largest missions and evangelism organizations in the world says that Dr. Wilson has deeply influenced him as the most spiritual man he has ever met. Dr. Wilson prays for hundreds of people every week—that God would use them. He encourages people, he believes in their spiritual gifts and he uses his own heavy influence and powerful connections to give them every opportunity to use them. As a pastor, professor, missionary, friend and counselor, he helps others see how God will use them and encourages them to work for the Lord before others notice them. Often, he will stand by and publicly speak well of someone, who although controversial, is serving the Lord and being used by Him.

One can pass the fire of a torch to another unlit torch without dimming one's own light. Lighting the torches of new leaders so they may also lead helps a small flicker in the night turn to a great blaze which can be seen a long way off. In the same way, equipping, or 'facilitating' others into leadership makes a movement grow. Acts 19:1-10 describes how in Paul's last ministry before he was imprisoned, he developed other leaders by beginning with twelve men in Ephesus. Paul himself stayed in the city, but those he trained reached all of Asia Minor with the word of the Lord! He describes how he worked with them during that time in Acts 20:17-38. Paul lit their torches! *A church planting movement needs leaders who will influence and develop other leaders who will keep the movement expanding.*

Leaders in a movement hold people accountable to the truth when it is overshadowed by traditions. Peter, Barnabas and Paul appealed to the ethics and conscience of other leaders to convince them regarding Gentiles and the Jewish law. They told the apostles and elders how God had used them to bring uncircumcised Gentiles to Christ. From this argument, they convinced the apostles and elders to write a letter freeing Gentile believers from obligations to Old Testament ceremonial law (Ac 15:6-7,23-29).

### III. SIGN 3: PEOPLE GET INVOLVED

When a movement is underway, people continue to get involved in aspects of the movement in growing numbers and growing levels of commitment to the common cause. For a church planting movement, *the common cause is to fill the land with churches that preach the Gospel!* This means that more people will need to be involved in all the aspects of starting new churches. More people will become fully committed church planters. More people will help with special skills like music, evangelism, research, and in any other way that will be a help to plant churches. More people will be part of the sending team by regularly praying for church planters and their ministry.

**EXAMPLE:**

In Romania, the beginning signs of a **prayer movement** are evident. From Alba Iulia, Romania, a group of three women began praying for each other and their husbands. They progressed to pray for their churches, their region, for the nation and for new churches to be planted. This fellowship grew to over 30 groups with approximately 150 women involved in prayer. It spread to Bucharest where a prayer brochure for Romania was produced and used all over the nation and outside of the country. In Sibiu, two churches which are not of the same denomination pray together. In Cluj, there is a monthly women's prayer gathering open to all churches. Often, unconverted women attend, and some even become believers through this fellowship.

The invisible, empowering relationship that we have with God through prayer is the intimate link with Him who gives birth to and drives on a movement. That expression of a movement of His Spirit is signaled as multiplying groups of believers come together to meet with Him in prayer. First a few, then more and more gather for prayer, until the movement of His Spirit sweeps across a nation.

What signifies a movement is the reason *why* it attracts more people. People are convinced and committed to the common cause, and pass on their conviction and commitment to others. People are committed to a church planting movement because they are convinced this is God at work.

**EXAMPLE:**

The Deeper Life movement in Nigeria grew out of a Bible study in the home of William Kmuye, then a university professor. It has grown to more than three thousand congregations from that one Bible study. People sensed that God's presence was among them through the serious study of His word. Although growing rapidly, the Deeper Life Movement is committed to biblical practices, sound doctrine and quality leadership training through cell group ministry.

What kind of ministry are people flocking to get involved with in your region?

**IV. SIGN 4: NEW FORMS**

When a movement is underway, not only professionals and ordained leaders serve in ministry, but ordinary believers discover that God wants to use them too. A movement gets people involved at every level. Leaders emerge with a passion for ministry. People become active in serving God in all sorts of ways that they may have formerly thought only professional or well-established Christians could do. For example, not only seminary-trained leaders may preach and teach, but also believers in the church whom God has gifted for this ministry.

**EXAMPLE:**

Someone asked a church planting pastor of the Assembly of God in Brazil where he attended seminary. Since very few of the Assembly of God leaders have ever attended any formal theological education he looked at the person who asked him with surprise that he would even ask. His answer was, "Why, the seminary of the street!" Such a great church planting movement needs leaders and their leaders are trained through practical ministry experience.

What happens next? As more people start working in the ministry of the Gospel they will discover more successful, interesting, or unique styles of ministry that help others get involved also. For example, in a church planting movement a certain song may become popular because of how it touches the hearts of those who hear and sing it, or because of how it turns people to the Lord. Other trends that may appear in a church planting movement include evangelism methods that are successful, cell group meetings, and even preaching styles.

**EXAMPLES:**

The Lord's Army, a cell group movement which preached the Gospel from the Romanian Orthodox church, experienced great growth from the 1930's to the 1950's. While most music in the evangelical churches was imported and translated (often badly), the Lord's Army movement produced praises to God in music born on Romanian soil coming from the Romanian soul. Evangelical believers in Romania from other churches use this music to praise the Lord today.

The "hippies" from Calvary Chapel started making music, founding Maranatha Music and producing songs that have been translated all over the world. Two of those songs are *Seek Ye First* and *As the Deer*.

The Ichthus cell group church planting movement out of England has made the *March for Jesus* a world event. The song *Shine Jesus Shine* also comes from this movement.

**V. SIGN 5: A MOVEMENT IS SPONTANEOUS**

When a massive movement is underway, no one person or organization can control it. It simply gets too big for any one person to organize it. However, leaders in a movement can get together and influence the direction of a movement. It is completely unrealistic to think that separate denominational and independent churches will join together to become one denomination for the sake of a church planting movement. The differences are too real for them to be the same entity. But they can unite together as separate organizations toward the common cause of advancing the Gospel through church planting! That happens in a saturation church planting movement.

It is very possible for leaders from different denominations to get together and plan to fill their nation with Bible preaching churches, whether Pentecostal or Baptist (and others too)! Therefore, a movement cannot by nature be organized, but people and structures in a movement can be directed toward the cause of church planting.

**EXAMPLE:**

In a meeting that brought major denominational leaders together to discuss advancing the Gospel in Brazil, the president of the Assemblies of God, Jose Wellington read Psalm 133, "Behold how good and how pleasant it is for brothers to live together in unity!" This meeting started the process which led to the Brazilian AD 2000 delegation and interdenominational good will.

A spiritual movement is always unpredictable. It is the very nature of the dynamism that is inherent in a movement. Yet such participation in the movements of God is oft times uncertain. We so often are operating and advancing within chaos, simply trying to manage that which we can and leaving the rest to God's sovereign care. Never knowing if there will be enough money, never certain that God will open the doors we envision or expect Him to open, never certain if there will be other people to join us, never certain if our strategies are 100 percent implicated in His movement, we advance in faith and confidence in His loving kindness.

A good test to see if what is happening is a movement of God or a human program is to ask, "Can a person control this?" Humans have great limitations. A movement of God must exceed and surpass human abilities and expectations. Can a person make another's heart receptive? Can a person convict another of sin? These are things the Spirit of God does. It is highly unlikely that what the human mind programs and controls is a movement of God. Get involved in ministry that will only succeed if God is in it. Avoid what will succeed if you just do the right things.

## **VI. SIGN 6: A MOVEMENT MOBILIZES PEOPLE AND STRUCTURES**

Rapid growth requires new structures, more leaders and new ways of communicating. As a church planting movement gains momentum and new forms for ministry emerge, Christians will also begin to be mobilized at all levels to be involved in planting churches. Existing structures like local churches, denominational leadership, Christian organizations, and even schools will begin to find ways to participate in and help the church planting task. Sometimes new structures are formed for helping existing ones cooperate toward a church planting movement. Literature and communication media need to emerge to take the movement farther. The following things may happen when people and structures mobilize:

When existing leaders such as pastors, denominational officials and other key Christians see that the church planting movement is clearly the will of God, they will encourage the structures they lead to help.

**EXAMPLE:**

The Discipling a Whole Nation (DAWN) ministry brought together church leaders in the Philippines in 1973 for prayer and planning. The denominations each set their own church planting goals and set a target of planting 50,000 new churches by the year 2003. They are on target today as God has honored both their faith and unity!

When previously inactive Christians see that the church planting movement is of God, they will often begin to join in by prayer, financial giving, and even going and working! Training will take place to help people participate in a concrete manner, and some of that training may find its way into Bible schools and seminaries as well.

**EXAMPLE:**

*The Alliance for Saturation Church Planting* joins local churches with mission agencies to serve as a united unit in the former communist countries. *The Alliance* has helped with training church planters. By developing facilitation teams in the former Communist countries of Eastern Europe, they have reached out to national churches and helped them to train their own church planters. *The Alliance* has also produced training materials including this manual.

Literature and other communication media will inform, instruct, and inspire people *en masse* concerning the main ideas and themes of the movement. This is an essential element to help different groups in a movement grow together in the same direction. Media, especially literature, also legitimizes. Literature and media can help people to take the movement that produces them seriously. They also help a movement to spread beyond our imagination. Literature and media also reach geographically where the leaders and participants in a movement never could. The New Testament epistles are an excellent example of literature that grew out of a church planting movement. They are still informing, instructing and inspiring church planting movements today! Do you think first century Christians imagined Paul's letters instructing and inspiring believers in South America almost two thousand years later?

## CONCLUSION

How do you find out where Jesus is actively working? He will always be found dwelling in His people. The first place to look to determine how God is at work is to check where He lives! How is God working in your region? Some of the signs of a movement may be evident in your region.

## QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION, REVIEW AND APPLICATION

- What can you do now to help lay the groundwork for a church planting movement in your region?
- How is God working at this time in the place you will serve Him for church planting? How can you stir the longing in people's hearts for God to work?
- Of the kinds of leaders in a movement, what kind of leader are you?
- What kind of literature is needed to accelerate a church planting movement?
- How would it be possible to have a consultation or congress toward a church planting movement in your region or country?

## ACTION PLAN

- Find a way to spread vision for saturation church planting. Either preach it, write it, or tell it to someone—but do something concrete to pass this vision to people somehow.
- Join in fellowship with others who have the same vision. Find and meet regularly with a group of people committed to saturation church planting.
- Develop some form of communication to spread the vision beyond your personal contact. Try to produce a newsletter, book, video, radio program or something that will communicate the vision when you are absent.
- Find other groups or organizations that will be partners with you toward a saturation church planting movement.

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# Shepherding Within a Movement

## MOVEMENT ISSUES

### ☞ Lesson Purpose

The purpose of this lesson is to give some practical insight into the task of shepherding new churches in the context of a church planting movement.

### ☞ Main Points

- Church planting movements are normally accompanied by several challenges.
- The Bible provides case studies in which we can find answers to the challenges that are often faced in church planting movements.

### ☞ Desired Outcomes

When the content of this lesson has been mastered, each participant should . . .

- Know the common issues that arise when the Church spreads quickly.
- Understand how the first leaders of the Church responded to these issues.
- Be equipped to face the challenges that are common in church planting movements.

### ☞ Suggestions to Trainers

It will be helpful to have available a map of the Mediterranean world during the New Testament times as you teach the lesson. Also, careful review of SCP Vision lesson 8 “The First Advance” (Manual Three) will help you be better prepared to teach this lesson.

## INTRODUCTION

All over the world where church planting movements are underway, these movements face challenges concerning leadership, doctrine, finances, ongoing evangelism, etc. Where do we find the answers to these difficulties? We may not traditionally think of the Bible as a church planting textbook, but since it teaches divine truth and since much of it was written in response to the expanding church, it is the best place in the world to learn about church planting movements.

### I. LEADERSHIP IN NEWLY PLANTED CHURCHES

One of the most common issues in church planting movements is that of leadership. When the Gospel advances powerfully and churches are planted rapidly, there is often a period of time when adequate leadership is difficult to find. With the passing of time, Paul and his co-workers returned to newly planted churches to encourage them (Ac 14:21-22; 20:2), to observe their progress (Ac 15:36), to *appoint elders* (Ac 14:23) and to strengthen them (Ac 16:5). Prayer and fasting were part of the selection process for choosing leadership.

While churches are developing, they need experienced leadership. Mature indigenous leadership is the best arrangement, and all of the church planting team’s effort must go toward the development of this indigenous leadership. However, rather than force men into leadership prematurely, the apostles allowed churches to exist without elders until they appointed them on the second visit. Sometimes leadership came from outside for a time. Paul sent Silas and Timothy to lead the ministry in Berea (Ac 17:14). He left Priscilla and Aquila in Cenchrea/Corinth (Ac 18:19). Toward the end of his life, Paul



most likely left Timothy to oversee Ephesus and Titus to be responsible for Crete (Tit 1:5). The goal of outside help is to train and release new leadership.

## **II. CORRESPONDING WITH NEW CHURCHES**

Paul's missionary ministry resulted in clusters of churches in four specific provinces—Galatia, Asia, Macedonia, and Achaia (see SCP Vision lesson 8 “The First Advance” in Manual Three). From the Epistles written to the churches and leaders in these provinces, we can discover how to apply biblical principles for problems new churches face. These letters were written to clarify theology, encourage the believers, instruct concerning church problems and to train leaders.

### **A. Instructions to the Galatians**

Paul wrote the book of Galatians to some of the very first churches he planted (Antioch in Pisidia, Lystra, Iconium, and Derbe) in order to stamp out the false teaching of the Judaizers who taught that obedience to the Mosaic Law was a necessary part of salvation. False teaching is a common weapon of the enemy, and new churches can be most susceptible to it. Paul countered this teaching by re-explaining the role of faith in the Gospel.

### **B. Instructions to the Macedonian Churches**

#### *1. Instructions to the Philippian Believers*

Paul wrote Philippians from prison in Rome. Philippians is all about joy. What a testimony that Paul was joyful even in prison! It is no wonder that Paul is so joyful as he reveals great understanding into the character of Christ in one of the greatest Christological passages in the Bible (2:5-11). Indeed for Paul, “to live is Christ, and to die is gain” (1:21).

#### *2. Instructions to the Church at Thessalonica*

Paul wrote two letters to the believers at Thessalonica. According to 1 Thessalonians 1:8-10, these believers had an impact on their province (Macedonia), the neighboring region (Achaia) and the world. The dominant theme of Paul's writing concerns the second coming of Christ.

### **C. Instructions to Corinth in Achaia**

The church in Corinth was indeed weak and spiritually needy. We learn in Paul's epistles to them that the church was plagued with divisions, jealousies, misuse of spiritual gifts and the Lord's Supper and that they did not know how to respond to immorality. However, Paul did not give up on this troubled church as many church planters would be tempted to do. He even tells them that the answers to their problems are in their midst (1Co 1:4-9).

### **D. Instructions to the Churches in the Province of Asia**

#### *1. Instructions to the Church in Ephesus*

Ephesus was the dominant city of the province of Asia, where Paul stayed and worked for three years. Many theologians believe that the letter to the Ephesians was intended not just for the Ephesians but also for the daughter churches which resulted from the advance of the Gospel in the province of Asia (Acts 19:9-10). The teaching in this letter has much to do with church planting movements. The statements concerning the purpose of the Church (chapters 2-3) make it clear that God intends for Gentiles (nations) to understand the Gospel through the presence of the Church.

#### *2. Instructions to the Church in Colosse*

Paul's letter to the Colossians is addressed to a church that he did not plant, in a city he had never visited. The church in Colosse was a part of the movement which started in Ephesus and spread to all of the province of Asia (Ac 19:9-10). The Colossian church was planted by Epaphras (Col 1:7), who had been trained by Paul and was sent out from there to accompany Paul in missionary work in other places (Col 4:11-13; Phm verse 23).

### 3. *Instructions to Timothy*

After Paul left Ephesus, Timothy became Paul's emissary and a leader in the Ephesian church. Having told Timothy to "stay in Ephesus" (1Ti 1:3), Paul wrote two letters to his "son in the faith" while Timothy supervised the churches in Asia from Ephesus. In his first letter to Timothy, Paul taught actions and precautions necessary to keep a church planting movement healthy. These include watching over doctrine (1Ti 1:3-5), public worship and prayer, the qualifications for leadership, warnings about financial gain, maintaining spiritual integrity, and practical advice on how to deal with people and matters of social action.

From his dungeon, facing his last days on earth, Paul wrote his second letter to Timothy. Here Paul uses the family as the model for relationships between leaders in a saturation church planting setting. Most of the admonishments are personal, as a father to a son whom he loves dearly (2Ti 1:2; 2:1). Paul told Timothy to set an example of how to treat other believers in the church (1Ti 5:1-2). He simply said to treat each other like family! Women are sisters or mothers and men are fathers or brothers. A family atmosphere guarantees that people are loved and accepted. Everyone can feel like they belong.

### 4. *Instructions to Philemon*

Paul wrote a sensitive letter to his friend Philemon, a member of the church in Colosse. A difficult social issue, that of slavery, had arisen when a runaway slave, Onesimus, became a believer. Paul encouraged Philemon in Christian love to accept Onesimus back as a brother in Christ.

When he treated this problem, Paul noted that he had the authority to tell Philemon to change his position. However, rather than force Philemon to change, Paul wanted to persuade him to take a new position toward his slave. In the same way, when Paul taught in the school of Tyrannus, Scripture says that "he reasoned" or "he discussed" (Ac 19:9). Although it may be more difficult, it is more effective to gently help people change their convictions rather than just tell them what to do. A movement always goes further when people advance the Gospel from their convictions rather than only blindly obeying commands.

On the basis of their relationship as friends and brothers in Christ, rather than from a position of authority, Paul was able to encourage Philemon to change his conviction and accept Onesimus as a brother. This same principle can be used in solving sensitive social issues in the church today. What are some issues facing you in your church, and what guidelines from this example can you apply to resolve them?

### 5. *John's Vision on the Island of Patmos*

Revelation was given to the Apostle John for the churches of Asia while John was in exile on the Island of Patmos. The seven churches (Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia and Laodicea) represent the second generation after the church planting movement.

The Lord Jesus Himself addressed the churches to tell them what really matters to Him. By paying close attention to Jesus' own evaluation of the churches, we can work to plant churches that please Him. Church planters must teach their congregations the qualities that Jesus praises in order to avoid the criticisms with which Jesus reproves the seven churches. For a biblical ecclesiology, or view of the church, chapters 2-3 of Revelation are essential.

The apocalyptic vision of John recorded in Revelation 4-22 is a unique part of the New Testament that in many ways is difficult to interpret. But the message of the vision has one reoccurring theme about which there can be no doubt—**Jesus will build His church!** "All nations will come and worship" (15:4). This should be great comfort to believers in all circumstances.

## E. **The Letter to the Romans**

Although Rome was not part of any of the regions that Paul evangelized during his missionary journeys, a strong church developed there as a result of others' labors. Paul's letter to the Romans

is one of the most valuable parts of Scripture. In great detail, Paul explained the meaning of the Gospel about which he was "not ashamed" (Ro 1:16). Paul knew the power of Gospel, for it had transformed his life, as well as the lives of thousands of others. Why is it that we do not see God working in powerful ways today? Perhaps part of the answer has to do with the fact that we fail to fully understand and release the Gospel in ministry.

**Example:**

The powerful book of Romans has been the spark that has ignited several spiritual movements. In the 16th century a young German Catholic monk and seminary professor named Martin Luther had a desire to be close to God. The problem, however, was that he did not know how and it seemed that neither did the other religious leaders of the day. Luther found the answer he was looking for in 1515 while lecturing on Paul's letter to the Romans. When he came to chapter 1, verse 17 he rediscovered the biblical doctrine of 'justification by faith.' Luther went on to preach the Gospel of salvation as a free gift apart from good works. As the Gospel was preached, countless lives were eternally changed and Europe was transformed.

**Example**

In 1735 a young Anglican priest named John left England to serve a three-year missionary term among Native Americans in the US, where he encountered many difficulties. Upon returning to London in great discouragement, he went to a meeting on Aldersgate where a group of believers was reading Martin Luther's introduction to his commentary on Romans. Then and there, on May 24, 1738, John Wesley heard the Gospel for perhaps the first time. Wesley went on to lead one of the greatest revivals the world has ever seen.

### III. GUARDING AGAINST HERESY

As we have already seen, doctrinal issues are some of the problems a church planting movement will usually face (1Ti 1:3-5). It is possible to plant many churches, but if they are not strong in biblical teaching, serious problems may arise. Extremes may go from legalism to mysticism. All such teachings must be regulated by Scripture.

#### A. A Portrait of Christ

A portrait is an accurate picture of someone. A caricature, like those in newspaper and magazine cartoons, twists the accurate image to emphasize one or two aspects of the person's image. Training leaders to adhere to good, solid Bible teaching will help the Church be an accurate portrait of Christ. Often, because of legalism or experiences, the accurate portrait of the Lord becomes twisted into a caricature. This can happen when a denomination or group of churches strongly urges members to follow only one, or a few parts of Scripture, or emphasize experiences. Remember:

1. *Experience should be interpreted by Scripture and not vice-versa. Scripture is the basis for teaching and training (2Ti 3:16-17).*
2. *Avoid extreme legalism or mysticism (Col 2:18-23). Instead, make Jesus Christ the center of everything (Col 1:27-29; 2:2-3,6-9; 3:4,15-16).*
3. *Avoid heresy which can destroy the church.*

#### B. True Christianity Requires Love Among Christians As Well As Correct Doctrine

According to church tradition, the Apostle John wrote First, Second and Third John while in Ephesus. John speaks strongly against those who distort the doctrine of Christ (1Jn 2:22) and who do not have relationships that are marked by Christian love (1Jn 2:9).

People who mixed Christianity with popular philosophies of the day distorted correct doctrine (1Jn 4:1-3). People like Diotrephes (3Jn 9) were leaders in the church who caused dissension and division, wanted to be the most important, and did not practice Christian love in their relationships.

The old apostle affirmed that Christ-centered faith and relationships of Christian love are the marks of a movement that practiced true Christianity (1Jn 5:1-2).

#### IV. RESOURCING

One of the issues in an SCP movement involves the mobilization of resources. Resources include money, equipment, literature, skills, etc. When people lack the resources to do what God has called them to do, they cannot implement the SCP vision. Two principles guide resources in church planting movements.

##### A. The Principle of Self-Support

Scripture teaches that local giving was part of the church planting movement in the first century. Paul expected churches to support their leaders financially (1Ti 5:17, 1Co 9:3-12). Ministry resources, including money, can be drawn from outside sources in order to get new works started. However, the fulfillment of the Great Commission in a region should be done primarily with the resources and initiative of the believers of that region. At the heart of the issue of resources is the fundamental truth that God's own people provide the primary means for the work of the Gospel. Their own tithes and offerings should be used to support their work.

As Jesus said, *"For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also"* (Mt 6:21). As a person gives *according to one's means*, the person becomes committed in their heart to what they are giving to. If people do not give sacrificially to local ministry, then the work has no heart-felt following. Something very powerful happens when people decide that a ministry or program is *theirs* and that its success or failure depends on God's work through them alone.

##### B. The Principle of Sharing

The collection from Galatia, Asia, Macedonia and Achaia for the needy believers in Jerusalem (1Co 16:1-2; 2Co 8,9) indicates that churches were expected not only to support the local ministry, but also to give to others in need. While it is common today for "mother churches" to provide for the financial needs of "daughter churches", we see that the opposite took place when Paul collected money for the Jerusalem church. Note also that this collection did not violate the principle of self-support (2Co 8:13-15).

Paul normally supported himself financially in order not to be a burden on others (Ac 18:2,3; 1Co 4:12). He did, however, receive help from the Philippian believers (Php 4:15-20). It is interesting to note that the often repeated phrase *"my God shall supply all your needs..."* is found in the context of Paul congratulating the Philippians for their giving to church planting ministry.

Financial giving is a basic discipline of the Christian life that enables churches to minister, reach out, and to plant more churches. Believers were never to be greedy (1Ti 6:3-10), and it is "more blessed to give than to receive" (see Acts 20:32-35). In fact, most of the giving in the New Testament was done out of poverty, or at least beyond one's means. Wealthy people also have an important role in a church planting movement. However, those who are well off must understand that 1 Timothy 6:17-19 includes six instructions for rich people who turn to Christ: not to be arrogant, not to put their hope in wealth, to hope in God alone, to do good, to be rich in good deeds, and to be generous and willing to share. Have you talked to the wealthier people in your church about the six commands directed toward them?

#### V. EVANGELISTIC AND CHURCH PLANTING STRATEGIES

How can the evangelistic fervor that ignites church planting movements be sustained? This is another issue that church planting leaders face.

##### A. Address People's Common Identity and Hopes (Acts 2:14-40)

*The right words given at the right time move people.* Paul asked the church in Ephesus to pray that he would use the right words in his preaching of the Gospel (Eph 6:19). In every culture, among

every people, Jesus is the answer. Whatever the mysteries and deep questions of an ethnic people may be, there is a key message which, when spoken at the right time, will stir many to make life decisions for Jesus Christ.

On the day of Pentecost in Acts 2, the Apostle Peter spoke to the people's common identity and hopes (Ac 2:14). At that time, these people were groaning with expectation for a special time when God would visit the conquered and scattered people of Israel. Peter told of the new time when the Spirit of God would no longer speak only through an elite prophetic community, but through sons and daughters, old and young men and even bondservants! (Ac 2:17-21). Later, Stephen, knowing how the Jews treasured their history, explained how they could find their collective purpose in Jesus' coming (Ac 7). Paul responded to the Greeks' passion for new and mysterious truth when he told the Athenians that they can now know the mystery of the *unknown* God (Ac 17:22-33).

Saturation church planting finds its due place in a nation when church planters have learned to speak to people's identity and to address their hopes. When the Gospel is explained in the context of a nation's own historical and cultural meaning, it has its greatest attractiveness and power. Another notable way to apply this principle is when the 'call to action' is formulated. If the 'call to action' can address the common identity and hopes of people, then it is likely to motivate them.

## **B. Use Special Events and Times**

Big events and celebrations in a nation, region, city, or village can economize effort and time for church planters. The Church was born at the time of a major celebration when thousands of Jews, proselytes and God-fearers came to Jerusalem from all over the world (Ac 2). After their time in Jerusalem, these pilgrims took their new faith back to their homelands. This could explain how the church in Rome was well established before any of the apostles arrived there.

When Paul last returned to Jerusalem, he desired to arrive for Pentecost (Ac 20:16), perhaps because Jews from all over the world would be present. When Jews from Asia recognized him, they accused Paul and gave him an occasion to declare his personal testimony to the international multitude gathered at the temple (Ac 21:27ff). Paul didn't plan it this way, but he took advantage of the situation to advance the Gospel.

Special events like the World Cup, national celebrations and holidays that already attract multitudes, and especially international crowds, are excellent opportunities to reach out. Churches can be planted more efficiently when receptive people already come to a mass event, as opposed to church planters expending much effort to find and attract people or organizing a huge and costly crusade. On a smaller scale, birthdays, name day parties, Christian weddings or funerals can be opportunities for outreach. With appropriate follow up, it can help both church planting and church growth.

## **C. Evangelize People in Authority**

People in authority must be included in any evangelistic outreach. Jesus gave the Apostle Paul his evangelistic strategy when He said, "He is a chosen instrument of mine to bear my name before Gentiles and kings" (Ac 9:15). Paul employed this strategy when he witnessed to the Roman Proconsul of Cyprus, Sergius Paulus (Ac 13:7), as well as to Felix, the corrupt governor of Judea, and his successor, Porcius Festus (Ac 24), to Herod Agrippa (Ac 25, 26), and to Publius, the leading man of Malta (Ac 28:7-10). Though the details are not recorded, we can be sure that Paul witnessed to the Roman Caesar, Nero, as well (Ac 27:24). In going to Rome and appealing to Caesar, Paul's mission changed from a regional focus to one of international impact (Ac 19:21, Ro 1:15).

Before national churches can witness to national leaders, these churches should be praying publicly for them (1Ti 2:1-2). This will result in a society that allows Christians to live a "peaceful and quiet life with all godliness and dignity." Furthermore, as people in authority learn of the Gospel by the clear witness of national believers, these government leaders, though unrepentant, will yet understand how Christians affect their society. And if national leaders have good intentions for their administration of a country, they will sympathize with and respect the values that Christians practice.

## **QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION, REVIEW AND APPLICATION**

- What are some of the issues that church planting movements face? How does the Bible help us respond to these issues?
- What heretical teachings threaten the Church in your region? What parts of Scripture address these issues?
- What are some of the hopes and dreams of the people you are serving?
- Do you have a regional plan to plant churches in surrounding cities?

## **ACTION PLAN**

List three major events in your culture and tell how you can use them as part of a church planting strategy.



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# THE CHURCH

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THE CHURCH

LESSON 12

# Dynamics of the Emerging Church

## WHEN DOES IT BECOME A CHURCH?

### ☞ Lesson Purpose

The purpose of this lesson is to explain the dynamics of the transition as a group of believers becomes a church.

### ☞ Main Points

- A group should steadily become a church, rather than making the transition immediately and sometimes prematurely.
- Individual ministry and cell groups should remain a vital part of the new church.
- A new church is the *beginning* of the fulfillment of the Great Commission—not the end.

### ☞ Desired Outcomes

When the content of this lesson has been mastered, each participant should . . .

- Understand the different definitions of a church.
- Be committed to the ongoing use of cell groups.
- Be committed to continued multiplication of the church.

### ☞ Suggestions to Trainers

It would be helpful to refer in this manual to Stewardship lesson 2, “Financial Stewardship”, Section III. “Local Church Finances.” This section has some relevant ideas about self-supporting churches and complements the discussion in this lesson regarding financial viability.

## INTRODUCTION

Just like the birth of an individual, one of the most exciting moments in the life of a church is when it is officially “born.” The formal birth of a church is usually not a haphazard event. As in biological life it is a dynamic process in which certain things normally happen before and afterward. In this lesson we will explore this process.

### I. WHEN IS A CHURCH A CHURCH?

With God’s blessing, the church planter should be able to develop a number of cell groups in his target area. At some point there will be enough believers to begin the process of organizing them into a local church. There are a number of important issues to consider at that time.

#### A. Who Decides When a Church is a Church?

The first issue concerns who has the right to call the new work a “local church.” There are at least three major sources of opinion about what really constitutes a church.

##### 1. Legal Requirements

The government of each country probably has specific laws concerning what kind of group can receive the legal status of a church. Biblically there does not appear to be any reason why a church would need to be registered with the government in order to be a church. However, it is often necessary or helpful to officially register as a church in order to avoid unnecessary

legal hassles. Government requirements for registering as a church vary from country to country, as do the benefits and disadvantages of registering. This issue will need to be decided on a case-by-case basis in each area, normally with the counsel of other experienced church leaders.

## 2. *Denominational Requirements*

If the new church plant is being developed under the auspices of a denomination, or if it would like to affiliate with an established denomination, the denomination will normally have their own guidelines as to what constitutes a church. They may include minimum membership requirements, church polity, financial status, doctrine, or other considerations. Again, these vary so widely that the church planter will have to work through them in his particular situation.

## 3. *Biblical Requirements*

The focus of this lesson is on the biblical understanding of a church rather than the denominational or legal one. These various concepts of the church can be viewed as a progression:

**Table 12.1 Church Criteria**

<i>If the church meets these criteria:</i>	<i>It is a church in the eyes of:</i>
<i>Biblical</i>	<i>God</i>
<i>Biblical + Denominational</i>	<i>God &amp; the Denomination</i>
<i>Biblical + Denominational + Legal</i>	<i>God &amp; the Denomination &amp; the Government</i>

Each church planter will have to decide which of these levels of recognition is important for the new work in his particular situation. Of the three concepts, however, the biblical one is the most foundational and important. Any group that does not meet the biblical definition of a church is a cult in the eyes of the Lord—regardless of whether or not the denomination or the government recognizes it. Therefore the biblical criteria for a church are vital to understand.

## **B. Definition of a Local Church**

Church lesson 4 “Defining The Local Church” (Manual One) discussed the definition of the Church in detail. Please refer to that lesson for a more in-depth description. You will also want to refer to the definition of the church that you developed in that lesson. Since definitions will vary substantially, this lesson will use a basic definition for discussion during the lesson time. You should work through this lesson again with your own definition.

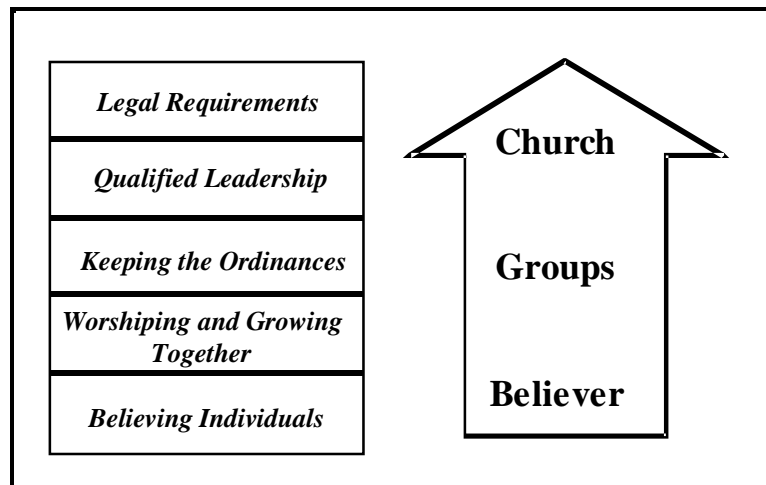
*A local church is often defined as an organized body of those who have professed belief in Jesus Christ, have been baptized, and who meet together on a regular basis for fellowship, worship, instruction in the Word and the practice of the ordinances.*

How exactly a church is organized and who leads the body may vary greatly from one group to another.

## **C. Distinguishing a Group from a Church**

Opinions vary widely as to when a group is organized enough to meet the above definition and legitimately be considered a church. Every church plant moves through the stages in Figure 12.2, moving from individuals, to groups, to a local church.

**Figure 12.2 From Individuals to Church**



There can be several different types of groups involved in a new church plant, including cell groups and small groups. Cell groups provide growth for a new church through ongoing evangelism, which is not always the case with small groups. Some groups provide a specific ministry focus, such as basic discipleship, youth or family. Although thought and prayer should be given towards using cell groups and/or small groups in a church planting ministry, the organization of the groups is not as important as the people in them. The church is people—groups simply provide structure and an environment in which ministry can happen in and through those people.

If we use the basic definition of a church from section B, we can describe in more detail at what point in the process a group becomes a church. In order to truly be a church, a congregation should meet each of the following requirements:

1. *Be Composed of Believers by Faith in Christ*

The local church must be composed of those who have placed their faith and trust in Christ. Only those who are born again are members of the universal Church, and therefore should be considered members of the local church. A group of unsaved people, no matter how great the number, is not a church. In reality, we can never be completely sure of the salvation of each member, but this should be our goal. Scripture does not specify a minimum number of members.

2. *Meet Together Regularly for Fellowship, Worship, and Teaching*

The early church met together daily, but as time progressed we see them specifically setting Sunday aside in honor of the Lord's resurrection on the first day of the week. There seems to be some room for discretion in light of Paul's comments in Romans 14:5-6. The focus of their meeting was the ministry of the Word and worship that centered on the sacrifice of Christ for their redemption.

There is no reason why a building is necessary in order to be considered a church. The early church met in the Jewish temple courtyard, in the synagogues, and in homes. During the Roman persecution they also met in caves or any other concealed place available. The first church buildings were not built until several centuries after Pentecost. Today buildings are often used, but certainly are not necessary.

3. *Practice the Ordinances*

There are two ordinances—baptism and the Lord's Supper—that all churches agree need to be performed. However, there is considerable variation between the forms they use. Baptism is practiced in various ways, and the frequency of the Lord's Supper varies. Denominational practices often influence these forms, but the functions must be done by the church. In order

to be considered a local church, there should be a workable system in place to administer these ordinances.

4. *Have Qualified Leadership*

The church needs to have enough qualified people to fulfill whatever leadership roles the church deems necessary to be a church. If they believe in pastoral rule, they need to have at least one qualified pastor. If they believe in a plurality of elders, they must have at least two. If they consider deacons necessary, then there must be members qualified to serve. Furthermore, these offices need to be elected or appointed in an organized manner that fulfills the form of government chosen by the church.

5. *Be Financially Viable*

The church is required to support the leaders who give themselves to full-time ministry to the congregation (1 Tim. 5:17-18). The early church also financially helped widows and the poor in the congregation. In addition, they sent money to other churches in need, and helped support missionary church planters. A group that is not supporting itself is not able to fulfill these local church functions. Because of this, some would question whether a group that does not support itself can be considered a church.

Can a group that is not supporting itself be considered a church?

This requirement is possible, even for a very poor group. If every member gives about ten percent of his income, it would take ten families to support one leader. If a lay leader does not need a full salary, it would require even fewer members to support him.

It is important to understand that "income" is not only cash, but also all the non-cash resources that a person has. If someone does not receive a regular cash salary but has a field of potatoes, a percentage of those potatoes should be given to the church or sold for cash in order to help support the church. Committed members of a local church who are exercising their biblical responsibility to give should be able to support not only their own leaders and ministry, but outreach as well.

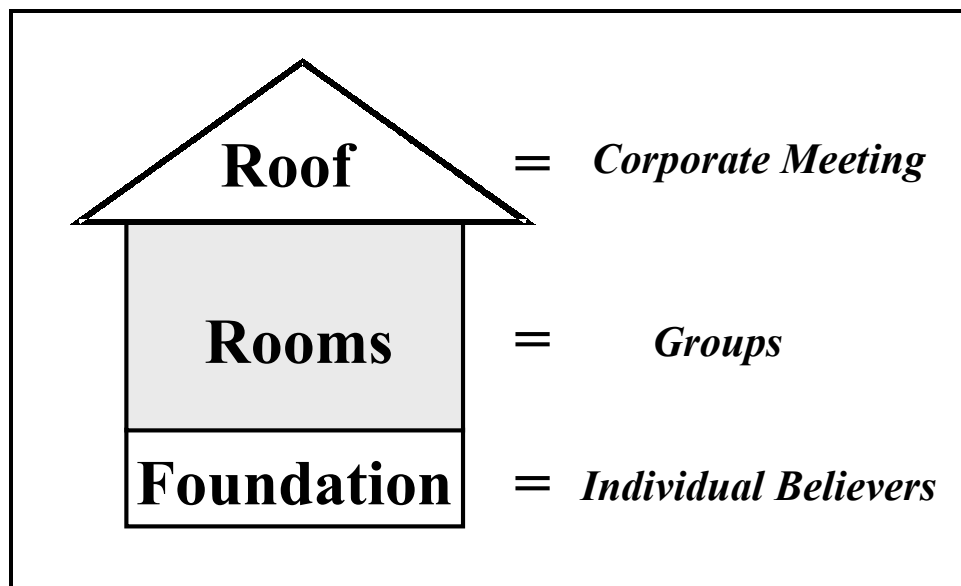
## II. ORGANIZING AS A CHURCH

The process of organizing a church is exactly that—a process. All too often, church planters prematurely make the transition from being a group to being a church. There are two major reasons why this is a mistake. First, every group of believers should be learning to fulfill as many church functions as possible from the inception of the group. The members of the group should grow steadily into these roles as they mature spiritually and increase numerically. Second, the groups should never cease to meet as groups when they become a church. The cell groups are vital, and should continue. The corporate church meetings are held *in addition to* the cell groups—not *instead of* them.

### A. Component Parts of a Healthy Local Church

The planting of a new local church in many ways resembles the construction of a house (remembering that the church is *not* a building). A house is composed of several parts, which are normally built in a particular order. First, the foundation is laid, then the rooms are built, and then the roof is added. The individual members, groups, and corporate meetings of the church are added in a similar fashion.

**Figure 12.3 Building the Lord's House**



1. *Individuals—The Foundation*

The image of a foundation is often used in the New Testament, but the identity of the foundation changes according to the truth being illustrated. In different passages, the foundation is Jesus Christ (1Co 3:11), the apostles and prophets (Eph 2:20), the doctrine of repentance (Heb 6:1), and the ministry of the Apostle Paul at the Corinthian church (1Co 3:10). Figure 12.3 uses the foundation in this latter sense. The basic “building blocks” of a local church are the individual believers. Winning individuals to the Lord is the first step in starting a local church. Even if small groups exist, but there are no believers in them, there is not yet a foundation for the church. We can think of the individual believers as the bricks of the foundation. This foundation, however, grows larger and stronger as more “bricks” (believers) are added.

2. *Groups—The Rooms*

Cell groups or small groups are equivalent to the rooms in the house. These rooms are where the activity of the church takes place. The groups are a vital part of the life of the church, just as organic cells are the vital structure of the living body. They are the second stage in the formation of the new local church. A normal house has various rooms, each serving a different purpose. A growing church should also have an assortment of cell groups or small groups, meeting various needs such as evangelism, discipleship, and training. As the foundation (believers) increases, more rooms are added as needed.

3. *Corporate Assembly—The Roof*

There are many bricks in the foundation of a house, and a number of rooms, but only one roof. It covers, protects, and holds together the whole house. The corporate meetings of the local church are like this. They are the culmination of the work. When the roof (corporate meeting) is added, all the normal activities of the church can take place freely. There is a sense of unity and fulfillment.

**B. Adding the “Roof”**

There are some unique situations or cultures in which the roof is constructed before the rooms of the house. A minimum number of poles or other supports temporarily hold the roof until the rooms can be added. Some local churches are even started this way. They jump from having a few believers to “holding services” on a particular Sunday when the church, by their standards, is officially born. This can be done, but is rarely the most effective way to work. Worse yet, when such

a system is used, the church often fails to add the rooms (cell groups), with the result that the church never reaches its potential.

Using the house analogy, it is easy to see that the “rooms” (groups) should be formed first, and the “roof” (corporate meetings) should be added as a means to draw all the groups together on a regular basis. This allows the advantages of both the cell groups and the large meetings. A new church that builds in this order will be stronger and more effective.

Before a church begins regular corporate worship, consider the following:

- Is there a strong foundation consisting of several multiplying cell groups with a total of about 30-40 people attending?
- Is there a core of people trained as evangelists and disciplers?
- Are ministry leaders trained and ready to take on new responsibilities?
- Are the leaders and church planter(s) united about the philosophy of ministry for the church?

### C. Keeping the Foundation and Rooms

No reasonable person ever builds a house, and having completed the roof, knocks down the foundation and walls. And yet a similar bizarre behavior often happens with new churches. Having assembled enough believers to hold a joint service, they stop meeting as cells, and neglect evangelism and individual discipleship. In essence, they destroy the “rooms” (groups) and allow the “foundation” (believers) to crumble.

Cell groups are not a “temporary plan” until the church is formed. *They are the life of the church!*

The importance of personal evangelism, individual discipleship, and cell groups in the *ongoing* life of the church cannot be stressed enough! They are not a “temporary plan” until the church is formed. *They are the life of the church!* They are necessary for the continued growth and maturity of the new church. The church should meet together as a large group *in addition to* individual growth and small group meetings—the large meeting should never *replace* them.

## CONCLUSION

If a group of believers meets the biblical criteria for a local church, it is a church in the eyes of God. A church is always a group of people that believe in Christ, but a group of believers is not necessarily a church. Some of the more common distinctions between groups and churches are in the areas of the ordinances (Lord’s Supper and baptism), types of leadership, and financial self-support.

Organizing a new local church does not mean finding a location to buy or rent and starting Sunday morning worship services. Individuals form the foundation of the church, and a new church is started only when they gather together corporately to fulfill all the functions of a church. Groups should be used before and after the birth of a new church to provide a structure for the ministry activity that will happen in any local church.

In order for a church planting movement to happen in any given town, region or country, the local church must have reproduction as a goal. In the same way that a “foundation”, “rooms” and “roof” were built (in that order) to form a new church, this church should also plan and prepare to “build” another new church using this same process. Where are you preparing the next “foundation”?

## QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION, REVIEW AND APPLICATION

- Describe the process in which one or more groups becomes a church.
- What are some indications that a group is ready to begin on-going corporate worship?
- Assuming that a new church has been starting using cell groups, describe the role of cells in the life of that new church.

THE CHURCH

LESSON 13

# Characteristics of Growing Churches

## GET NEW PEOPLE, KEEP THEM AND PUT THEM TO WORK

### Lesson Purpose

The purpose of this lesson is to explain which characteristics must be present in a new church in order for it to grow.

### Main Points

- Growth and reproduction is the norm for all healthy things.
- Churches grow when they reach new people, keep them, and equip them to reach out to others.

### Desired Outcomes

When the content of this lesson has been mastered, each participant should . . .

- Understand how the characteristics of a church will positively or negatively affect its growth.
- Participate in cell groups for evangelizing the lost and for training believers in ministry.

### Suggestions to Trainers

Stress that a mindset of growth is key for both new and old churches. While some of the characteristics in this lesson will be more effective than others in a specific location, the mindset will enable each student to creatively develop the right method for growth.

## I. WHAT IS A GROWING CHURCH?

Jesus Christ promised that He would build His church and that the gates of hell would not stand against it. As we look at the history of Christianity, we see that He has been keeping His promise. The church has grown from a few disciples in Jerusalem on Pentecost to hundreds of millions of believers located in nations around the globe. Today the church is still growing at a tremendous rate in Asia, Africa and South America. In other places the growth of the church is much less obvious. Some countries have practically no church, and in others growth is stagnant. Since the growth of the church of Christ is dependent on the growth of individual congregations, a church planter must understand some of the reasons why churches do or do not grow.

It is important to define what we mean by a *growing church* before we note their characteristics. A church can grow in three main ways:

1. Numerically—More believers or more churches
2. Spiritually—Increased biblical knowledge and deeper spiritual walk
3. Socially—More or better effectiveness as “salt” in a lost world

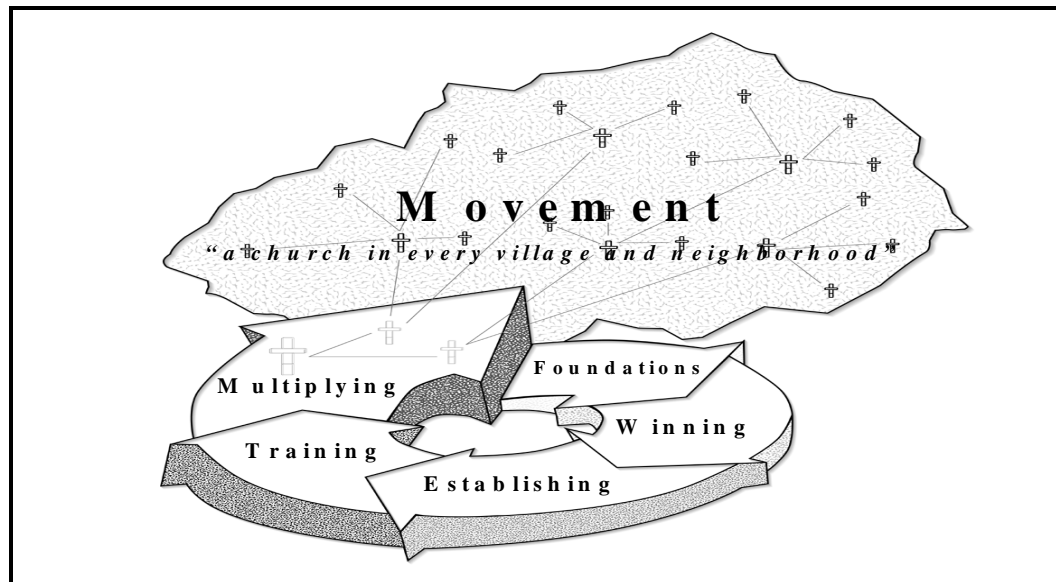
Many churches are content if they see even one of these. Some are satisfied if they simply survive. They may say, “We haven’t seen anyone saved, but we are faithfully serving the Lord.” Others may be so obsessed with numerical growth that they downplay commitment in order to raise their attendance. None of these approaches is biblical. A local church should be growing in each of the ways listed above.

However, a local church that *grows*, but does not *reproduce* is not acceptable to the Lord. The Great Commission instructs us to bring *all nations* into obedience to Him. The Church Planting Cycle in Figure 12.1 illustrates the importance of church planting in accomplishing this goal. Churches that want to be pleasing to the Lord and obedient to the Great Commission will seek to *multiply* themselves by planting



*daughter churches*, who will in turn plant other churches. This concept is vital to the understanding of what a growing church should be.

**Figure 13.1 The Church Planting Cycle**



A method that helps the church to grow in one country and culture may fail miserably in another. A good church must decide what is effective and appropriate in its own culture. But there are certain basic characteristics that seem to be universal. Explosive growth does not always happen. Some cultures resist the Gospel for decades or longer. But usually absence of growth signals a problem with the church or its ministry methods.

## II. HOW CHURCH GROWTH HAPPENS

The basic requirements to have a growing church are fairly simple, although it is challenging to implement and maintain them. The church must **attract** new people, **keep** them, **equip** them to reach others.

### A. Growing Churches Attract New People

Without new people, the church does not get bigger. This is so simple and yet so vital. This growth usually does not happen by accident. We must plan for it and work for it. The church planter must consciously think about where and how his new church can find and attract new people.

### B. Growing Churches Keep New People

Bringing more people is the first step. The next one is to keep both these new people and the old ones. Otherwise, it is like filling a bucket with a hole in the bottom—a futile effort until the hole is fixed. Any person in a church has a choice to stay or to leave. A growing church will adapt to such a good job of meeting the spiritual needs of the new believers that they will want to become more faithful in the church.

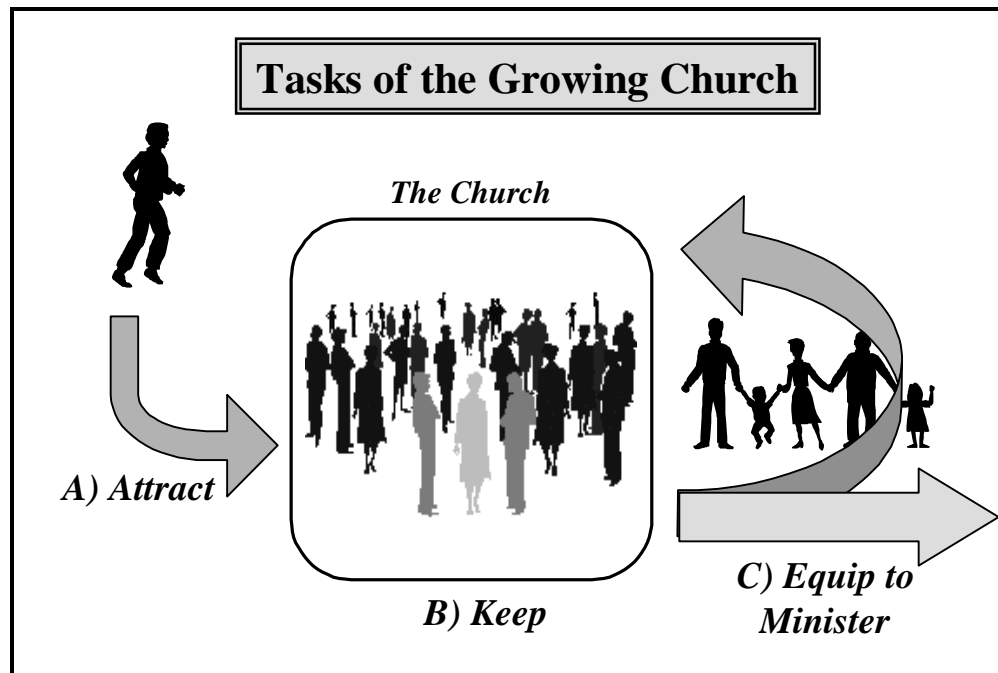
### C. Growing Churches Equip New People for Life and Ministry

Ephesians 4:11-16 is a key passage on church growth. It shows that the church grows to maturity as each member of the body is equipped. In a healthy church the leaders consider that their main purpose is to equip the other members. This ministry includes three major areas:

- Ministry within the body
- Ministry of bringing the lost into the body

- Ministry of establishing new congregations

**Figure 13.2 The Growing Church**



The important actions of a growing church are demonstrated in Figure 12.2. How is your church, or your church plant, doing in each of these areas? Where do you need to improve?

### III. TWELVE CHARACTERISTICS OF GROWING CHURCHES

Here are twelve practical ways that a local church can accomplish the actions shown in the figure above. A good church should be involved in each area.

#### A. They Go to the Lost

This vital step is often forgotten. Some churches believe that it is the responsibility of the lost to come to church. This is totally counter to the Great Commission, which commands the church to go (Mt 28:18-20). We are to leave the 99 righteous sheep and seek the lost one (Lk 15).

Any hunter or fisherman knows how ridiculous it would be to expect the fish or the game to come to them. They use all their skill and understanding in order to determine where the fish or game are located and to go to them. "Fishers of men" must do the same.

The early church sought the lost in the temple, the synagogue, the market, and house-to-house. Jesus went to banquets and parties attended by tax collectors, prostitutes, and others of known sinful character. Unfortunately, the "righteous" did not understand this principle. The religious rulers attacked Jesus for "eating and drinking with sinners" (Lk 5:30-32). Jesus did not dispute that He did exactly that. Rather, He said that His purpose was to seek the lost. When a lamb is lost in the swamp, a loving shepherd will go down into the mud and muck to go after it and rescue it.

It takes wisdom and discernment to know where we can and cannot go. But the ministry of Jesus demonstrates that it is important to seek the lost wherever they may be, even if it brings criticism from the "righteous." We must strive to find an acceptable balance rather than throw away the opportunity to minister to the lost where they are.

## **B. They Use Cell Groups**

Many unbelievers will not attend a church, but they can be persuaded to come to the home of a friend where they can ask questions about Christianity in a less threatening situation. These groups should never follow the same format as church. They should be informal, non-threatening, and friendly. The purpose of the group should be to discuss the truth of God's Word rather than to preach at the lost. Cell groups are discussed in detail in these materials.

## **C. They Participate in Social Activities with Unbelievers**

A church that wants to grow will encourage its members to go to sporting events, chess clubs, the market, the pool, the sauna, birthday parties, weddings, funerals, picnics, public meetings, etc. Any activity may be a chance to meet and develop relationships with the unsaved. Christians are to be separate from the *sin* of the world, but not from the *world*. Rather, we are to be in the world as salt and light.

## **D. They Maintain Natural Networks of Relationships**

Most people come to Christ through the influence of someone they know. Every Christian should be developing relationships with unbelievers that will eventually allow them to share the Gospel. If every member managed to develop only one such relationship each year and led that person to Christ, the church would double yearly. Many believers have few relationships with the lost. As a Christian becomes more involved in church life, his circle of friends changes and begins to include more Christians and fewer unbelievers. Consequently, he has increasingly fewer friendships with the lost and less opportunity to attract them to Christ.

The new believer should be encouraged to live an authentic Christian life and evangelize his lost friends.

The best source of contacts with the lost is through the new believer. Unfortunately, new believers are often encouraged to separate from their unsaved friends and spend all their time with believers. This approach severely damages evangelism and hinders church growth.

## **E. They Change in Order to Win the Lost**

The Apostle Paul attempted to become all things to all men in order to win all men (1Co 9:19-23). What did he mean? Certainly he did not become sinful in order to win the sinful. What then did he mean? He was willing to change the way he lived if it helped the lost to listen to the Gospel. Think about what that means to us.

Rather than the believers changing their "culture" to win the lost, many churches expect the lost to change their "culture" in order to come to the church.

The scriptural principle is clear. The believer is to yield his own rights and preferences for the sake of the lost.

Yet the scriptural principle is clear. The believer is to yield his own rights and preferences for the sake of the lost. And the strong believer is to yield to the weak believer. This does not mean that the believer may sin. But he seeks to do everything permissible in order to reach out and meet the lost in a manner that is comfortable for them.

*The character traits of the believer draw the lost to Christ.* If the believer is gloomy, moody, dowdy, or bitter, his witness will not be effective. A genuine Christian should exude joy despite his troubles, a love for God and others, and peace and assurance about God's love for him. Think about the lists of personal traits or actions in Figure 13.1. Which column, A or B, do you think would attract an unbeliever to a Christian?

**Table 13.1 Personal Traits**

Column A	Column B
Love for others	Goes to church every Sunday
Joy in trials	Dresses differently
Assurance of God's love	Doesn't drink
Peace in difficult times	Doesn't smoke
Generous with finances and time	Stingy
Loving marriage	Sings in the choir
Well-behaved children	Knows the Christian hymns
Dependability	Knows the Lord's Prayer
Graciousness	Avoids sin

Most Christians would agree that both columns contain good Christian traits. That is not the issue. Which traits are attractive to the unbeliever? The traits in the left column are more likely to influence an unbeliever to listen to our message. Believers in whose lives those traits are most noticeable will be more effective in evangelism.

These characteristics must be genuine. A believer who pretends to love a lost acquaintance in order to win him will be recognized as fake. A genuine Christian is attractive, even to the unsaved. Character traits are best seen in a crisis. When we have problems, the unbeliever can see how we depend on God. When the unbeliever has a crisis, he can experience our love and help. Both situations attract him to the Gospel.

#### **F. They Are Involved With the Needy**

Many people come to Christ during a crisis. Unbelievers often pay little attention to God when things are going well. The Lord often uses a crisis to force them to understand their need. Growing churches know that people are more open at those times, and they seek ways to respond to people when they are hurting.

The particular means is not as important as the fact that we demonstrate our love and care for the lost. Sometimes material help is needed because of unemployment, fire or other problems. In the case of illness or death, a sympathetic ear may be the most appreciated way to demonstrate compassion. The key is to keep our eyes open for needs that we can respond to, as did the Good Samaritan.

#### **G. They Quickly Include New People**

The way members react to a new person during his first visit may well determine whether he ever comes again. If he feels welcome and accepted, he will probably return again. This is often true of a new believer as well as an unsaved visitor. Many churches in Eastern Europe are very cautious about accepting new people. This caution helped the church survive in times of persecution, and was understandable then. However, continuing to hold this attitude today can be devastating to church growth.

An unsaved visitor normally attends church because he is open to the Gospel. It is important to seize that opportunity to make him feel welcome and to seek to answer his questions. The same is true of new believers, who are compared with newborn babies (1 Pet 2:2). They also need love, acceptance and encouragement to convince them of the need for a close relationship to the church.

## **H. They Have Vibrant Body Life**

The early Jerusalem church is an excellent model of a local church body that was alive and fulfilling the needs of its members. In Acts 2:42-47 we see the main functions of the church body demonstrated:

1. *Powerful, clear Bible teaching and preaching*
2. *Loving and accepting fellowship*
3. *Heartfelt devotion to the Lord's Table*
4. *Life-changing prayer*
5. *Sharing with brothers and sisters in need*

Everyone enjoys being in a group that loves them and cares for them. This is one major benefit of a family, and the church is to be a family. When Christians care for one another as brothers and sisters in Christ, people will stay in the group.

## **I. They Equip Members for Life**

Each member is to grow in maturity. For this to happen, the leaders must model the Christian life for them. Real discipleship takes place when the godly members spend time with the younger Christians and demonstrate for them how to grow and how to serve the Lord.

It is surprising how much of a typical church service is intended to evangelize the lost, even though most of the congregation may be believers. Evangelistic sermons do little to help the believer grow to maturity. While the Gospel should be preached in church, a greater emphasis should be placed on messages specifically for the believers. If the teaching is appropriate for the needs of the believer, they will continue to attend the church.

## **J. They Equip Members for Ministry in the Body**

The ministry of the church is to be carried on by the members of the church—not by the leaders. As we discussed in the Church Lessons 9 and 10 (Manual Three), God has gifted all believers with spiritual gifts to be used in ministry. The purpose of the leaders, then, is to train and equip the members of the church to use effectively their spiritual gifts in ministry. When this principle is followed and all the members of the body are active in serving one another and reaching the lost, the church will grow. The entire church body can accomplish so much more than the leaders alone.

## **K. They Equip Members for Ministry to the Lost**

Believers are to help the church grow. In John 15, Jesus said that the believer should bear fruit and that He would prune the branches so that they would be even more fruitful. The will of the Father is that we bear much fruit. This applies to all believers—not just the leaders. Jesus did not define the fruit in John 15, but he commanded us to go and make disciples. Surely the fruit includes the winning of the lost.

Few believers ever win another person to Christ. There are many reasons for this. Some of the most common ones are:

- They are not taught to evangelize until they have been a Christian long enough to lose their non-Christian contacts.
- They are taught so little about the Christian life that they are afraid to try to explain it to unbelievers.
- They are never taught any effective method of presenting the Gospel.
- They assume that evangelism is the job of the leaders.
- Some believers fail to witness because of unconfessed sin in their own lives.

All of these stem from poor equipping of the believers for ministry. A good church planter will be careful to prepare his members for ministry, motivate them, model a soul-winning heart and encourage them as they minister. In this way, he will multiply his ministry.

## **L. They Equip Members for Ministry to New Congregations**

While the growth of a local church is good, the multiplication of local churches is better. A healthy church should not only grow in size but also reproduce itself many times. There are a number of reasons why the establishment of new congregations is more desirable than the simple growth of the mother church.

### **1. *New Congregations Grow Faster***

It is a fact that new churches almost always grow much faster than old ones. There are many theories as to why this happens:

- Newer churches usually locate in an area where there has been no church, and therefore closer to unevangelized individuals. It is like picking berries and finding a patch where no one else has yet picked.
- New churches are free from old problems. Unfortunately, many older churches have a history of hurts, problems or scandals. Unbelievers may use these as an excuse not to attend. However, they might be willing to try a new church with a clean reputation.
- New churches must grow to survive, and therefore their members more naturally have an evangelistic mindset. They are more conscious of the lost and more willing to reach out to them. They have not yet become complacent.
- People like to be part of a church where there are people of a similar culture. Most established churches have developed a program and style of worship that is appropriate and attractive to their typical member. People of a different age, education or background may not be interested in that church. New churches can design ministry forms that are appropriate for these other people that the established church cannot reach. For this reason, it is usually good if the new church forms do not precisely resemble the old one.
- New churches often do not have their own meeting place and are forced to conduct much of their ministry in homes and cell groups. In reality, cell group ministry is a much more effective way to reach the lost and to disciple new believers. So the lack of facilities becomes an asset rather than a liability.
- Established churches have higher overhead for their buildings. The giving and effort required to build and maintain a large facility sap the energy and resources that could otherwise be directed into evangelism.

The new believer should be encouraged to evangelize his lost friends and acquaintances while he still has a relationship with them.

The giving and effort required to build and maintain a large facility sap the energy and resources that could otherwise be directed into evangelism

### **2. *Reproducing Churches Grow Faster***

While older churches seldom grow as fast as new ones, they grow faster when they are involved in planting new congregations. This is hard for some to believe, but true. Many wrongly assume that helping to start a new church would weaken the old one. Rather, the increased emphasis on evangelism, outreach and training that are needed for the new work almost always results in growth for the old church! The enthusiasm for growth is so contagious that a stagnant church can often revitalize itself by promoting church planting.

This principle also applies to new churches. The church planter should teach the new congregation about the need to reproduce from the very beginning and encourage them to start other groups as soon as possible. Such a mindset will keep his new work vibrant and growing.

#### **IV. EVALUATING AND MONITORING CHURCH GROWTH**

All parents know that it is important for their child to be weighed and measured by the doctor on a regular basis to determine if the child is healthy and growing properly. The same is true of the church. By gathering and analyzing certain types of numerical growth, church planters can gain valuable insight into the health and growth of their churches. For example, the number of baptisms per year in a church is an indication of "conversion growth" and shows how effectively the church is bringing in new people. Increases or decreases in church membership and attendance can indicate whether the church is keeping and equipping the members. Finally, charting the number of cell groups, new church plants, or other ministries outside the church can show whether the church is successfully involving members in the work of the Gospel. Evaluating this data is the only reliable way to know whether the church is doing its part to fulfill the Great Commission.

#### **QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION, REVIEW AND APPLICATION**

- Is your church growing? In what sense? Numerically? Spiritually? Socially? Some of these? All of these?
- Am I fulfilling my responsibility to equip the believers for ministry, or am I trying to do it myself? How am I equipping them? Is it working?
- Why would an unbeliever want to come to my church? Why would a new believer want to stay? Can I make my church more receptive to them?
- Have I started a new church plant yet? Cell groups? If not, what am I waiting for?

#### **ACTION PLAN**

- Attend another church and imagine that you are an unbeliever. Would you come back to that church? Why or why not? How does it compare to your church? What did you learn from this that will help you in your church?
- Think about the churches in your area. Which of them are growing, and which are not. Compare the characteristics of each to the traits in this lesson. Which characteristics appear to be the reasons for their growth or lack thereof? Can you define other helpful traits?

THE CHURCH

LESSON 14

# Church Government and Church Offices

## WHO IS RESPONSIBLE?



### Lesson Purpose

The purpose of this lesson is to explain the major types of church government and the requirements for the officers of the church.



### Main Points

- Two major types are Hierarchical and Congregational.
- Elders and deacons must meet biblical requirements.



### Desired Outcomes

When the content of this lesson has been mastered, each participant should . . .

- Have a good understanding of the different types of church government
- Understand how to identify potential leaders.
- Understand the responsibilities and privileges of church leaders.



### Suggestions to Trainers

The purpose of this lesson is not to try to convince the church planter to adopt any particular form, but to help him think through the implications for church growth and multiplication of his choice of church government and leaders.

## I. WHAT IS A CHURCH?

The Church of Jesus Christ is that invisible body of born-again believers in Jesus Christ—dead, living and yet to be born from every tribe, language, people and nation on earth. This church is often called the Universal Church. Local churches are the visible manifestation in time and place of the Universal Church. One definition of a local church is “an organized body of baptized believers, led by a spiritually qualified shepherd(s), affirming their relationship to the Lord and to each other by regular observation of the Lord’s Supper, committed to the authority of the Word of God, gathered regularly for worship and the study of the Word, and turned outward to the world in witness.” How many attendees it must have, how exactly it is organized and who leads the body vary greatly from one group to another.

Doctrinal and practical differences often lead believers in the same local area to form totally different and separate assemblies. Differing understandings of Scripture have led to numerous varieties of church structure and government. This lesson will attempt to summarize different forms of government so that you, the church planter, can think seriously about what form would work best for your church and what forms would lead to more rapid multiplication of churches.

## II. TYPES OF CHURCH GOVERNMENT

Church government can be divided into two main types with several variations of each. A church may or may not be aware of which model of government it uses, but each church will generally fit into one of these forms, or some variation thereof. The various systems are distinguished mainly by the degree of autonomy of each local church.



## A. Hierarchical Government

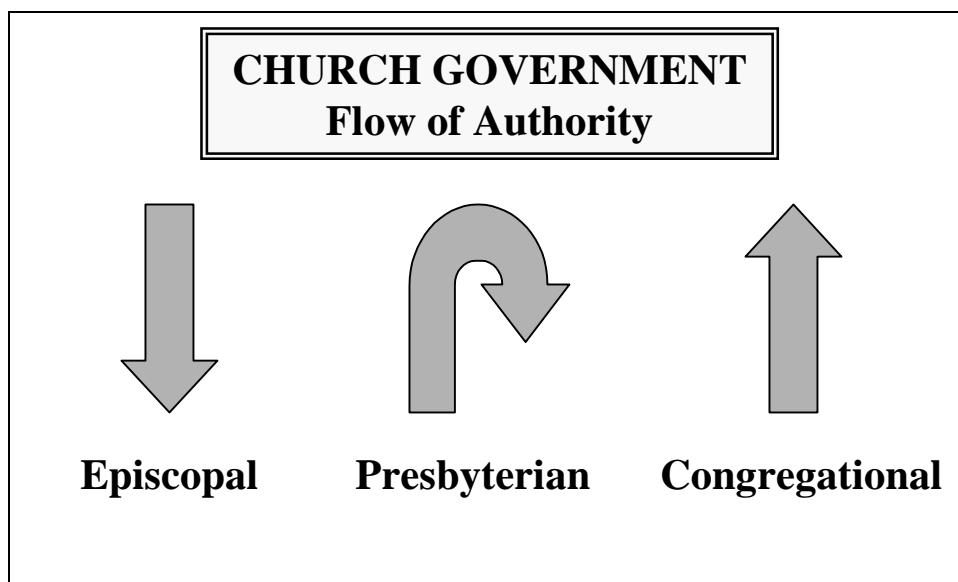
Hierarchical forms of church government vary in style, but in general they indicate “top down” authority. Control flows from the leaders or officials down to the congregations and individual members. There are two major types of hierarchical governments:

### 1. *Episcopal*

The Episcopal form of government includes a hierarchy that has control over the local church. This control is exercised through the bishops of the church. Authority flows down from the bishops to the presbyters to the deacons and finally to the church members. The bishops have the power not only to appoint the presbyters and deacons who serve under them but also to appoint the successor bishops. In this way, they perpetuate their authority. Episcopal structure is used by the Methodists, Orthodox, Anglican and Roman Catholic churches.

This authority for the bishops is often based on the doctrine of apostolic succession or a similar belief. That is, they believe that the authority of the bishops has been passed down through history from the Apostle Peter, who was himself appointed head of the church by Jesus (relevant Scriptures: Acts 14:23 and Titus 1:5).

**Figure 13.1 Flow of Authority**



### 2. *Presbyterian*

The Presbyterian form of government also has a hierarchical structure, but this hierarchy is not appointed from above. Rather, authority is vested in representatives chosen by the people, both clergy and lay, who act in their interest. The church elects its ruling elders. These elders, along with the teaching elder (pastor), form the session. The teaching elder and a representative of the ruling elders from area local churches join together to form a presbytery, which has authority over the local sessions. Representatives from several presbyteries form a synod, and representatives from each synod form the general assembly, which is the highest authority.

Although Presbyterian government is appointed from below, unlike the Episcopalian form, there is one exception. While the congregation chooses its ruling elders, the presbytery ordains the teaching elders – also known as ministers or pastors. These teaching elders are theoretically equal in authority to the ruling elders. They simply have different functions. The teaching elders are responsible for the teaching of the Word and for the sacraments. The ruling elders are concerned with the other decisions involved with running the church.

Support for this structure is usually found in the Jerusalem council (Acts 15).

## **B. Congregational**

In the congregational form of church government, authority is "bottom up." Control and responsibility for governing the local church rests in the members of that church. That authority ultimately comes from Christ alone, the head of the church, and not from any other human body or individual. The members themselves make the necessary decisions within their body and choose their own leaders. In actual practice, they may allow their leaders considerable decision-making freedom, but they are still answerable to the congregation, who must approve all major decisions.

Support for this type is normally found in the passages such as Acts 6:5 where the congregation appeared to ratify the decisions of the leaders.

## **III. OFFICES IN THE CHURCH**

There are a number of words used for the church leaders in the New Testament: elders, deacons, presbyters, overseers, bishops, shepherds, pastors, teachers. Qualifications for only three of these are listed in the Scriptures, so we will look at these. In 1 Timothy 3, Paul gives qualifications for overseers. In Titus 1, he uses the same qualifications for elders, but in the middle of the list uses the term overseer. This suggestion that the terms are interchangeable might help us in determining the offices in the church. (See also Ac 20:17,28 and 1Pe 5:1,2).

### **A. Qualifications for Overseers (1 Timothy 3:1-7)**

The qualifications of the overseer (sometimes bishop) are described in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and listed as follows:

- Above reproach
- Having only one wife
- Temperate
- Self-controlled
- Respectable
- Hospitable
- Able to teach
- Not given to drunkenness
- Not violent, but gentle
- Not quarrelsome
- Not a lover of money
- Manages his family well
- Sees that his children obey him with all respect
- Not a new convert
- Have a good reputation with outsiders

A man chosen as overseer must demonstrate these qualities in his life. The emphasis is on his current character. If he has had a poor reputation in his past life, there certainly needs to be a significant period of holy living to convince the congregation that he has indeed changed his ways and to help keep him from falling into sin.

### **B. Qualifications for Elders/Overseers (Titus 1:5-9)**

In his epistle to Titus, Paul reiterates his list of qualifications for elders and overseers. Notice that this list of qualifications is similar to the expanded list given in 1 Timothy 3:1-7.

- Blameless
- Husband of one wife
- Children believe and are not wild and disobedient

- Not overbearing
- Not quick-tempered
- Not given to drunkenness
- Not violent
- Not pursuing dishonest gain

### C. Qualifications for Deacons (1 Timothy 3:8-13)

The qualifications for deacons are similar to those of the elders, except that deacons are not required to be able to teach. The main requirements for deacons are listed in 1 Timothy 3:8-13 as:

- Respected
- Sincere
- Not excessive drinkers
- Not greedy for money
- Having a clear conscience
- Tested
- Having only one wife
- Managing his children and household well

The spiritual requirements are just as strict as those for the elder. They must also have proven reputations. The only difference, not being required to be able to teach, is readily understood in light of their role. The Greek word *diakonos*<sup>1</sup> that is translated as deacon refers to one who serves. The first appearance of the deacons seems to be Acts 6. At that time there was a problem in the church. Some of the Gentile widows were being overlooked in the distribution of food to the needy. The apostles who directed the church did not think it was right for them to leave their responsibility of teaching and praying. Instead, they asked the congregation to choose seven men who could be entrusted with the task of distributing food.

We therefore understand that the New Testament deacons were responsible for the material and social needs within the church. Since they would handle church finances, the strict spiritual requirements and the need for testing is reasonable. The purpose of the deacons is to allow the elders time to concentrate on the spiritual needs of the church.

In 1 Timothy 3:11 the feminine form of *diakonos* is used. Some churches take this to mean the “wife of the deacon.” Other interpret it to mean a female deacon, or “deaconess.” (See also Romans 16:1 where Phoebe is called a deaconess.) In churches with deaconesses, they have a serving role similar to that of the deacons.

## IV. RESPONSIBILITIES AND PRIVILEGES OF CHURCH LEADERS

### A. Responsibilities

1 Peter 5 sums up the responsibilities of elders/shepherds/overseers: to care for the flock of God. Some specific things they are to do are as follows:

- Do the work of an evangelist (2Ti 4:5).
- Govern—The Greek word translated rule or govern is *proistemi*<sup>2</sup>, which means “to be over, to superintend, to preside over, to be a protector or guardian.” Note that Peter makes it clear that in fulfilling this duty Timothy is not to “lord it over” his people, but to be an example to them.
- Read the Word publicly (1Ti 4:13).

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<sup>1</sup> δακονος

<sup>2</sup> προιστημι

- Preach the Word (2Ti 4:1-2).
- Teach the Word (Tit 2:1).

## **B. Privileges**

Faithful elders are worthy of respect. The respect results from the proven godly lives that they have lived in order to be chosen as elders. Their counsel is to be seriously considered by the congregation. In addition, the people should be careful about accusing them of wrongdoing unless it is well supported by at least two witnesses (1Ti 5:19-20). However, if proven guilty of sin, they are to be disciplined more harshly than a regular member. This is in keeping with their public position. They have great power to influence people for good or evil, and they therefore incur a more severe condemnation if they fall.

The faithful elders who teach are also worthy of financial support. Paul makes it clear in 1 Corinthians 9:7-12 that the new church was expected to support those who labor to teach them. Churches often ignore this teaching, and expect their elders, pastors, or church planters to find some other source of income. As a result, elders may be overworked or may not be able to give sufficient time to the work of oversight and teaching. Ruling and teaching the church are serious matters. You must determine within your church context how to fulfill this responsibility to your elders. The goal should be to support them so that they can give themselves to full-time ministry to the church. Even though Paul was willing to work as a tentmaker when there was not yet a church to support him, he immediately switched to full-time ministry as soon as it was possible. This seems to have been the case in Acts 18:1-5 when Silas and Timothy apparently brought a gift from the Macedonian churches (cf. 2Co 8:1-4).

How much is appropriate? Paul uses the term "double honor" in 1 Timothy 5:17-18. It could mean "twice the average wage," but it seems more likely that it refers to honor in two forms—respect and financial reward. In that case, they are worthy of at least the amount that the average member of their congregation receives. If they have no financial need, they may refuse that part of the honor as Paul did (1Co 9:12) but that is the right of the elder, not of the church. It is the responsibility of the congregation to serve them in this way, and thus demonstrate their respect for the teaching of the Word. If they refuse it, the church should use those funds to support the planting of another church, as the Macedonians did in the example above.

## **V. SUMMARY**

Although the New Testament contains each of these types of government and of leaders, it has no specific command on how a local church should be organized. As a church planter, you should carefully and prayerfully consider the options. Your background and denominational affiliation will most likely heavily influence your choice of church government. Part of your responsibility in preparing your cell group to become a church is to teach them about church government and specifically the type of government they as the new church will have.

## **QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION, REVIEW AND APPLICATION**

- As you consider the types of church government described in this lesson, what are some positive things that would contribute to multiplication? What are some negative things that would hinder church multiplication?
- Do you agree with Paul's exhortation to pay the elders who teach? What position will the church that you are planting take on this?

## **ACTION PLAN**

Identify (two) men in your church plant who you think have the potential to be elders. Develop a plan to disciple and test them in the specific character traits required for an elder.



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# SPIRITUAL CHARACTER

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SPIRITUAL  
CHARACTER

LESSON 11

# Love as the Foundation for Ministry

## Lesson Purpose

The purpose of this lesson is to produce people who minister from a heart of love.

## Main Points

- Our relationship with God impacts how we relate to others.
- The unconditional love God has for us as expressed in the Gospel is our model for relating to others.
- One of the most attractive points of a new church should be the loving relationship that exists between believers.

## Desired Outcomes

As a result of this lesson the participant should:

- Become more loving and gracious toward others.
- Understand how to minister to others from a heart of love for people.

## INTRODUCTION

We have been learning how the Gospel impacts our walk with God. We have talked about how God loves us as a Father loves a child through grace and mercy. Our relationship with God impacts how we relate to others. The person who lives by faith is not compelled by the law, but by love. His faith produces within him a genuine love. So we see these inseparable qualities of faith and love working together.

## I. THE GOSPEL AS A MODEL FOR RELATIONSHIPS

Our spiritual life begins with our spiritual birth. Before talking about the Gospel as a model for relationships, we need to review just what the Gospel has done in our lives. As the table 11.1 describes, there are two basic but very different ways to relate to God. These two approaches affect how we relate to others as well.

Table 11.1 The Gospel and Religion

Gospel	Religion
<i>(God's supernatural attempt to reach man)</i>	<i>(man's natural attempt to reach God)</i>
Grace	Works
Faith	Obedience
Unconditional love	Judgementalism
Transforming Holy Spirit	Personal effort
Grace leads to obedience	Obedience leads to grace

### A. The Gospel Saves

The powerful message of the Gospel changes us in many ways. We are declared righteous by faith in the Gospel saving us from the wrath of God and guaranteeing eternal life.



## B. The Gospel Transforms

The Gospel affects more than just our eternal destiny. The Gospel message changes us daily. We are made holy by the blood of our Savior with the cross ever before us as the central point of our spiritual lives. We walk by faith believing that God loves us. Out of gratitude for our salvation through the Gospel, we live lives of obedience to God's will. Through understanding our position in Christ, we find strength to overcome sin and grow to maturity.

## C. The Gospel Provides a Model for Relationships

Lastly, the Gospel impacts our relationship with others. The Gospel is unconditional love extended to us. This unconditional love then can become a model by which we relate to others. In writing to the Church he had planted in Ephesus, Paul gave just this advice saying "Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other just as in Christ, God forgave you" (Eph 4:32). Jesus taught his disciples to pray saying, "forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors" (Mt. 6:12).

How can the Gospel be a model for relationships? How can we be kind and compassionate to one another? As we will see, Jesus taught us how.

# II. GOD'S UNCONDITIONAL, SACRIFICIAL LOVE

God's unconditional and sacrificial love is explained in great depth in the life and teachings of Jesus.

## A. The Great Commandment

When Jesus was questioned by the Pharisees regarding the greatest commandment, He summarized it by quoting from Deuteronomy 6:5: "**Love** the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind." He then added the second greatest commandment, taken from Leviticus 19:18, which summarized the rest of the Old Testament law, "**Love** your neighbor as yourself" (Mt 22: 34-40, Mark 12:28-31). Together this is often called the Great Commandment. The Great Commandment is what Jesus wants us to look like: Christ-likeness. It is the summary of the law: holiness.

In their zeal for keeping the Law, the Pharisees seemed to have forgotten these two commandments. They loved the law but not the Giver of the law, much less their neighbor. Nevertheless, these commandments were guidelines for man's relationship with God and with fellow man.

## B. The New Commandment

Shortly before His death, Jesus gave His disciples some specific instructions that would be the guidelines to show them how to relate to one another. These guidelines are found in John 13-17. He began by giving a new commandment, "**Love** one another. As I have **loved** you, so you must love one another" (Jn 13:34). This is similar to the great commandment. But, there are two major differences:

### 1) *The love is among believers.*

In the great commandment, we are taught to love God and our neighbors. In this new commandment, we see that there is to be a special love among His followers: "My children... Love one another" (Jn 13:33-34).

Jesus went on to describe the witness that this love among believers is to the lost when He said, "By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you **love** one another" (Jn. 13:35). When Christians do not love one another, it is one of the worst testimonies. If those who believe the Gospel do not love one another, then how is the unbeliever to understand that the Gospel brings peace with God? When we do not love one another, people wonder where is the power of the Gospel? It brings

When we do not love one another, people wonder where is the power of the Gospel?

peace between man and God... should it not also bring peace among men? Our churches are to be a miniature picture of God's Kingdom on earth, where the powerful love of Christ is seen.

2) *The degree of the love.*

In the great commandment, the degree of loving others was measured by the love for self. But in the new commandment, Christ's sacrificial love becomes our standard for how we are to love one another.

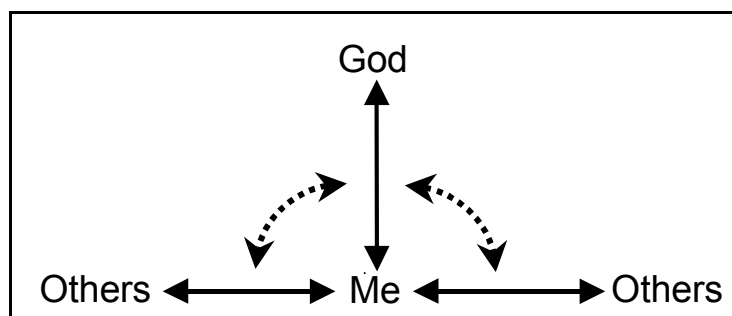
What does Jesus mean when He says He is giving a *new* commandment? (Jn 13:34). In Greek, there are two different words that can be translated "new." The first of these, *neos*<sup>3</sup>, refers to something that has never before existed. But the word for new that Jesus used was the other word, *kainos*<sup>4</sup>, which means "new in quality." He explained the new quality of love in John 15:12,13: *"My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends."* Following the example of Jesus, His children must have love for each other that is measured by the love the Lord has for us.

### III. GOD'S LOVE APPLIED TO RELATIONSHIPS

The relationship between a person and God will have a direct impact on his relationship with others. In Figure 11-2, we see a simple diagram that illustrates this. The vertical line represents the first part of the Great Commandment *"Love the Lord your God..."* and the second part of the New Commandment *"...as I have loved you."* The horizontal lines represent our relationship to others in which we are to love them as Jesus has loved us. The dotted arch represents the fact that the way in which we relate to others is similar to our relationship with God.

The relationship between a person and God will have a direct impact on his relationship with **others**.

Figure 11.2 Loving God and loving others



If a person relates to God legalistically—there will be a strong tendency to relate to others in the same way. If a person believes that God is angry with them, then he will likely be angry toward others. On the other hand, if a person understands that God loves them unconditionally, then he will be free to love others in the same way.

One way to measure spiritual growth then is to look at how one relates to others. Is it possible to be a good Christian but not get along with others very well? Because of the new commandment, it does not seem so. We are to love God and others.

It is remarkable that love as a part of Christ-likeness is so often overlooked. Why is that? Possibly, because it is easier to obey a list of rules than it is to have our hearts changed. Many kinds of people can obey rules and regulations, but it takes a heart changed by God to love.

<sup>3</sup> νεος

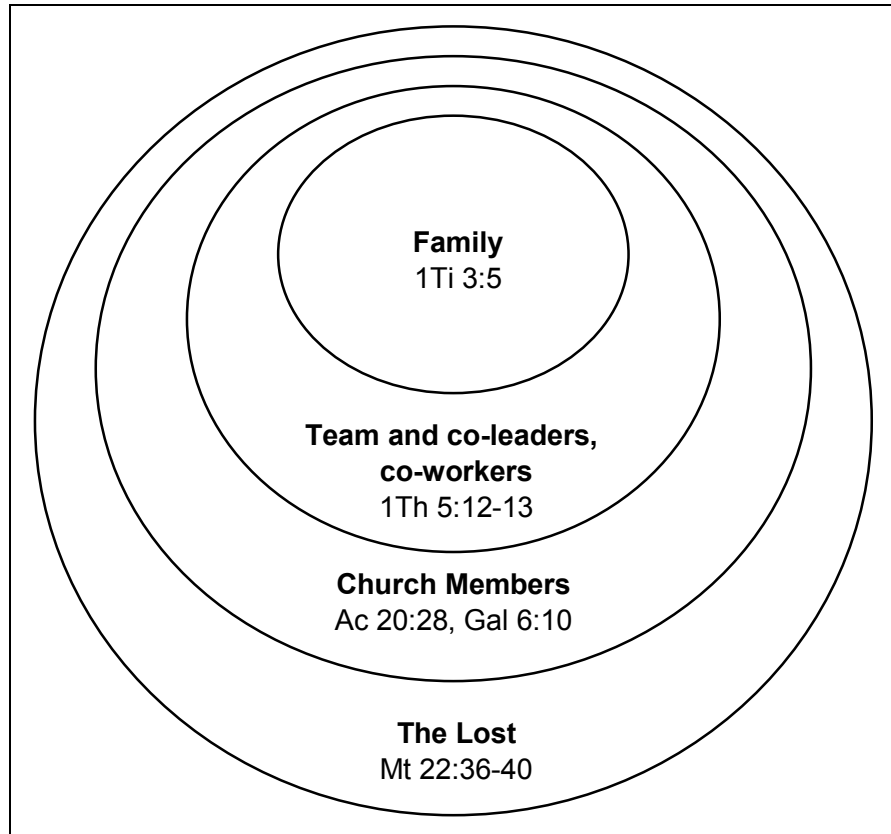
<sup>4</sup> καινος

#### IV. LOVE AS A BASIS FOR MINISTRY

The unconditional love of God should be a basis for ministry. Since God has so unconditionally loved us, we are called to love others in the same way. God has so touched us with His love that we should be compelled to pass the love on to others in a way that bears witness to what Christ has done for us.

Who are those in ministry to whom we display this love? Who are the 'others' that God has put in our lives? The closer God has put them to us, the greater responsibility we are to love and touch their lives in the way that God has done to us. The typical church planter then might have the following areas of ministry as displayed in figure 11-3.

**Figure 11.3 "Whom Do We Love?"**



It may not be natural for you to love some in your congregation. The ministry is difficult. But when God's unconditional love characterizes relationships, it is obvious that God is at work. This then is a witness to the lost. "By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you love one another" (Jn 13:35).

The most attractive thing about your church plant ought to be the quality of the relationships that are established. Unconditional and sacrificial love ought to be the norm starting with the church leadership. This is how God loves us and how we ought to love others.

The most attractive thing about your church plant ought to be the quality of the relationships that are established.

#### CONCLUSION

Spiritual growth is most of all growth in one thing – in God's *agape* love. Spiritual immaturity is first of all immaturity in God's love. Spiritual falls are based on the lack of understanding God's love. And growth in this love is the only cure. May our faith in Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior, demonstrate itself in works of love, love to our families, sisters and brothers in Christ, to our churches, to the perishing world. May the Lord strengthen faith in our hearts.

## **QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION, REVIEW AND APPLICATION**

- How would you define “neighbor” as used in the great commandment (love your neighbor as yourself)? What would be the results if your whole church obeyed this command?
- What did Jesus mean when he said love one another “as I have loved you?”
- Is it more important for leaders to obey this command than for others in the church? Why or why not?
- How well do you love people?
- Think about the difference love makes in the following situations: family/friends; believers with unbelievers? church members/leaders?
- How should our growing faith in the Gospel affect the way we love others?

## **ACTION PLAN**

- Ask God to show you some believers to whom you should show the kind of love Jesus commanded. Write down their names and what you will do. Leave space to write the results when this is accomplished.
- Ask God to show you some “neighbors” to whom you should show love. Write down their names and what you will do to demonstrate your love for them. Leave space to write the results when this is accomplished.
- Think about someone you are close to (spouse, parent, or child). How do you love this person? In what ways has your lack of faith in the Gospel affected the way you have loved them? What sins do you need to confess to them? Think of concrete ways you want to love this person because of your renewed faith in the Gospel.



SPIRITUAL  
CHARACTER

LESSON 12

# Understanding The Father's Heart

## ☛ Lesson Purpose

The purpose of this lesson is that we as leaders might become loving, compassionate people who rejoice when lost sinners are found.

## ☛ Main Points

- God loves His children unconditionally.
- We should love as the Father loves.

## ☛ Desired Outcomes

When the content of this lesson has been mastered, each participant should:

- Understand the Father's love for the lost.
- Know that as Christian leaders we must continually examine our attitudes and actions toward the lost.
- Ask God to give grace to love as God loves.

## ☛ Suggestions to Trainers

The first two verses in Luke 15 are crucial to understanding the parables Jesus teaches in this chapter. Take time at the beginning of the session to get the trainees to imagine the setting with tax collectors and 'sinners' gathered around listening to Jesus. Imagine the Pharisees in the background criticizing Jesus' association with these people. Make this an interactive session by stopping to discuss the questions inserted in the text. Leave time at the end for personal evaluation and application.

## INTRODUCTION

Throughout the Bible, both Old and New Testaments, we see that God's love surpasses not just our sins, but also our ingratitude for that love. We are called on to love others as God loves us. But do we really understand what that means? Jesus, through His life's example, teaches us much about what this means. One of the most vivid and clear passages talking about this kind of love is the parable of the prodigal son (Lk 15:11-31). It is crucial for us to understand God's love for us if we are to show that same love to others.

## I. THREE PARABLES ABOUT LOST THINGS -LUKE 15

### A. The Context Of Luke 15

The first two verses of Luke 15 provide the context for Jesus' teaching in the later verses. Here we see Jesus surrounded by tax collectors and "sinners" eager to hear his teaching (Lk 15:1). Imagine what it would be like to Jesus to be sitting around telling stories with tax collectors and "sinners." Where would this take place—outside? In a courtyard in a Mediterranean style house? On a roof? What kinds of people would be in the group gathered around Jesus? What would be on the table? Would there be food? Do you hear laughter? Are people trying to impress Jesus with stories of their own?

After you have a picture in your mind of Jesus gathered with the tax collectors and sinners, now imagine the Pharisees and the teachers of the law (Lk 15:2). Where would they be standing or sitting? Certainly not in the same room with the tax collectors and sinners. The Pharisees could

not associate with sinners. Perhaps they are standing outside in the darkness or on the fringes of the crowd some distance away -so as not to touch any of these sinners. What are the Pharisees muttering about?

Allow yourself to feel the impact of this scene and the tension between Jesus, the gathered crowd and the Pharisees. Keeping this scene in mind, read the parables which Jesus tells in the remainder of the chapter.

## B. The Parables

The three parables in Luke 15 include the parable of the lost sheep (vv. 3-7), the parable of the lost coin (vv. 8-10), and the parable of the lost son (vv. 11-32). The main point of the three parables is found in Luke 15:10, *"I tell you, there is rejoicing in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents."* Note the following comparisons and contrasts in these parables.

"I tell you, there is rejoicing in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents."

- All three stories are about finding lost things (one sheep out of 100, one coin out of 10, one son out of two). The things that were lost were all valuable items. As Jesus tells the parables, He starts out with a loss (one sheep out of 100), then an increasing loss (one coin out of 10), then finally one of the greatest losses a person can experience (one son out of two).
- The lost things in all three parables were eventually found.
- Rejoicing and celebrating with others took place when the lost items were found. How do you think the shepherd, woman and father felt upon finding their missing items? What kind of rejoicing do you think took place? What kind of celebration would you have if you had lost something of great value and then found it again?
- There is one contrast between the first two parables (lost sheep, lost coin) and the last (the parable of the lost son). Unlike the first two, in the parable of the lost son, no one goes searching for him. Why is that? Many people think that the reason for this is to show that a person must take responsibility for his own actions and "come home." This may be partly true, but it is not the point that Jesus was making here. There is a deeper reason that should become obvious as we look more closely at the passage.

## II. THE PARABLE OF THE PRODIGAL SON

As is his custom, Jesus places his emphasis on attitudes. A look at the attitudes of each of the three persons will help us to understand what Jesus intended his listeners to learn from the parable.

### A. The Father

This parable is sometimes called the parable of the Father's love. The father was obviously a loving person who gave his son freedom to choose—even when he made the wrong choice. He continued to show unconditional love to his son, accepting him back, forgetting the past. The unconditional love of the father lightened the hardship of the son's sorrow, opened the doors of hope for his return, showed the way and made the repentance process easier.

This parable tells us not only about a father's love. Christ presents in it an excellent picture of how a person responds to love, shown to him by our heavenly Father, God. The reaction of the two sons shows us two human reactions to the Father's love.

### B. The Younger Brother

The younger brother's actions revealed a person who was basically selfish. He was unconcerned for his father's feelings or his own responsibilities as the member of the family. In Jewish culture, the father might divide the inheritance but had a full right to keep the income from it until his death. For a son to ask for full rights to the inheritance and its income while the father was still living was to express that he considered his father as dead.

The son's selfishness was shown in his squandering his wealth without concern for how hard his father had worked to earn that money. Nor did he stop to think that his absence would mean that his brother would have to work much harder.

Quite naturally, his selfishness eventually led to his disappointment and despair. When he reached the end of himself, he was truly repentant. He openly confessed his sin and unworthiness before the father (v. 21). The love demonstrated by his father and the way he received him obviously made a profound impact on the son and changed his life forever. What do you think... would the prodigal son ever run away from his father again? Most of us would agree that it is doubtful that he would ever run away again, because he had found what every soul longs for—love. Love is the most powerful motivator known to us (otherwise God wouldn't be 'Love' 1Jn 4:8). This love was available to the prodigal son unconditionally from his father. He is a true son in a spiritual sense. (See Spiritual Character lesson 6 "Living Like Sons Instead of Orphans" and lesson 7 "An Orphan Learns To Be A Son" in Manual Two.)

Would the prodigal son ever run away from his father again?

### C. The Elder Brother

We often favor the older son, whose actions seem more decent to us. Of course, he showed responsibility, worked hard and never left the family as his younger brother did. Nevertheless, the elder brother was also self-centered. He did not show concern for the suffering of his father or for his lost brother. There is no mention about the fact that he ever tried to find and bring his brother back. He did not even call him his brother, but rather referred to him as "your son" when speaking to his father (v. 30). His attitude was one of jealousy toward his brother and resentment that his father would honor the brother rather than him. He justified himself on the basis of his work for the father.

Deep inside, the elder brother envied his brother and felt insulted when the father celebrated the 'prodigal' son's return. He was thinking that he deserved this kind of treatment due to his hard work for his father (v.29). Such a reaction from the older son reveals that for years, he had been serving the father out of a sense of obligation, not love. Spiritually speaking, this son is an orphan (see Spiritual Character lessons 6 and 7).

His heart remained cold and egotistic, which ruined his relationships with the rest of the members of the family. Like his younger brother, he needed repentance.

### D. Interpretation

God loves His children the same way as the father in the parable does – unconditionally. With this parable, Jesus answers the charges of the religious leaders (Pharisees and Sadducees). 'The prodigal son' symbolizes the sinners with whom Jesus had fellowship (Luke 15:1-2). In telling this parable, Jesus explained to his accusers why He had fellowship with sinners – He loved them unconditionally. The religious leaders who judged Jesus for having fellowship with sinners were acting like the envious and self-righteous elder brother, while they should have been like the father, full of unconditional love and rejoicing when the lost return home.

## III. APPLICATION—DO WE LOVE AS THE FATHER LOVES?

A real danger for believers is that although we have all been prodigals and come home, we have a powerful tendency to become like the elder brother after a time. Jesus wants us to repent like the younger son did and to have the love that the father had. The following questions will help you determine your true condition (whether or not you have become like the older son in the parable).

1. What is my attitude toward the lost? Do I despise them? Am I judgmental? Am I compassionate and forgiving? Think of times when you've been around "undesirable" people. What has been your reaction?
2. Do I actively seek the lost or just wait for them to "come home?" Compare Jesus' words in Luke 19:10.



3. Am I uncomfortable “eating with” sinners? Am I more concerned about what people will think of me than I am for the lost sinner?
4. Do I “run to meet sinners” and show them compassion, or do I reject them along with their sin? (For example, how would I react if a prostitute or drug addict came into my fellowship?)
5. Is my love for the Father such that I love those that He loves? When sinners repent, do I rejoice and accept them as brothers and sisters?
6. Am I inwardly muttering about how hard I work and how unappreciated I am instead of rejoicing and celebrating with the Lord?

## **ACTION PLAN**

Read Luke 15. Then re-read and write answers to the application questions. Spend time in prayer and ask God to give you the same heart of compassion for people that God has. If there are things you need to confess to Him, do so. If you need to confess to others or to make plans for positive steps towards relating to others as God relates to you, write these down along with how you will do it.

SPIRITUAL  
CHARACTER

LESSON 13

# Grace Is For The Humble

## ☛ Lesson Purpose

The purpose of this lesson is to show how the Christian life must be lived in humility. Strength comes out of weakness... and the Christian life must come out of humility.

## ☛ Main Points

- Christians should be characterized by humility.
- We are called to minister not in our own strength, but in the power of the Spirit.
- Prayer expresses humility towards God.

## ☛ Desired Outcomes

When the content of this lesson has been mastered, each participant should:

- Understand how to serve with humility.
- Know the principle that strength flows from our weakness.
- Make a commitment to a dependent relationship with the Father.

## ☛ Suggestions to Trainers

The humility test is very powerful. It may lead to a time of repentance for the participants. Look for the opportunity to deal with personal spiritual issues wherever possible. Look for good ways of illustrating the concepts in this lesson from your own personal experience.

## INTRODUCTION

Many Christians struggle to maintain humility. Some Christians—even leaders—start out humble, but after some success in ministry, they develop a subtle pride or self-confidence that contradicts Christian humility. Perhaps nothing is more deadly to a Christian than pride – and church planters are not exempt from this either. Not only does pride create barriers between Christian brothers, but it is also one of those things that the Lord hates (Pr 6:16-17).

Jesus made it very clear to His followers that they should not be self-serving (Mt 20:20-28; Jn 13:1-16). Many worldly leaders use intimidation or an attitude of superiority to get followers to submit. These things should never be characteristic of a Christian (Mt 20:25,28; 1Pe 5:1-7). On the contrary, humility should be the mark of all Christians, with the leader setting the example as Christ did.

## I. HUMILITY—WHAT IS IT?

What comes to your mind when you hear the word “humility?” Many people think of humility as lowliness. We sometimes describe the poorly dressed, poorly fed, poor man as ‘humble.’ While God wants us to be humble, He does not want us to think of ourselves as poor beggars, or paupers. The Scriptures tell us we are His children and joint heirs of His kingdom with Christ. To believe anything else is a great distortion of biblical truth.

Purposely taking the lowest place seems wrong to the world...

Humility is ‘not thinking of yourself more highly than you ought’ (Ro 12:3). The humble person does not draw attention to himself, nor does he do things to state his own importance. Purposely taking the lowest place seems wrong to the world – and maybe even to some of us. But it is the path to

righteousness and the way that Christians, especially leaders, display the Gospel to those around them. Our flesh despises the low place and we have a battle on our hands to take the lowest place. But it is in this place the humble will find grace (Lk 14:10).

***"God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble"*** (1Pe 5:5). He does not leave us in our foolish pride. He wants us to be humble. It is from the humble place that we understand how great God is. Do you ever see yourself as being in conflict with God? Could it be that some of the struggles we face are actually God's efforts to teach humility?

Perhaps the best way to understand humility is to examine ourselves. The twelve questions listed in Table 13.1 will help us understand humility while revealing some of the ways in which we fall short. Consider each question carefully.

**Table 13.1 The Humility Test**

1. How do you take criticism?
2. Do people find it easy to come to you? Are you approachable?
3. Are you frequently involved in power struggles and arguments?
4. Do you find yourself thinking everyone else is wrong but you?
5. Does anger lurk beneath the surface of your life?
6. Are you able to rejoice when you hear of others' successes?
7. Would others think of you as a critical person?
8. Do you find yourself frequently defending yourself to others?
9. Are you a good listener, able to concentrate on others rather than your answer or what is the right thing to do?
10. Do you purposefully take the lowest place? (Luke 14:7-11)
11. Are you merciful and gentle, or is there a hard edge to your personality?
12. Is prayer the first movement of your heart?

## II. EXAMPLES OF HUMILITY

### A. Jesus

The Apostle Paul clearly states that Jesus is our example for humility. We learn in Philippians 2:5 that we are to have the same attitude as Christ Jesus, who humbled Himself even to the point of death.

Our example for humility, Jesus, was perfect in all things. Yet, the **perfect man—Jesus Christ—was perfectly dependent!** Note what Jesus said about Himself: *"I will tell you the truth, the Son can do nothing by Himself; He can only do what He sees the Father doing, because whatever the Father does, the Son also does"* (Jn 5:19-20). If anyone did not need to be dependent, Jesus was the one. But dependence is not a sign of weakness, but rather a sign of strength. This is the upside-down way of looking at both leadership and the Christian life.

Humility is a recognition that "I am dependent upon God for whatever I need to accomplish."

Humility is a recognition that "I cannot do it alone. I am dependent upon God for whatever I need to accomplish." In the world's eyes, such an admission is seen as weakness, not strength. Maybe that is why so many of us have such a struggle with the concept of humility. We let the world set our standards, not God.

## B. Paul

The great church planter Paul had much to be proud of by human standards (Phil 3:4-11, 2Co 11:22-29). However, we can see that Paul grew in humility over the course of his ministry. Notice that early in his ministry he describes himself as "the least of the apostles" (1Co 15:9). Later, in his letter to the Ephesians, he calls himself "the least of all saints" (Eph 3:8). And in the last phase of his life he describes himself as the "chief of all sinners" (1Ti 1:15).

Paul also had a "thorn" which we do not completely understand, but which he asked God to take away. Note his comments concerning this request: *"But he said to me, 'My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.' Therefore, I will boast all the more gladly about my weakness so that Christ's power may rest on me. That is why, for Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong"* (2Co 12:9-10). It was more important from God's perspective for Paul to testify through means of "the thorn" and live in humble dependence on God, than for Paul to be free from the thorn and be proud. God wants His children to depend on Him. God wants you and me to depend on Him.

Our self-righteousness is another form of independence. Compare and contrast the man who is strong on the outside (strong in himself) but weak on the inside with the leader who is outwardly weak but inwardly strong (see Table 13.2).

**Table 13.2 Saul and Paul**

<b>Saul:</b>  <b><i>Outwardly Strong</i></b>  <b><i>Inwardly Weak</i></b>	<b>Paul:</b>  <b><i>Inwardly Strong</i></b>  <b><i>Outwardly Weak</i></b>
<p>This man was very strong in his determination to "do the right thing." His zeal even drove him to put Christians in jail. As a Pharisee, he followed the law strictly. He may have been outwardly flawless, but inwardly he was wasting away (Php 3:4-11).</p>	<p>When Saul was converted, he became less dependent on his own zeal to accomplish things and more dependent on the Father's strength working in him.. He was no longer interested in how he was perceived outwardly and chose to take the lowest place. Think about how Paul humbled himself with the Corinthians. <i>"Who is not weak and I do not feel weak? Who is led into sin, and I do not inwardly burn?"</i> (2Co 11:29). <i>"May I never boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.."</i> (Gal 6:14). We see a man who was powerful because he did not care what others thought of him. He cared about what Jesus thought about him and as a result, became a powerful person used by God in a mighty way.</p>

## III. PRAYER EXPRESSES HUMILITY TOWARDS GOD

Many Christians have little knowledge of how to live in dependence and trust when life seems out of control. Unfortunately, prayer can be another way for us to display independence. Sometimes we pray to gain control of situations that we feel are out of control. But real prayer is about God being in control. It is an acknowledgment of complete dependence on God. The humble man does not pray in an attempt to gain control of situations. Rather, he prays to be linked to the purposes and plan of God. Does this describe your prayers?

## IV. CHRISTIAN LIFE CHARACTERIZED BY HUMILITY

Pride keeps us from recognizing our need to depend on God. We started out the Christian life as beggars and God gave us bread to eat. He provided for us much like He did for the Israelites wandering in the desert. Each day, they needed bread from the Father to sustain them. That is the same situation

we are in. But when we decide we no longer need the bread, we get into trouble. We are no longer beggars but rather have our own source of bread. This is independence and it comes with our love for our own righteousness.

Pride and independence also make leaders the dispensers of the bread rather than the guides to where the bread is. This is a dangerous move away from the Gospel. We figure that we have what people need rather than Jesus having it. We encourage dependence on us rather than Jesus. As leaders, we need to take people to the One who has the power, the food, the comfort and the forgiveness.

Pride and independence make leaders the dispensers of the bread rather than the guides to where the bread is.

1 Peter 5:1-4 gives some principles for those wanting to be church elders or leaders. They should be described in the following four ways:

- Shepherd
- Not lording it over others
- Willing to Serve
- An example

The kind of leadership described above is extremely loving and servant-oriented. A follower would naturally want to respond favorably toward the leader who meets the criteria above. People normally do not want to hurt someone who loves them. This is why it is very natural for Peter, in the very next verse (1Pe 5:5), to encourage the young men, no doubt the followers of the elders, to submit to their leadership.

We also learn in verses 5 and 6 that “all” are to seek humility: “*Clothe yourself with humility.*” In other words “seek it.” “*Humble yourselves*” (vs. 6) is a command, not an option, from the Holy Spirit. This exhortation is not just for the leaders or for the followers. It is for everyone.

The following table can help show the difference between the Christian who lives independently and the one who lives in dependence on God.

**Table 13.3 - Independence verses Dependence**

Independence— <i>PRIDE</i>	Dependence— <i>HUMILITY</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The independent person has a “success/failure” view of things.</li><li>• Unbelief is a normal pattern for this person because he knows he has limits.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The person who depends on Christ understands that Jesus is in charge. He lives with this confidence.</li><li>• Faith is central to this person’s life. The only failure is unbelief.</li></ul>

## CONCLUSION

Are you filled with pride or are you characterized by humility? If you are not humble, then you are missing out on great blessings from a mighty God who gives grace to the **humble**. Talk to your mentor about your need to be humble before God. Make this a matter of prayer.

## QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION, REVIEW AND APPLICATION

- Why do you think many Christians, including leaders, struggle with humility?
- In what ways do you find it hard to be humble?
- Why does God give grace to the humble?
- What difference does humility make in the life of a church planter?

## ACTION PLAN

- Find an accountability partner, a person with whom you can share honestly and openly.
- Ask your accountability partner to help you monitor the items included in the humility test.
- In your spiritual journal, document the changes you see taking place in your life.

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# PRAYER

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PRAYER

LESSON 8,9

# Concert of Prayer

## PRAYING BIBLICALLY

### ☞ Lesson Purpose

To provide opportunity for the church planter trainees to join together in praying for the fulfillment of the Great Commission—not only in their area, but to the “end of the earth.”

### ☞ Main Points

- Prayer was the starting point of the spread of the Gospel in Acts.
- Biblical prayer should include intercession for the work of the Lord around the world.

### ☞ Desired Outcomes

When he has mastered the content of this lesson, each participant will ...

- Be more aware of the global scope of the Gospel.
- Be more convinced that prayer is the key to seeing God work as powerfully today as He did in the book of Acts.

### ☞ Suggestions to Trainers

Note that this is a two-session block that combines teaching and praying. Each section presents a biblical principle that relates to prayer for church planting. Immediately after each principle is introduced, time should be taken to pray about that topic. You may want to alternate between praying as a whole group and breaking up into small groups.

## INTRODUCTION

Every church planter who desires to be effective must be committed to prayer. Prayer is a source of both power and direction from the Lord. Nothing of lasting spiritual value will be accomplished without it. However, it is possible to pray often and fervently, but not pray for the important things. While it is certainly true that God wants us to pray for our own needs, that by itself is not enough. He also expects us to pray for the needs of others, and for the fulfillment of His plan to reach all nations—that is, the Great Commission.

## I. THE GOSPEL FOR ALL PEOPLE

God’s heart desires for all to hear the Good News of the Gospel. Jesus Christ left heaven in order to provide salvation through His shed blood, and the apostles traveled throughout the known world of their day to announce that fact. Many believers today are content to care for their own needs or the needs of those who are close to them and ignore the needs of the world. In some ways, the early church struggled with this same problem. The first believers were all ethnic Jews, and they had a difficult time deciding to take the Gospel to the other nations. What finally convinced them? In a word, prayer. There are four very significant occasions in Acts where prayer provided the power or the motivation to witness, or both.

### A. The 120 disciples in Acts 1:12-14

The final command of Jesus before His resurrection was for the disciples to wait in Jerusalem. They spent their time together “*constantly in prayer*” in an upper room. The result of this extended prayer meeting was the arrival of the Holy Spirit, the powerful preaching of Peter, and the conversion of 3000 people in one day!



## **B. The Jerusalem Church in Acts 4:23-31**

The young church in Jerusalem faced strong opposition from the religious authorities, who ordered them to stop spreading the Gospel of Jesus Christ. In response, the believers met together and poured out their concern to God. The result was an outpouring of the power of the Holy Spirit and the accompanying boldness to continue their witness despite the opposition.

## **C. Peter on the rooftop in Acts 10:9-15**

At this point in Acts, the Gospel had not penetrated beyond the Jewish people. Once again, God used prayer—this time the prayer of Peter alone—to bring a desire to reach even the Gentiles. Peter was unwilling to even *enter the house* of a Gentile or to *eat with him*, let alone to witness to him. But after God met Peter in his prayer time, he not only willingly went to the home of Cornelius and opened a door of faith to the Gentiles, but he even defended the right of the Gentiles to be saved before the hostile Jewish believers (Acts 11).

## **D. Paul and Barnabas at Antioch in Acts 13:1-3**

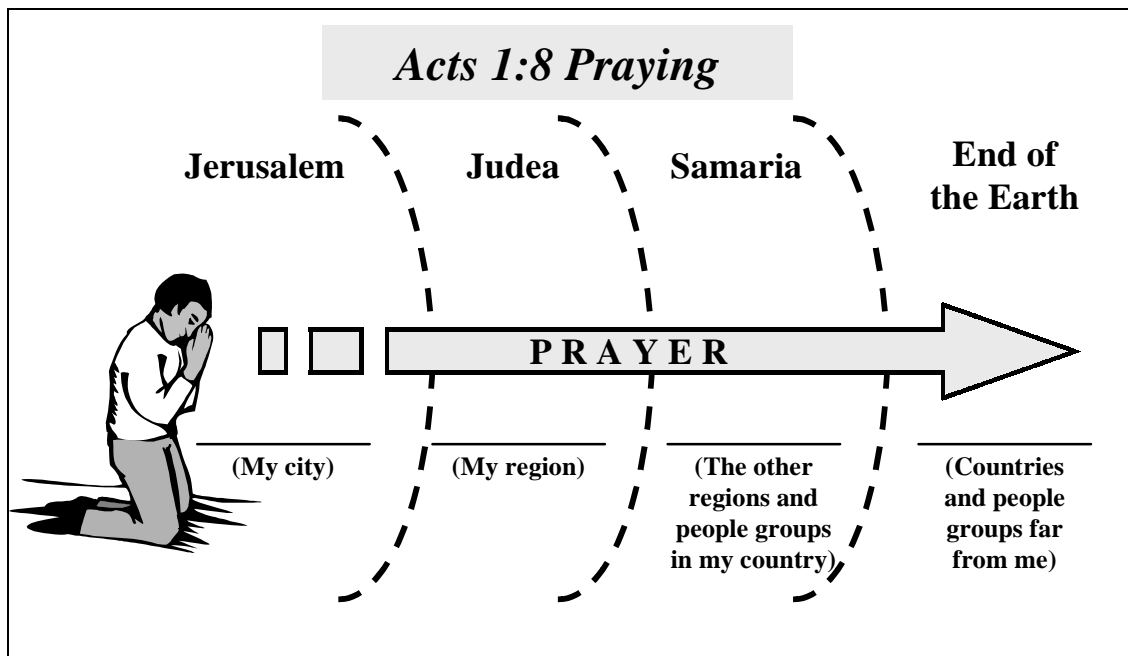
The first serious attempt by the early church to truly deal with the Great Commission and take the Gospel to *all nations* is found in the missionary journeys of the Apostle Paul. Those journeys grew out of a prayer meeting of the Antioch church. In this instance, the Bible specifically says that they were fasting. Prayer Lesson 5 explained that fasting was normally a setting aside of food or drink for the express purpose of *undistracted prayer and fellowship with God*. It was during this intense time of communion with the Lord that He instructed them to set aside Paul and Barnabas for missionary work. The church immediately complied and sent them off *with prayer*.

# **II. PRAYING FOR THE WORLD**

It took the early church a long time to understand their responsibility to reach all nations. This is one biblical example that we should not repeat. At the same time Jesus told them to wait for the Holy Spirit, He also told them *where* and *to whom* they were to preach the Gospel. It was to go to those in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and to the ends of the earth (Acts 1:4-8). And yet we follow the history of the church through thirteen chapters of Acts before they took this seriously. How sad!

The purpose of the following concert of prayer is to focus not only on our personal and local needs, but also to expand our prayer to the "end of the earth." That was the Lord's intention. As you look at the figure below, think about what each of the areas might represent to you, and fill in the blanks accordingly. Refer back to these as you move through the prayer time.

**Figure 8.1 Acts 1:8 Praying**



### **III. CONCERT OF PRAYER – PRAYING FOR THE WHOLE WORLD**

The following section presents biblical, strategic topics for prayer which facilitators and leaders can use as a foundation to more effectively focus and guide their prayer groups and networks. Use this format as a guide for today's concert of prayer.

#### **A. Pray for Personal Needs and Problems**

Even though our prayer groups are to pray for saturation church planting, we sometimes have to release our own burdens so that we can better keep our minds on the things that are on God's heart for our nations, regions, cities, towns, villages, and neighborhoods. Philippians 4:6-7 tells us that as we pray about our anxieties God's peace will guard our hearts and minds in the things of Christ.

**Divide into groups of two or three, briefly share personal needs, and spend time taking turns praying for each other.**

#### **B. Pray for God's Church**

As we look at the needs of the church, we may be tempted to pray about things that bother us personally or even pray with a critical attitude. This is not wise as the church is Christ's bride (Ephesians 5:22-32) and no groom appreciates a negative attitude toward His beloved bride. The following prayer requests can help guide our prayer for the church.

**Spend a few minutes praying together as a group for each of the following areas:**

##### **1. Pray for Unity**

When Jesus prayed for believers, he prayed for unity. He prayed that we would be one because of our love for Him and for the Father, and our love for one another that resembles the love between Jesus and the Father (Jn 17:20-23). This contributes to saturation church planting because through this unity the world will know about Jesus.

2. *Pray for the Love of Christ*

The Apostle Paul prayed for the church in Philippi to abound in love, but not in blind love. He prayed for an intelligent love with deep knowledge and insight (Php 1:9). This contributes to saturation church planting because as we love one another all men will know that we follow Jesus (Jn 13:35).

3. *Pray for Obedience*

Paul prayed that the church in Ephesus would understand her call, and the great hope that the call of God holds (Eph 1:18). This contributes to saturation church planting because as the Church understands her call, she will multiply and take the Gospel to the world (Mt 28:18-20).

**C. Pray for More Workers for God's Harvest**

This is a direct command from Matthew 9:38. If Jesus commands us to pray for something, and we are faithful to pray, will He be faithful to answer? Could it be that there is such a shortage of workers because there is a lack of prayer for this very thing the Lord Jesus himself commanded? Think about it.

**Ask the Lord to send more workers into His harvest both here and around the world.**

**D. Pray for Church Planters**

Paul was a church planting apostle. Knowing the needs of his calling, he asked the church in Ephesus to pray for him that he would have the right words to say and the boldness to proclaim the Gospel (Eph 6:19-20).

**Pray by name for those among you and others that you know are planting new churches.**

**E. Pray for Political, Social, and Religious Leaders**

1Timothy 2:1-5 gives clear instruction to Christians to pray for governmental leaders and those in authority. The *purpose* of this prayer is so that there will be peace—resulting in the *salvation of many*.

**Divide into small groups again and pray for your government and other leaders by name, asking that God might use them to create a better environment for the preaching of the Gospel.**

**F. Pray for Your Nation and the Nations of the World**

Paul preached to the Gentiles, but he openly stated that he interceded to God for his own nation, Israel. In Romans 10:1 he wrote, "Brothers, my heart's desire and prayer to God for the Israelites is that they may be saved." In another example, following the prayers of the saints in heaven, God blessed their intercession by purchasing men from all the nations for Himself with the blood of Jesus Christ (Rev 5:8-10). As we pray for whole nations, we contribute to saturation church planting before the throne of God.

**Close this concert of prayer by taking the remaining time to pray as one group for the salvation of your own people, and also for those of other people groups in your country and around the world. Mention each one specifically and by name as God brings them to your mind.**

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# LEADERSHIP

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LEADERSHIP

6

LESSON

# Servant Leadership

## Lesson Purpose

The purpose of this lesson is to discuss the importance and implications of servanthood as an attitude for leadership in church planting movements.

## Main Points

- Leadership is “what” and servanthood is “how.”
- Servant leadership is the biblical model for Christian leaders.

## Desired Outcomes

When the content of this lesson has been mastered, each participant should . . .

- Know the difference between worldly leadership and servant leadership
- Be committed to leading as a servant rather than as a boss.

## Appendix

6A The Leader’s Checklist

## INTRODUCTION

One of the greatest needs for church planting movements is for biblically motivated leadership. When worldly approaches to leadership are imported into the church, or when people rely on their natural inclination instead of God’s Word, the tendency is towards power-motivated, controlling leaders. If we do not break this yoke of non-biblical leadership and unleash the resources of the Body of Christ, there is little hope that the world can be evangelized and brought under the Lordship of Christ in our lifetime.

Christ left us with an example of how to lead others, and our pattern for leadership should come from His example. His approach to leadership involved the giving of Himself to His followers.

## I. WORLDLY LEADERSHIP

There is a tendency to view leadership as a matter of authority. Some feel that authority gives them the right to lead by ruling others. Thinking this way can result in devious and self-serving leadership. We see examples of this in politics, education, business etc., which can create a tendency for us to lead according to the ways of the world, since those ways are so familiar to us.

The world views leadership as a matter of authority.

Worldly leadership is based on certain assumptions about how people are motivated, such as:

- You can’t trust people to do what you want them to do.
- If you trust others too much, they will take advantage of you.
- Leaders assume authority on the basis of either their position or by their personality.
- People will do what you want them to do only when motivated by reward, or threatened by punishment.
- Leaders should avoid close contact with their followers, or their followers will view them as weak.

Do you agree with any of these statements? Why or why not?

The assumptions above are common in many leaders. They may not say it outwardly, but inwardly, they may think of their leadership task from a selfish, despotic perspective. Listen to the 'self talk' of the following leaders and discuss how each one is selfish:

- *I know best what is to be done. After all, I am the best trained, most experienced, and better informed about our task than anyone else. My followers expect that from me as the leader.*
- *As the leader I cannot do everything myself, so I need the help of my followers to do the work, but I do not need their ideas or plans to implement what is to be done.*
- *I suppose I should listen to my followers. These days they expect that much from me. But, I don't expect to hear anything new. I'm quite confident we'll end up doing it my way.*
- *Of course, I am the one who handles the proceedings and controls the pace of all meetings. After all, the agenda is mine and I've thought each point through already.*

## II. SERVANT LEADERSHIP

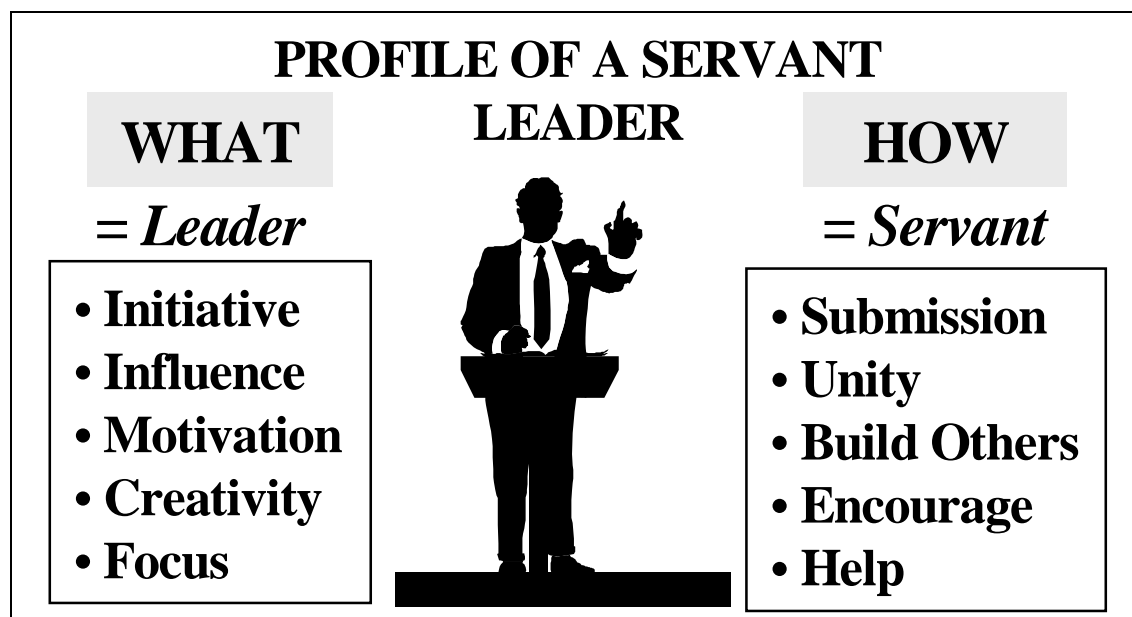
Jesus took time to clearly explain the world's way of leading (Mt 20:25-28). He pronounced "*Not so with you,*" and made it clear that the disciples should never employ heavy handed, self-centered methods of leadership. Instead, those who follow Jesus are to be "servants of all."

### A. Servanthood and leadership can coexist

An initial glance at the words "servanthood" and "leadership" appear somewhat contradictory. On the one hand, a servant is a person employed by another, who does the will of his employer. His job security depends on it, as well as his honor as a hired servant. Servanthood implies responsive activity, subservient position, and a submissive spirit.

*Leadership*, on the other hand, implies initiation. It involves direction, influence and motivation. It requires pro-activity, creative involvement, focus, and building others up so that together they can produce more than each person could individually. Leadership is *knowing where one is going, and having the ability to inspire others to go along.*

Figure 3.1 The Servant leader



So how can the two fit together? Whereas leadership describes the 'what' of our work, servanthood addresses fundamentally the 'how' of our work (the needs of others). We lead as servants. To be a

“leader” in the worldly sense does not require servanthood. However, in the task of spawning church planting movements, it is a must.

## **B. Christian principles concerning motivation and leadership**

- People are made in the image of God and therefore have intrinsic worth (Ge 1:27-28).
- People are motivated to perform with excellence in recognition that everything is to be done to the glory of God (Col 3:23).
- People will not grow and develop unless they are trusted and given freedom both to succeed and to fail.
- A leader is appointed by God and assumes authority from Him (Ro 13:1).
- Successful leaders view others as friends, not as subordinates, and interact with them in a spirit of openness and humility (Jn 15:15).

## **III. NEW TESTAMENT TEACHING ON SERVANT LEADERSHIP**

Jesus and the Apostles not only taught about servant leadership, but also demonstrated it with their lives. Their example should continue to challenge us as we minister today.

### **A. The Example and Teaching of Jesus**

Jesus' leadership should not be self-serving (Mt 20:25-28; Jn 13:1-16). Jesus put aside his own honor to serve—most graphically in the upper room as he washed the feet of the disciples. Eventually, his unique ministry led him to physically die for those he under his care (Php 2:1-11). He took the form of a servant in order to carry our burden of sin. He invited the lost to come to him and find rest from their burdens. He said, *“Come to me all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light”* (Mt 11:28-30).

As a great leader Jesus ignited the most amazing movement of all time, the movement of his world-wide church. Yet Jesus was also clearly a servant. How ironic that it was from this position as a servant that Jesus started the movement we are discussing today.

Jesus calls his disciples “friends” and himself a “servant” (Jn 15:15). The disciples did not demand this of him. The disciples' role was one of deepest respect and obedience. In ordinary relationships, these roles are often reversed. The leader demands respect and obedience, as followers look for a friend and a servant.

Jesus also taught his disciples the importance of being servant leaders. In Matthew 20:25-28, he warned them not to follow the world's system of leadership. Rather, he challenged them to follow his example by giving their very lives to seek and save the lost.

### **B. The Example and Teaching of Paul**

Perhaps the best example of Paul's servant heart is seen in his second letter to the Thessalonians. Look closely at how he described his service among them:

*“We were not looking for praise from men, not from you or anyone else. As apostles of Christ we could have been a burden to you, but we were gentle among you, like a mother caring for her little children. We loved you so much that we were delighted to share with you not only the gospel of God, but our lives as well, because you had become so dear to us. Surely you remember, brothers, our toil and hardship; we worked day and night in order not to be a burden to anyone while we preached the gospel of God to you”* (1Th 2:6-9).

Clearly Paul felt that his position as an apostle entitled him to serve others and bear their burdens, rather than to be served. He taught us to do the same:

- *“We who are strong ought to bear with the failings of the weak and not to please ourselves”* (Ro 15:1).



- *“And we urge you, brother, warn those who are idle, encourage the timid, help the weak, be patient with everyone” (1Th 5:14).*
- *“Brothers, if someone is caught in a sin, you who are spiritual should restore him gently. But watch yourself, or you also may be tempted. Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ” (Gal 6:1,2).*

### C. The Example and Teaching of Peter

In his first epistle, Peter makes it very clear that leaders in the church are expected to be servant leaders (1Pe 5:1-4). Peter appeals as one who saw Christ's suffering first hand and even alludes to Jesus' teaching on leadership (Mt 20:25-28) by instructing these elders not to 'lord it over' those entrusted to them.

The life of Peter confirms that he believed what he taught. He suffered greatly in the Lord's service. Tradition says that Peter was crucified upside-down *at his request*, because he did not feel that he was worthy to be crucified in the same position as Christ.

## IV. APPLICATION

Servant leadership is the biblical approach to leadership. In simple terms, servant leadership means that the leader puts his followers' well-being ahead of his own. Christian leaders are first and foremost servants. Intimidation, superiority, and force should never be characteristic of a Christian leader (Mt 20:25-28, 1Pe 5:1-7). The Christian leader is not a “ruler” in the sense of a dictator [the word “rule” (Greek root ‘arch’) is never used in the New Testament to describe relationships between Christians]. Instead he is a servant.

Servant leadership means that the leader puts his followers' well-being ahead of his own.

### Qualities and Characteristics of the Servant leader

- The servant leader maintains and builds unity (Eph 4:3). He avoids needless arguments about ownership, credit or territory.
- Servant leaders are not threatened by others' strengths and accomplishments. Instead, they recognize the value of these strengths and use them to help achieve the goals of the group.
- The servant leader is a “builder up” of others. The servant leader works to encourage and lift up others in every possible way. They celebrate the victories of others, no matter how small.
- Servant leaders are pro-active to move issues ahead, while maintaining meekness and a consideration of others.
- Servant leaders speak well of others at all times.
- The servant leader seeks to build a broad base of leaders to lead with him.
- Servant leaders recognize and use authority appropriately (positional, relational, experiential, personal, spiritual).
- A servant leader does not draw his meaning, worth or reputation from the position he holds.
- A servant leader does not make decisions based on his progress, advancement, comfort, increase of authority or position at the expense of those he serves.
- A servant leader's commitment to his followers' progress, their ministries, and their increase is a key expression of his love.
- A servant leader develops other servant leaders, so as to provide a strong base of leadership for new, reproducing churches.

## CONCLUSION

The attitude of the servant leader is that his job is to lead others to do what God wants from them. His job is not to 'lord it over' others, or manipulate people into doing what he thinks is best. Instead, he is to build up others in all areas of life and ministry. The success of a servant leader is measured by the accomplishments in the lives of those he leads.

The servant leader must build up others in all areas of life and ministry.

A servant leader realizes that before God, he is on the same level as those he leads. His authority to lead is not really his but comes from God, so that he is not free to use this authority in any way he wishes. He must use this authority in the same way that Jesus did, as a servant to those he was leading.

## QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION, REVIEW AND APPLICATION

- Why is it difficult for a leader to be a servant leader?
- What are some of the burdens that a church planter should be willing to bear for others?
- Describe what a church planter would look like who was a servant leader.
- What changes in your own life and ministry do you need to make to be a better servant leader?

## ACTION PLAN

Complete Appendix 6A, "The Leader's Checklist." Evaluate your own leadership style based on the results of this checklist. As a leader, determine areas in your life and ministry that need to change.

## SOURCES

Engel, James F., Jane Overstreet, and Terry Sparks. *Leadership: Making Human Strength Productive*. St. Davids, PA: The Center For Organizational Excellence, Eastern College, 1996.

**LEADERSHIP  
APPENDIX**

**6A**

# The Leader's Checklist

Use the scale below to evaluate your qualities as a church-planting leader. Circle the one number (from 1 - 5) that best represents how well each statement describes you. It may also be useful to allow someone you know and trust to evaluate you honestly, such as your spouse or a spiritual friend. Then compare the results to determine points of agreement and disagreement. From this you may want to make some changes in your ministry style in order to be more effective in church planting.

**Circle one number for each question**

		<b>Poor</b>		<b>Excellent</b>		
1.	I am always willing to take faith-motivated risks for God.	1	2	3	4	5
2.	I have the ability to communicate a God-given vision to others.	1	2	3	4	5
3.	I am committed to evangelism, church planting and the starting of cell groups.	1	2	3	4	5
4.	I like to take initiative.	1	2	3	4	5
5.	I am willing and able to work through interpersonal conflict.	1	2	3	4	5
6.	I am able to create ownership of ministry in others.	1	2	3	4	5
7.	I can utilize the spiritual gifts and abilities of others.	1	2	3	4	5
8.	I walk with Christ.	1	2	3	4	5
9.	I am a servant leader.	1	2	3	4	5
10.	I have the full cooperation and support of my family.	1	2	3	4	5
11.	I relate well to the unchurched and the unconverted.	1	2	3	4	5
12.	I approach challenges as "opportunities" rather than as "problems."	1	2	3	4	5
13.	I follow through on goals that I have set with others.	1	2	3	4	5
14.	I am resilient when faced with hard times.	1	2	3	4	5
15.	I have a "call from God" to do church planting.	1	2	3	4	5
16.	I know how to delegate to people.	1	2	3	4	5
17.	I train others to use their gifts more effectively.	1	2	3	4	5

LEADERSHIP

7

LESSON

# Leadership Dynamics

## Lesson Purpose

The purpose of this lesson is to explain how the leader, group and task are interrelated, and how they together influence the church planting process.

## Main Points

- The leader, the group, and the task all influence leadership success.
- Varying leadership styles are appropriate in different situations, but leadership of a church planting group should be group-centered.

## Desired Outcomes

When the content of this lesson has been mastered each participant should...

- Know his or her natural leadership style.
- Be committed to being more 'group-oriented' in his or her leadership.

## INTRODUCTION

Why is it that some leaders fail and others succeed? Why do many leaders excel in some situations and fail in others? In the same way, is it really possible to describe a generic kind of leader who will be successful in all situations and in all cultures? Can we make bold statements such as "A leader must always . . .?" Many have tried to do just that, and failed. A study of leadership that looks only at the skills and qualifications of the leader is missing an important part of the equation.

The answer to the questions above is complex because several factors influence the effectiveness of leaders, of which the skills of the leader is only one part. Instead, leadership involves the interrelationship of three factors, as shown in figure 7.1:

- The characteristics of the leader.
- The characteristics of the group.
- The nature of the task.

In order for a leader to guide his group in successfully completing its task, these three factors must fit together. The leader must be able to lead the group and understand how to approach the task. The group must be capable of completing the task and willing to follow the leader. In order to ensure that a group committed to planting a church is reasonably well prepared for the task, it is necessary to evaluate the 'chemistry' between all three of these elements.

In order for a leader to guide his group in successfully completing its task, three factors must fit together.

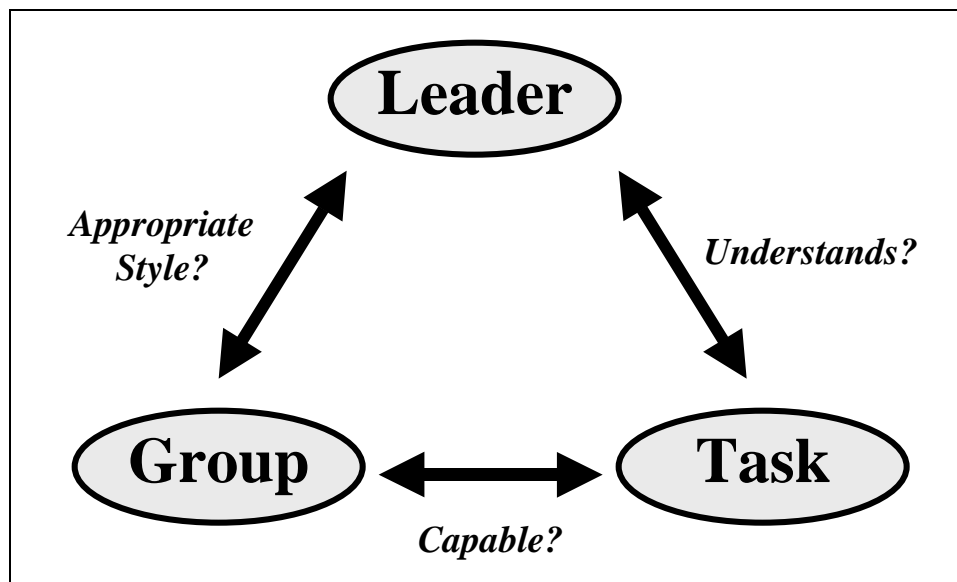
## I. CHARACTERISTICS OF THE LEADER

The leader, while not the only factor, is the most important variable in the leadership process. Little happens without leadership, and the right leader can make all the difference in the world. Sometimes a group has no clear leader. This is a common ministry problem—no one rises up to take leadership. If, however, the group is accomplishing the task, one or more members of the group are probably fulfilling the leadership role—even if this is not recognized. In fact, there are situations where several people will direct the task by consensus, intentionally choosing not to have any one leader. While this works on

occasion, it is difficult to make progress on any task without one person to coordinate and make sure that group decisions are followed up. This is the primary reason that committees have such a bad reputation of not accomplishing much.

This lesson assumes that your church planting group has a leader—even if the difference in authority between that leader and the other members is minimal. It is also assumed that you are probably that leader, and that you desire to do a better job of leading. What are the important factors in the relationship between leader, the group, and the task?

**Figure 7.1 Three Factors of Leadership Success**



#### **A. The Person of the Leader**

The character of the leader has already been dealt with in previous lessons, so we will only touch on it here. That does not mean it is not important. On the contrary, when we are dealing with the spiritual task of church planting, the heart of the leader is probably the single most important factor in the group's success. That is why it is of such importance to the Lord, and why it should be the top priority for us (1Sa 16:7).

Based on what has been discussed in previous leadership lessons in Manual Two, consider the following:

- To what extent do you fit the 'profile' of a leader in the context of church planting as discussed in Leadership lesson 2, "Profile of a Leader"?
- Obviously no one fits the profile perfectly. How do you as the leader deal with the areas in which you are not gifted?
- Do you follow the biblical principles of leadership as outlined in Leadership lesson 1, "Biblical Principles of Leadership"?

#### **B. How the Leader Relates to the Group**

Leadership styles vary from leader to leader and from situation to situation. Figure 7.2 illustrates five styles of leadership that are common. The leader's style may range from "leader-centered" to "group-centered" depending on how much the leader shares control with the group.

It can be argued that there is a time and place for each of these five styles of leadership. However, the 'leader-centered' end of the scale would normally only be appropriate when the group lacks the maturity or understanding to make good decisions, or perhaps in a crisis situation.

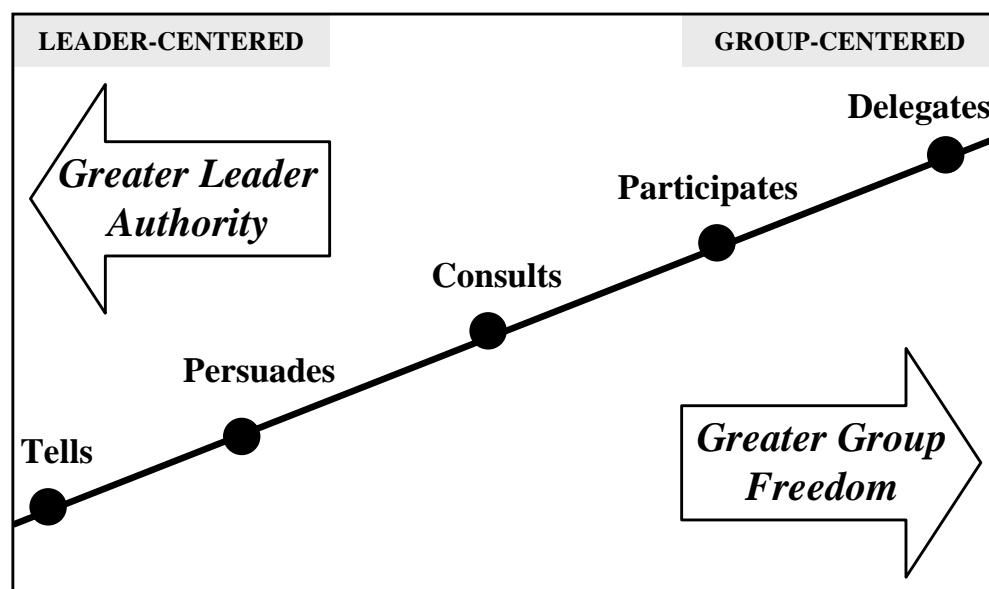
There is a time and place for each of these five styles of leadership.

For the purpose of church planting, there should be a significant level of maturity and spirituality on the part of all those who are ministering and directing the work. Therefore, a leader of a church planting group should expect to mainly use the 'group-centered' styles of leadership. Problems arise when the leader of the church plant is only comfortable with 'leader-centered' styles. In that case, the leader has four options. He can:

- Learn to change his style
- Give up the leadership role
- Work alone
- Frustrate the entire group and hinder the planting of the church

As you look at figure 7.2 and read the discussion of each style of leadership, evaluate your own preferred style. We say "preferred" because although most leaders may be able to use a number of different styles, they tend to be more comfortable in one of them.

**Figure 7.2 Five Common Leadership Styles**



1. *Telling*

Leaders identify problems, consider options, choose one solution, and tell their followers what to do. Leaders may consider members' views, but members do not participate directly in decision-making.

2. *Persuading*

Leaders make decisions and try to persuade group members to accept them. A leader using this style may point out that they considered the organization's goals and the interests of the group members. They even point out how the members will benefit from carrying out the decision.

3. *Consulting*

Group members have opportunity to influence decision-making from the beginning. Leaders using this style present problems and relevant background information. They invite the group to suggest alternative actions. Leaders then select the most promising solution.

4. *Participating*

Leaders participate in the discussion to a similar degree as the other members, and agree in advance to carry out whatever decision the group makes.

### 5. *Delegating*

Leaders define the boundaries within which to solve problems or accomplish tasks. Then they turn it over to the group to work out solutions or to implement the tasks.

Remember that none of these five styles is inherently right or wrong. The military, for instance, has had great success in *telling* soldiers what to do, with no discussion allowed. Even in church planting situations, there might be some times when it is best and simplest if the leader makes certain decisions without consulting the group. Usually this happens when there is an urgent need to make a decision *now!* However, in all but extreme situations, the leader of a church plant should consult those with whom he or she is working. A good leader needs to know when each leadership style would be appropriate, and be growing in his or her ability to use other than his natural style when necessary.

The leader of a church plant should normally consult those with whom he or she is working.

### C. **The Leader's Understanding of the Task**

It should be obvious that a leader must understand the task to be accomplished and know how to carry it out. However, leaders are often appointed solely on the basis of personality or past leadership ability, even if they do not understand the task at hand. Some may be intelligent enough to learn quickly and succeed, but many fail in this situation. It is strongly desirable that the leader should have a thorough understanding of the task.

Church planting is too important a task to commit to leaders that do not understand it, or who are not willing to learn about it. In fact, a leader who is not a learner will seldom guide a group to successful accomplishment of its task. Therefore, a leader of a church plant *must* understand the process of church planting, and be growing in his or her knowledge. The role of the leader is crucial. If the leader has faulty assumptions or ideas, the church plant will probably fail.

It is not necessary that the leader know *everything* about church planting. If so, no church would ever be planted—for lack of leaders. In the same way, it is not even necessary that the leader know more than any other member of the group. Perhaps another member is an 'expert church planter', but is not a particularly capable leader. The best solution in that case is for the more gifted leader to assume the leadership of the group, but to make sure that he adopts a 'group-centered' style so that the group benefits from the experience of the more knowledgeable member(s).

It is not necessary that the leader know *everything* about church planting.

## II. **CHARACTERISTICS OF GROUP**

By the 'group', we mean 'whoever the leader leads.' The leader may not be in control of this factor. You may work with people that you did not pick, but God has led you together. Whether you personally chose the group members or not, you can improve your leadership and the group's success by being aware of the nature of the group.

The church planting group must be leading godly lives, and be able to perform basic functions such as evangelism, discipleship, and building relationships. If the members are capable in these areas, your task as a leader will simply be to keep them focused on the goal of planting the church. If there is a deficiency in one or more areas, you will need to find a way to develop competency in those tasks. Therefore, a careful evaluation of the group will be very profitable, and enhance their chances of establishing a solid, growing church. There are several areas to consider.

If the group is deficient in some area, the leader will need to develop their competency in those tasks.

### A. The Group Members' Skills and Abilities

Look at the group you work with and consider the following questions:

- How much experience do group members have in evangelism, discipleship etc.? Do you need to concentrate on training?
- In what ways are some of them ready to be released for ministry?
- Are your group members aware of their spiritual gifts?

The answer to these questions will affect the progress of the group. You cannot lead the group where they are unprepared to go. If your group lacks ministry skills, you will need to train them.

### B. The Group Members' Commitment to the Task

Perhaps you have a group of skilled people to work with. Some may have planted churches before; others are experienced evangelists or cell group leaders. But perhaps your group members are not available to participate in the task because of other commitments.

- Do employment schedules interfere with ministry meetings and activities?
- Do family obligations interrupt the focus of group members?
- Do the members think that the church plant is of vital importance?

Perhaps group members are committed to the church plant, but have very different ideas about the kind of church they are establishing. They may expect different ministry styles, or have conflicting visions of church structure. If your team has not worked out a clear plan and strategy, this kind of problem will probably arise. You will have great difficulty moving the group forward until you all agree on what you are moving towards.

### C. The Relationships Between the Members

Leadership is largely "people" business. A large part of ministry is dealing with others. If there are relationship problems among those you work with, it will interfere with the task sooner or later. Leaders need to continually monitor the relationships among the group members. If the group does not trust each other, progress can be inhibited. If members are competing for recognition or position, true cooperation will be impossible. A variety of motivations and hidden agendas may unconsciously interfere with the goal.

It is also possible that one or more members of the group might have a relationship problem with the leader. This often arises when leadership styles conflict with expectations. A leader might use a very directive style with a group that values freedom, thereby making the members feel belittled. Or, in the opposite case, a leader might defer decisions to a group that would rather have stronger direction from the leader, and thus feel confused or have trouble knowing what to do. Both issues should be addressed and a workable compromise reached.

Problems often arise when leadership styles conflict with group expectations.

How do you deal with interpersonal conflict as a leader of others? An experienced leader offers the following advice:

*When I sense tension among those I lead, or when someone displays "disruptive" zeal for a particular point of view, I try to ask myself "what is going on here?" Oftentimes there are hurts, fears or interpersonal issues below the surface that are coming out in an unusual way. Perhaps I have offended this person, or maybe he or she feels unappreciated by the group. By spending a bit of extra time with the seeming "troubled" person, perhaps giving them a chance to open up, I am often able to reassure them of their worth and acceptance by me and the group. Often, this is all that is necessary to improve harmony among us.*



### III. THE NATURE OF THE TASK

The third factor in leadership is the task. The task is the purpose for which the group exists. It is important that the task be clear in the mind of each member. The responsibility to keep this goal before them falls squarely on the shoulders of the leader.

It is the leader's responsibility to make the task clear.

There are two extremes:

- 1) failing to keep the task clearly before the group, and
- 2) overemphasizing the task to the detriment of group relationships.

The first extreme causes the group to flounder doing unimportant activities, or to get so caught up taking care of the group that they forget the lost to whom the Lord has sent them. The second extreme results in wounded relationships and an inability to model Christian community.

**Your task is saturation church planting.** As the leader, you need to continually evaluate whether or not your group is making progress in planting the church. Your research helps you to understand your particular situation and focus your efforts in the important areas. In addition to what you have learned in your research, you need to consider how the following issues affect the difficulty of planting a church in your target area, and adjust your expectations accordingly.

As a leader, you need to continually evaluate whether or not your group is making progress in planting the church.

- Are you planting a church among resistant or receptive people?
- Are you or members of your group "outsiders" or "foreigners" among these people?
- Are there economic realities that make the church planting effort difficult?
- Do you have enough information about your context? Do you and your group understand your task?
- Do you have a clear plan and strategy that takes the results of your research into account?
- Are there any unique spiritual dynamics that must be confronted?
- Are there any political pressures that are affecting the situation?
- Do you have the resources needed to complete the task?
- In what ways has God prepared you and your group for this task?
- Are there any 'open doors' that are proving effective in the work, and which you need to use more fully?
- Are the people that your group has already reached growing and being discipled in the Lord? What corrections do you need to make to your strategy to better help them?

### CONCLUSION

As you can see there are many factors that affect the leadership process. As a church planter you need to watch your own leadership abilities and skills, shepherd and train your group and monitor the various realities of the task. The action plan at the end of this lesson will help you take stock of your factors.

### QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION, REVIEW AND APPLICATION

- What are the three main factors that affect the success of leadership?
- What is the most typical style of secular leadership in your country?
- What is the most typical style of leadership within your churches?
- What style of leadership was exercised by those Christian leaders who have had the most positive influence on you in the past?

## ACTION PLAN

Write a report on the various factors in your leadership situation by answering the following questions. Give this report to your mentor and discuss it with him before the next training session.

- 1) Describe yourself as a leader
  - What leadership style do you use the most?
  - Which limitations do you see yourself as having? What can you do to compensate for these limitations?
- 2) Describe your group
  - Describe their skills and abilities.
  - What is their level of commitment to the task?
  - Are there any interpersonal conflicts that need to be addressed?
- 3) Describe your task
  - Are you planting a church among resistant or receptive people?
  - Are you or members of your team “outsiders” or “foreigners” among these groups?
  - Are there economic realities that make the church planting effort difficult?
  - Do you have enough information about your context? Do you and your group understand your task?
  - Do you have a clear plan and strategy that takes the results of your research into account?
  - Are there any unique spiritual dynamics that must be confronted?
  - Are there any political pressures that are affecting the situation?
  - Do you have the resources needed to complete the task?
  - In what ways has God prepared you and your group for this task?
- 4) Conclusion
  - As a result of what you have learned, what do you need to focus on?
  - What leadership style would be most effective in your situation, and why?

## SOURCES

D'Souza, A., and Engel, J. F. “Leadership Styles, Being a Leader” in *Leadership: Making Human Strength Productive*. St. Davids, PA: The Center For Organizational Excellence, Eastern College, 1996. (Used by Permission)



LEADERSHIP

8

LESSON

# Styles of Interaction

## ☞ Lesson Purpose

The purpose of this workshop is to introduce styles of interaction, to give the leader a frame of reference for understanding how he or she can most effectively work with others.

## ☞ Main Points

- Interaction styles are not the same as leadership styles, but affect leadership.
- All interaction styles have their strengths and weaknesses.

## ☞ Desired Outcomes

When the content of this lesson has been mastered each participant should...

- Know his/her own style of interacting with others.
- Understand how conflicts arise because of different interacting styles.
- Identify one way to improve his/her effectiveness with others.

## ☞ Suggestions to Trainers

This lesson is a combination lesson and workshop. Trainees will evaluate their own interactive style using the table in Figure 8.1 (allow 15 minutes for this activity). Then refer back to the results of the evaluation as you work through the explanation of each kind of interactive style. This lesson is best done with lots of discussion among participants and trainer.

## INTRODUCTION

Leadership is a social process. Leaders deal with people, and interpersonal relationships are a large part of effectiveness. As a church planter, your effectiveness is greatly influenced by your ability to understand and relate to other people. *Interaction styles* focus on interpersonal relationships, whereas *leadership styles* focus on accomplishing a particular task. There is, of course, some overlap, and both are important considerations for a leader. In this lesson we will look at several styles for interacting with others. You will have an opportunity to discover your own tendencies in dealing with others. The evaluation tool in this lesson will also be useful in understanding others.

### I. DISCOVER YOUR STYLE OF INTERACTION

God has made us all different and calls us to different tasks. This means **everyone is not like you**. When we expect others to behave like us, to think like us, and to see things the way we do, then we end up building relationships only with people like us. We then fail to appreciate others, and often find ourselves in conflict.

We need to take an objective look at ourselves in order to see how we affect others. We may offend others and not know it. We may feel unable to motivate others and not know why. The following paragraphs contain an exercise which can help you to discover your style for interacting with others. When you discover your interactive style, you can begin to make changes to maximize your strengths and minimize your weaknesses. This can reduce

When you discover your interactive style, you can maximize your strengths and minimize your weaknesses.

conflict with others, and help you to be more effective.

### A. Directions for Evaluating your Interaction Style

Figure 8.1 contains four columns of statements. Respond to all of the statements in the table by putting a 0, 1, or 2 in the space provided beside each statement.

0 = This statement never describes you.

1 = This statement sometimes describes you.

2 = This statement describes you very well.

**Figure 8.1 Evaluating Your Interaction Style**

Column 1	Column 2	Column 3	Column 4
I grasp the big picture more quickly than others around me _____	I am a person who generates enthusiasm in people around me _____	People say I demonstrate patience and understanding _____	I can be counted on to carry out a task I am given _____
I like to make things happen quickly _____	I work best when I am free from the control of others _____	People say that I am easy to get along with _____	One of my greatest strengths is paying attention to detail _____
I am not very good at details _____	I often put people ahead of programs _____	I am a good listener _____	If a job is worth doing, it is worth doing very well _____
I often challenge the status quo _____	Management of time is difficult for me _____	People are just as important to me as the ministry program _____	I need to know exactly what is expected of me _____
When necessary, I will take control to make things happen _____	People like to be around me _____	I do best in situations where people work together in harmony _____	I don't want to make decisions without having all the facts _____
I sometimes find it hard to be a good team player _____	I tend to take it personally when people disagree with me _____	I am most effective when my work situation is stable and secure _____	I have difficulty in expressing my feelings _____
Some people say that I am not a very good listener _____	I don't do very well with facts and detail work _____	I do best when people let me know that I am appreciated _____	I am a cautious person who hesitates to take risks _____
I often get bored when my ministry becomes routine _____	I find it easy to express my thoughts and feelings _____	Too much change threatens me _____	I function well within known guidelines and policies _____
I get frustrated when other people resist my ideas _____	I do best when I sense that others really like me _____	My superiors can count on my loyalty _____	I am critical when my performance falls short of standards _____
I welcome challenge and change—the more the better _____	I am effective in motivating others to work together _____	I do everything I can to meet the needs of those who are close to me _____	People often wonder just what I am thinking _____
<b>Total for Column 1:</b> _____	<b>Total for Column 2:</b> _____	<b>Total for Column 3:</b> _____	<b>Total for Column 4:</b> _____

## B. Scoring

When you are finished, add up your answers in each column and write the totals in the spaces below each column. Refer to these numbers as you continue to work through the rest of the lesson.

## C. Interpreting the Results

There are four basic styles of interaction. The four columns in figure 8.1 represent these four styles. Again, these styles of interaction differ from "leadership styles" introduced in the last lesson because they apply to everyone, whether they are leaders or not.

You can now determine your normal interaction style by filling in the totals from figure 8.1 into the spaces beside "Total for Column ..." in table 8.2 below. Next, find the highest number and place a "1" beside it in the space under "Rank." Then, rank your second highest style as "2," your third highest as "3," and the lowest as "4."

**Table 8.2 Your Style**

Totals from Figure 8.1	Style	Rank
Total from Column 1:	<b>DOER</b>	
Total from Column 2:	<b>MOTIVATOR</b>	
Total from Column 3:	<b>TEAM PLAYER</b>	
Total from Column 4:	<b>THINKER</b>	

You now know which of these four interaction styles are the strongest and weakest. You are ready to look at what each one means, the various strengths and weaknesses of them, and what you can do to improve your interaction.

## II. THE FOUR INTERACTION STYLES

None of these four styles is better than any others. They all have their own strengths and weaknesses. God uses all personalities in His kingdom.

### A. The Doer

"Take charge and rise to the challenge of bringing about change to make ministries more effective."

Doers tend to be capable people, able to accept challenges and solve problems in a quick and effective way. They are people of action and can be depended on to get things done. Doers are not afraid to take risks; sometimes they take on too much work and may appear impatient when there is no apparent progress.

Example: Paul (Php 4:13)

<p><b><i>Desires Situations Which Allow:</i></b></p> <p>Freedom, authority, variety, difficult tasks, opportunity for advancement, encourage individuality</p> <p><b><i>Those who are similar may see you as:</i></b></p> <p>Decisive, independent, efficient, practical, determined</p>	<p><b><i>Responds Best to Others Who:</i></b></p> <p>Provide direct answers, stick to business, stress logic, provide pressure</p> <p><b><i>Those who are different may see you as:</i></b></p> <p>Harsh, pushy, dominating, severe, tough</p>
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### ***SOME ACTION STEPS***

- Learn to listen, be patient

- Be less controlling
- Develop greater concern for people
- Be more flexible and supportive with people
- Explain why things are as they are

## B. The Motivator

“Motivating and influencing others to work together to achieve important outcomes”

Motivators are optimistic and enthusiastic people who are very good at relating to others. They are often very articulate and can explain ideas and possibilities in a way that inspires others to get involved. Their tendency to get excited about new things may make it difficult for them to follow through on some tasks.

Example: Peter (Mt 14:28,16:16)

<b><i>Desires Situations Which Allow:</i></b> Prestige, friendly relationships, freedom from control and detail, opportunity to motivate and help others, free expression of ideas	<b><i>Responds Best to Others Who:</i></b> Are friendly and democratic, provide for recognition and acceptance, seek social involvement
<b><i>Those who are similar may see you as:</i></b> Stimulating, enthusiastic, dramatic, outgoing, personable	<b><i>Those who are different may see you as:</i></b> Excitable, egotistical, reacting, manipulative, talkative

### *SOME ACTION STEPS*

- Be less impulsive—evaluate your ideas
- Be more results-oriented
- Control actions and emotions
- Focus more on details/facts
- Slow down, listen, don’t talk as much

## C. The Team Player

“Cooperate readily with others to carry out the vision and plans”

Team players are supportive, loyal people who have strong sensitivity to the needs of others. They can be counted on to carry out tasks as assigned by their leaders and will not offend those they are committed to. Team players may not work well alone as they sometimes lack personal initiative.

Example: Barnabas (Ac 15:37-39)

<b><i>Desires Situations Which Allow:</i></b> Individual specialization, group identity, established work patterns, security, clear goals and job description	<b><i>Responds Best to Others Who:</i></b> Serve as a friend, allow time to adjust to change, allow freedom to work at your own pace, provide support
<b><i>Those who are similar may see you as:</i></b> Supportive, willing, dependable, reliable, agreeable	<b><i>Those who are different may see you as:</i></b> Conforming, awkward, dependent, slow, reticent

### *SOME ACTION STEPS*

- Be less sensitive to what others think
- Be more direct
- Be more concerned with the task itself

- Face confrontation and be more decisive
- Learn to say 'no'
- Do more to initiate action

#### D. The Thinker

"Motivated to carry out visions and plans with excellence and attention to detail"

Thinkers are conscientious, orderly people who have great perception for details. They can be counted on to follow through on projects that others find too complex. Thinkers are challenged by unexpected changes and tend to become rigid in the face of ambiguity.

Example: Luke (Luke 1:1-4)

<b><i>Desires Situations Which Allow:</i></b> Specialization, precision, planning, security, stability, limited risk of failure	<b><i>Responds Best to Others Who:</i></b> Provide reassurance, maintain supportive atmosphere, specify methods and standards
<b><i>Those who are similar may see you as:</i></b> Thorough, persistent, orderly, serious, industrious	<b><i>Those who are different may see you as:</i></b> Critical, stuffy, picky, indecisive, moralistic

#### *SOME ACTION STEPS*

- Focus on doing the right things—not just on doing things right
- Respond more quickly
- Begin to trust your intuition and be less fact-oriented
- Be more willing to take risks
- Be more open and flexible
- Don't be afraid to develop relationships

Do the results describe you? You may want to share your results with a spouse or someone who knows you well to see if they can verify these results. Remember that the styles do not match people perfectly. You may find that you do not fit exactly into any one of these four styles. For most people the two groups in which they scored highest will shed light on their style.

*Take some time to share what you have learned about yourself up to this point with the other trainees. In small groups answer the following questions:*

- What is your preferred working environment?
- What kind of people do you respond best to?
- Describe your actual working environment. How is it like or unlike your preference?
- Have you had difficulty influencing those whose style you suspect is different from your own?
- What have you learned about yourself that you did not realize before?
- What steps can you take to be more effective with those around you? Do you need to be more direct? Do you need to listen more? Do you need to be more outgoing?

#### SUMMARY

What can you do, now that you know a few things about yourself, to be more effective with others? As was already said, each of these styles has its unique strengths as well as weaknesses. You will want to utilize your strengths and learn to grow through your weaknesses.



## QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION, REVIEW AND APPLICATION

For each of the four groups of people, describe the strengths and weaknesses in terms of the church planting process.

- How do doers approach the church planting task? What are their strengths and weaknesses?
- How do motivators approach the church planting task? What are their strengths and weaknesses?
- How do team players approach the church planting task? What are their strengths and weaknesses?
- How do thinkers approach the church planting task? What are their strengths and weaknesses?

## ACTION PLAN

- As a way to understand these four categories, pick out five people that you know from your circle of friends and quietly observe them in various situations and discreetly note their actions or statements that verify their interaction style.
- Consider the “action steps” that follow each of the styles. Identify two that you will consciously work on before the next training session. Share this with your mentor, and ask your mentor to give you feedback on how you are doing.

## SOURCES

Engel, James F., Jane Overstreet, and Terry Sparks. *Leadership: Making Human Strength Productive*. St. Davids, PA: The Center For Organizational Excellence, Eastern College, 1996. (Used by Permission)

LEADERSHIP

9

LESSON

# Leadership Needs

## ☞ Lesson Purpose

The purpose of this lesson is to help the trainee see what kinds and how many leaders are needed for local churches and for the whole body of Christ (The Church) in his nation.

## ☞ Main Points

- The saturation church planting task requires a variety of leaders.
- Every believer should be trained for leadership, although not all will excel at it.
- The lower the level of leadership, the more leaders are needed.

## ☞ Desired Outcomes

When the content of this lesson has been mastered each participant should...

- Know the four levels of leaders described in this lesson.
- Be able to assess the leadership needs in his ministry.

## INTRODUCTION

A church needs leadership. We would probably all agree with this statement. But it also raises a number of other important questions. What kinds of leaders are needed? Who should be a candidate for leadership training? Where should church leaders be trained? How should they be trained? Who should train them? What roles should they assume in church life? Dwight Smith, a mission leader, has said that "Without leaders, there will be no tomorrow; there will only be a repetition of today."

Without leaders, there will be no tomorrow; there will only be a repetition of today.

When these types of church leadership questions are discussed, there are two common false assumptions. The first assumption is that the leaders can only be trained in special programs (a Bible institute or seminary) and then be sent out to work in local churches. The second assumption is that leadership means "pastors." These assumptions only limit the options available to fill leadership needs. This lesson will attempt to provide a better understanding of the real needs for leadership in the Church.

## I. WHAT KIND OF LEADERS DOES THE CHURCH NEED?

The narrow understanding of church leadership as a pastor only, while common, ignores the fact that many other kinds of leaders are needed in the Church if we are to fulfill the Great Commission. Neither is it the Lord's will that pastors alone carry on the ministry of the Church. There are at least four levels of church leadership that have been identified. Using these levels, we will describe the tasks of the leaders along with the various kinds of training programs needed to prepare them for service.

Many kinds of leaders, in addition to pastors, are needed if the Church is to fulfill the Great Commission.

Before we determine what leaders the Church needs, we must remember our definition of leadership that was presented in earlier lessons. Leadership is *influence*. We must be careful not to fall into the trap of thinking of leadership as a formal position, but rather as influence. Using that definition, we can now think of church leaders in terms of the people who are able to influence others to grow spiritually

and reach the lost. Obviously, the Church needs a huge number of that kind of leaders. In fact, *most*, if not all, Christians should be able to do these tasks.

This new way of looking at leaders for the Church shows the importance of training not only a 'select few' leaders, but for a much broader training of believers in general. Not all will be capable of the same level of leadership. Some have more natural ability to lead, or are spiritually gifted for those roles. They may lead very large churches, or groups of churches. Others will lead in less sensational ways, such as in small groups. The four levels of leadership are:

It is important to train believers in general for leadership, rather than just a select few.

#### **A. Small Group or Cell Group Leaders – The Practitioners**

These leaders have a less formal leadership role than do the church leaders or pastors, but it is one of the most vital positions. These leaders have the most direct contact with the lost, and with both new and mature believers. They are in many ways the 'front line.' The "higher" levels of leadership really exist to help train, mobilize, and envision this group to carry on the majority of the church planting work. While such a leader should be a growing Christian, there does not seem to be the same strict guidelines for this level of leaders as there is for elders. This is a good place to use less mature believers in ministry. It will be a stretching experience for them, and as they mature and succeed, they can be given additional responsibility. Much of the actual ministry of the early church happened in small groups with this kind of leadership (Acts 2:46-47).

#### **B. Local Church Leaders – The Equippers**

Local church leaders have responsibility to equip the entire local congregation for ministry, and to guide them in that task. They were never intended to do the work of the ministry by themselves. Rather, their role is too important to spend time "waiting tables." Those in this category might be called brothers, elders, deacons, pastors, or something else, depending on the particular church association to which they belong. There might be only one, or many, depending on the size of the congregation. They have awesome responsibility before the Lord, and should be chosen carefully. Only those of proven character and godly lives should be considered for this level of leadership.

#### **C. Regional Church Leaders – The Mobilizers**

By the time a person has risen to this level of leadership, they should be spending most of their time motivating others to do the work of the ministry. In this way, they can multiply their efforts and make the maximum impact with their experience. Those in this level of leadership might be called overseers, bishops, presbyters, or many other titles. The name is much less important than the role they fulfill. This level is perhaps most vulnerable to the sin of pride, and therefore must be chosen carefully.

#### **D. National Church Leaders – The Envisioners**

National leaders are those who are able to help others see what could be. They spend their time clarifying the goal of our activities for the rest of us. While the *mobilizers* keep the movement machinery running, the *envisioners* steer us toward the target of bringing the Gospel to every nation. Unity and cooperation among the believers is key to fulfilling the Great Commission. Jesus prayed that the unity of the believers would be a testimony that would prove to the world that He was sent by the Father, and that He loves us (Jn 17:23). And yet, maintaining that unity without compromising the truth of the Gospel is a monumental task. Very few leaders have the wisdom to be able to fulfill this role as national church leaders.

Few leaders have the wisdom to be able to be national church leaders.

It should be noted that there is a natural and appropriate blurring of the lines between the tasks of the four kinds of leaders. These categories represent the *primary* functions of each leadership level. In reality, all four levels should fulfill the other roles to a lesser degree. For instance, a pastor should also envision. A small group leader should equip. A national leader should mobilize, and so on. However,

they should spend the majority of their time, and be most gifted in the areas listed for their level of leadership.

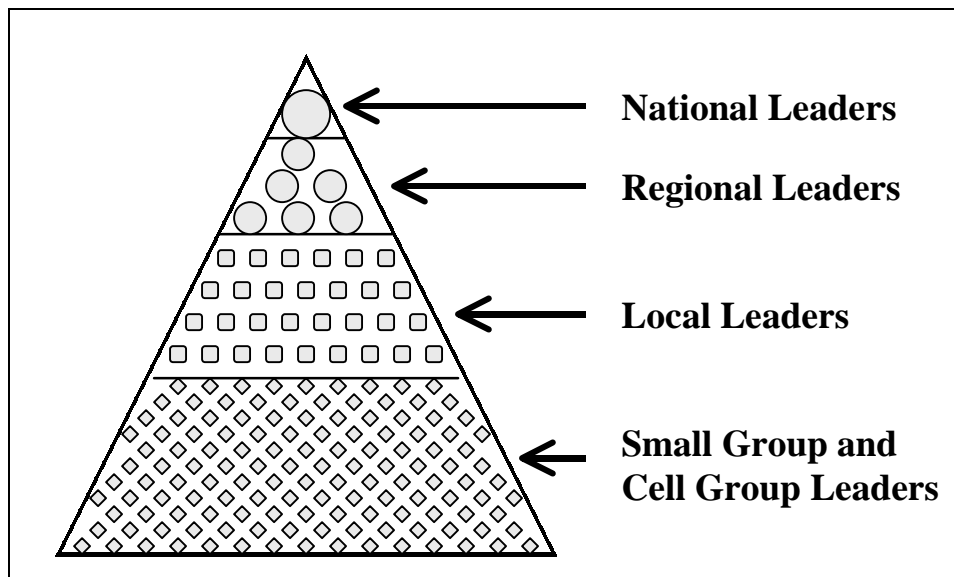
There are various ways to classify the levels of leadership, but for our purposes, we will use these four. And although these training materials focus on the first two levels, this does not mean that the other two are not important. Rather, regional and national leaders usually begin their ministries in the first two levels, and are given more responsibility as their abilities are recognized.

It should also be noted that a variety of people are needed to fill these leadership roles. In order for a church planting movement to happen, many different groups need to be motivated and lead. While qualified men will be needed for many positions, there will also be a need for women leaders and youth leaders. In some situations, single men and women may be better able to devote the time and energy needed if the movement is to spread. This was the case in the New Testament, where the Lord greatly used the Apostle Paul as a single man.

## II. HOW MANY LEADERS DOES THE CHURCH NEED?

Leadership needs in the Church can best be illustrate by the pyramid in figure 9.1. This figure demonstrates the fact that many more leaders are needed at the bottom of the pyramid than at the top. This is because of the increasing number of groups to lead as we go down the pyramid. There are a relatively small number of national churches, but each of them may have many regions. Each regional church may be comprised of a large number of local churches. Each healthy local church will have many small groups and/or cell groups meeting together for edification, prayer, worship, evangelism, and other activities and needs.

**Figure 9.1 The Church Leadership Level Pyramid**



Thus, the answer to the question "How many leaders do we need?" is "As many as we can possibly train!" When we consider all the levels of leadership, we see that the need is massive, and is increasing as people are won to the Lord, small groups are formed, and new local churches are established. This leads to the next logical question.

### A. The 'Sand Table'

Ministry will rise or fall on its leadership. This means that before a church can add new members, it must expand its leadership base. This is analogous to piling sand on a table. You can pile only so much sand on the table before it is covered. When there is no more space on the table then the table is covered and the sand assumes the shape of a pyramid with all the extra sand running off

the table. If you want to add more sand and build a bigger pyramid, you must expand the base of the table.

The point of the pyramid principle is simple. If you want to grow, you must start by expanding the base. Potential leaders can be found right in your cell groups and churches. They simply need to be identified and trained. Train new leaders and your church will be able to grow in health and numbers. If your church is not growing then it is very likely that it does not have enough leaders at a certain level. For instance, does your church have enough small group leaders? If not, perhaps you need to concentrate on leadership development so that your church can be more effective at reaching others for Christ.

Potential leaders can be found right in your cell groups and churches. They simply need to be identified and trained.

## B. The 'Jethro Principle'

Secular leadership experts have said that for effective group action, whether in the military, business world, or in the social realm, 10-15% of the group must be in leadership positions. This percentage ensures that the group has proper communication, supervision and interaction so that they can accomplish something. In other words, there should be one leader for every seven to ten people being supervised.

It is not surprising that God provided us with a biblical example of leadership ratios thousands of years before these secular experts made their discoveries. In Exodus 18, Moses was exhausted from leading the people of Israel. His father-in-law, Jethro, saw this, and suggested a better way to lead the people. This example that we will call the 'Jethro Principle,' is still valid. He advised Moses to appoint leaders of thousands, hundreds, fifties, and tens. How many leaders is this? Let's add up the leaders for a group of 1000 people:

**Table 9.2**

For Each 1000 People	Kinds of Leaders	Number Needed
<b>1000 ÷</b>	<b>1000 =</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>1000 ÷</b>	<b>100 =</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>1000 ÷</b>	<b>50 =</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>1000 ÷</b>	<b>10 =</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Total Leaders Needed Per 1000</b>		<b>131</b>

From Table 9.2, you can see that according to the 'Jethro Principle' there should be 131 leaders for every 1000 people being lead. If we state this as a percent, 131 out of 1000 is 13.1%. That number matches the secular 10-15% figure very well. Here is a simple test for you. In your current church or church plant, 10-15% of the people should be leaders. Multiply the number of people you have by 0.15 (or 15%) to see how well you are doing:

*Total number of people in my church (plant):* \_\_\_\_\_

*Multiplied by 15%:*     X    0.15    

*Number of leaders you should have:* \_\_\_\_\_

*Number that I really have now:* \_\_\_\_\_

How are you doing? Congratulations if you have even more than 15%. If you have less, it is important that you begin to work on developing leaders.

### III. WHERE DO WE FIND THESE LEADERS?

The Lord never gives us a task to complete unless He knows that it is possible. We can accomplish this seemingly impossible task if we are careful to follow His instructions, and some basic scriptural principles of leadership training.

In Matthew 25:14-30, Jesus told a parable about three servants. While the parable has a specific purpose, verses 21 and 23 repeat a noteworthy phrase, "You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things." This concept is reasonable, and seems to explain how we can find the leaders that we need. We should look for those who are faithful in 'smaller' leadership roles, and give them increasing responsibilities. We have already seen this when we looked at the levels of leadership. Success (and faithfulness) at lower levels was always the requirement for higher roles.

Therefore, this increasing need for Christian leaders for the Church will have to be met by discipling new believers and training them for leadership. This is where we should look for leaders, and where we should begin to train. This is not to suggest that new converts are immediately ready to serve as a church leader. They are not, and the Bible warns against rushing this process (1Ti 3:6). However, the fact that they can not immediately *serve* as leaders does not remove our responsibility to begin to train them for possible *future* service. We should focus on developing faithfulness, godly character, and a servant attitude immediately. As men and women prove faithful, they should be given both more responsibility and more in-depth training.

Fig. 8.3



### SUMMARY

The time is now to get more serious about training more leaders at more levels. Future growth and church health depends on it. We cannot assume that the right kind of leaders will emerge from the training institutions when we need them. Local church leaders need to take initiative in this.

### QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION, REVIEW AND APPLICATION

- How many people in your church are functioning at some level of leadership?
- What is the greatest leadership need in your ministry at this time?
- What can you do in your church plant to train cell group and small group leaders?
- Who are the leaders in your region? Where and how have they been trained?

### ACTION PLAN

Study the training programs and leadership needs in your region. What training is available for each level of leadership? How can you benefit from these resources in your church plant? Share the results of your study with your mentor.

### SOURCES

Womack, David A. *The Pyramid Principle*. Minneapolis, MN: Bethany Fellowship, 1977.



LEADERSHIP

10

LESSON

# Training New Leaders

## ☞ Lesson Purpose

The purpose of this lesson is to stress the responsibility of church planters to multiply themselves through the training of other leaders. It is not enough just to delegate responsibility; leadership must be multiplied. This lesson describes a simple on-the-job training technique that can result in multiplication of leaders.

## ☞ Main Points

- Moses, Jesus, and Paul all modeled the training of new leaders.
- Training should take into account both the needs of the ministry and the needs of the new leader.
- The leader should gradually involve and release his trainee.

## ☞ Desired Outcomes

When the content of this lesson has been mastered each participant should...

- Know how leaders were trained in the Bible.
- Know and use the 5-step process to train a new leader in a new task.
- Be committed to multiplying himself/herself through the development of other leaders.

## ☞ Appendix

10A Qualities to Encourage in a New Leader

## INTRODUCTION

Leadership development is one of the most important aspects of church planting and church growth. Without leadership development, church members remain forever dependent on the church planter and his team. Growing churches normally have a program, formal or informal, in which leaders are trained to assume responsibility. Stagnant churches often do not.

As a church planter, you must multiply yourself by developing other leaders. Early in the church planting process when the church planter is spending most of his time engaged in evangelism, he needs to begin identifying and building up those who might be future leaders. At later stages in the church plant, he is likely to spend most of his time involved in leadership development. Leadership development is essential in order to create an active, growing church. How do we do it? First, note the following biblical examples:

## I. BIBLICAL EXAMPLES OF LEADERSHIP MULTIPLICATION

### A. Moses and Joshua

Moses accomplished incredible things for God. He liberated the children of Israel from Egyptian slavery and brought them to the border of the promised land. Joshua was at Moses' side as a reliable fighter from the beginning of Moses' leadership (Ex. 17:9-14). Joshua went with Moses on Mt Sinai to receive the law and commandments, (Ex 24:12-13), and seemed to have special permission to enter the 'tent of meeting' where God met with Moses (Ex 33:7-11). Joshua's great faith was best displayed when he and Caleb alone believed that God would give them the strength to conquer Canaan (Nu 14:6-9).



At a certain point in Moses' life he asked himself a question that all leaders should frequently ask: "Who is going to replace me?" Moses recognized that Israel would need future leadership, and he asked God for a replacement. God chose Joshua, who had been learning at Moses' side, and then told Moses to delegate some of his authority to Joshua so that the people would know that Joshua was the man of God's choosing (Nu 27:15-22).

Moses saw the promised land, but did not enter into it. Joshua, however, saw the realization of Moses' dream when he victoriously entered the promised land with all Israel. Moses could have become jealous of the fact that he would not enter the promised land, but that Joshua would (Dt 1:37-38). Instead, however, Moses handed off the leadership gracefully to Joshua, just as God had instructed (Dt 31:7, 34:9). Moses serves as a shining example of a servant leader who seeks the best for the people and the Lord's work, rather than his own glory.

## B. Jesus

Jesus had a plan to spread the salvation message to the whole world. How did he go about it? He taught large multitudes on many occasions, but his real focus was on the development of his very close followers. This relatively small group of men would carry on the message of salvation with even greater impact after He left. Jesus personally began to select these men before He initiated His larger preaching ministry (Jn 1:35-51).

Jesus spent three and a half years demonstrating the power of His message in His preaching and healing, and later in His sacrificial death and miraculous resurrection. He was a living model of His message for His disciples. At the earliest appropriate time, Jesus gave His disciples a chance to participate in the ministry by sending them out as missionaries (Mt 10). When their ministry was not successful, Jesus provided timely instruction to rectify the problem (Mt 17:14-21). Their training in ministry was evidently more important than the actual tasks they accomplished. Jesus prepared his disciples to be able to carry on without his physical presence. He had enough confidence in his disciples to give them the "keys of the kingdom" (Mt 16:19), and put the future ministry into their hands (Mt 18:18-20).

Jesus taught large multitudes on many occasions, but his real focus was on the development of his very close followers.

We see, therefore, that Jesus multiplied Himself in the lives of others in order to accomplish His purpose. He said, "follow me and I will make you fishers of men" (Mt. 4:19). Jesus was himself a fisher of men, so He essentially said, "follow me and I will make you what I am!" In leadership development, we are also interested in training replacements rather than just finding helpers. Our desire should be to see trainees eventually reach or even surpass the level of success that we have had in ministry.

## C. Paul

We see Paul's commitment to developing leaders most clearly in his words to Timothy in 2 Timothy 2:2: "*And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others.*" He refers to the "many witnesses" present as he taught Timothy. Both Jesus and Paul disciplined men in small groups, rather than "one-by-one." We need to follow their example by equipping leaders "in action." In this way, others will observe in a practical way how to develop leaders. Remember, discipling others is something that is not only taught; it is caught.

Paul was anxious for Timothy to learn how to equip others. Note his reference in 2 Timothy 2:2 to *faithful men*. The selection of those who are to be trained is an important part of the training process. The main requirement for Christian ministry is faithfulness. Paul was not only passing *information* on to Timothy, but also a *method* of equipping others. As Paul monitored and disciplined Timothy, so Timothy would learn to watch and disciple others. Paul had to be sure the training pattern could be repeated to a third and even a fourth generation.

Paul trained Timothy for the ministry almost as if he were his own son, but Timothy is by no means the only one to have been trained by Paul. We read of Silas, John Mark, Barnabas, Aquila and Priscilla, and Apollos—all of whom learned from Paul to various degrees. The last missionary journey of Paul seems to have been a training/discipleship trip. During this trip we read of seven people (Ac 20:4) traveling with Paul, most of them learning from him. In his own epistles, Paul mentions Epaphras, Demas, Archippus, Titus, Phoebe and many others. For example, in the conclusion of his epistle to the Romans, Paul greets 27 people, many of whom had worked with and may have been trained by Paul.

Timothy is by no means the only one to have been trained by Paul.

You should use this pattern explained in 2 Timothy 2:2 and modeled by Paul by involving potential leaders in all you do during the time you are together. Whether planning group meetings, visiting the lost, counseling hurting people, praying for lost sheep, or teaching—all should be joint projects.

## II. TRAINING OBJECTIVES

You have already been introduced to “Z-Thinking.” In a church planting context, that means planning with the final outcome in mind. Effective leadership training also requires that we look ahead to the needs of the new church as we train. The main questions we need to ask are: “*What are we trying to help people to become?*” “*What kind of leaders are needed?*” “*What are we aiming for?*” “*What does a finished product look like?*” These foundational questions are important, since they guide the training process.

We need have a clear picture of the leadership needs, but we should also be careful not to squeeze the wrong person into those molds. When we find “faithful” people who have leadership ability, they should not be trained in a rigid, inflexible program. Each potential leader has his own personality, abilities, spiritual gift, background, and experience which *must* be taken into account. Therefore, when training potential leaders, consider the following factors:

Effective leadership training requires that we look ahead to the needs of the new church as we train.

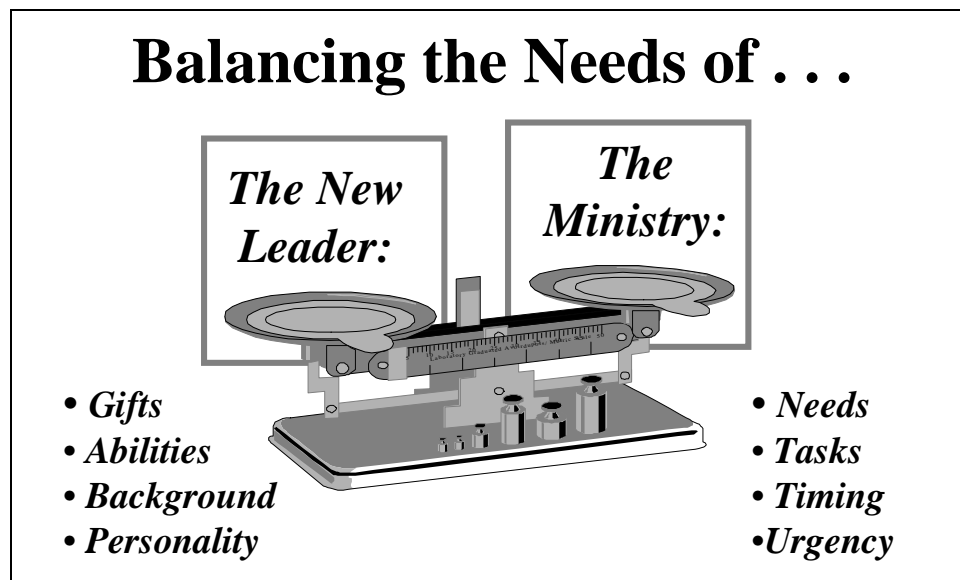
- *Spiritual Gifts* - Remember that God has gifted each member of the body. People will gravitate to and find fulfillment in ministry that uses their spiritual gifts. For example, someone with gifts of mercy and administration might be effective in coordinating a soup kitchen or helping the elderly, but not in teaching a Sunday school class. Place growing leaders where they best fit, and not simply where there is a need for a “warm body.”
- *Abilities* - Everyone has natural talents or activities that they have learned through effort and practice, and which may also be helpful in ministry. However, these *natural* abilities cannot replace *spiritual* gifts, so we need to be careful not to force growing leaders to focus on ministries that they *can do*, but for which they do not have a spiritual gift. The ideal situation, of course, is to find a ministry ‘fit’ that uses a leader’s gifts as well as his or her abilities.
- *Ministry needs* - The needs of your church planting ministry should also influence the training process. If a person’s gifts do not fit into a particular ongoing ministry, they probably should be trained in some other setting. However, a new leader’s spiritual gift may not be immediately obvious—they are usually discovered through service. God may want someone to develop a skill for which they have no previous experience or apparent giftedness. It is also true that a leader often has to learn to fulfill roles that are needed to help move the church planting ministry forward. While a Christian leader should focus on his gift, he is not excused from being involved in other areas of ministry. For example, Timothy needed to learn to be an evangelist (2Ti 4:5).
- *Experience* – Past experience in leadership should be carefully evaluated, because it can either positively or negatively influence the future leadership success of the trainee. It might be a *positive* experience because the trainee has probably already learned some hard and valuable lessons about leadership. These need not be repeated, and can save time in the training process. It can also help to quickly identify strengths and weaknesses of the trainee. However, it can be *negative* if it has taught or reinforced an authoritarian or other non-biblical style of leadership. It can also make

potential ability hard to discern—indication of capability might just be experience, or lack of experience might make it appear that there is no ability.

- *Personality* – There are so many factors of personality that we cannot possibly mention all the combinations. For instance, a potential leader may or may not interact easily with people—a vital skill. One leader might be easily depressed and need lots of encouragement, while another is upbeat and positive. Be aware of these and other factors as you choose and train leaders.

Prayerful consideration of these factors can reveal what God is calling potential leaders to become. Review them and adjust them to the actual situation in your ministry and for your trainees. This is easier said than done. It takes wisdom, and sensitivity to develop a new leader to his or her potential, meet existing needs in the church plant, and not slight either. Figure 10.1 illustrates the difficulty and importance of finding this balance.

**Figure 10.1 Keeping the Balance**



Once these dynamics are understood, the trainer should evaluate the trainee and determine how best to develop the leadership skills and qualities of the trainee in the current church planting situation. Each situation is different, just as each person is different.

An approach that is often effective is to form a list of the strengths and weaknesses of the trainee, and write down specific areas of growth that you want to encourage. As you compare potential leaders to this list of objectives, it will help you know how to approach the training process for each of them. For example, if a leader in training falls short of a particular objective, then a “learning activity” can be designed to help him grow in that area. Note the following examples:

**Table 10.2 Objectives Lead to Learning Activities**

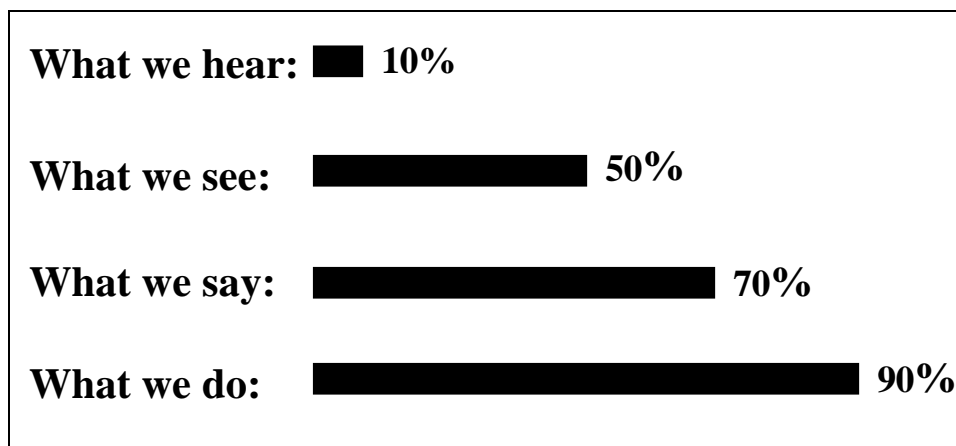
TRAINING OBJECTIVE	LEARNING ACTIVITY
To improve poor preaching skills.	Let him see exactly how you prepare your sermons.
To increase Bible knowledge enough to be able to lead a cell group effectively.	Have him take a correspondence course to increase his understanding of the Bible.
To strengthen weak nurturing (pastoral) ability.	Have him study the pastoral epistles inductively (1 and 2 Timothy and Titus).
A mature believer aspires to be a cell group leader but does not relate well to unsaved people.	Have the potential leader try to befriend an unsaved person and keep a record of his experiences in growing this friendship.

### III. FIVE-STEP PROCESS FOR TRAINING NEW LEADERS

This process for training new leaders has already been explained in cell group lesson 9, "Training New Cell Group Leaders." Cell groups offer wonderful training ground for developing new leaders. They provide opportunity for training leaders "on the job," realizing that **we learn best by doing**. Always remember training is an active process. Do not place all the emphasis on knowledge and information. Instead, look for creative ways to get the aspiring leader to **DO** things. He will learn most from what he does.

Figure 10.3 shows how much of any presentation is remembered at the end of thirty days, under normal circumstances. The retention depends on what kind of involvement we had in the learning activity. It is clear that we remember best when we are involved in *doing* the activity.

**Figure 10.3 How Much Do We Remember?**



The following five-step process can be used to help a potential leader develop a particular skill. It is an activity-based process.

#### A. Step 1: "I Do It"

In the training of leaders, you should lead by example. Perhaps the number one rule in leadership development is to be the kind of leader others will want to imitate. Often training fails because it has not included good modeling of a concept or skill. Model ministry before you require it of your trainee.

**B. Step 2: “I Do It; You Watch”**

While the trainee also ‘watched’ in step 1, it was a more passive, one-way activity. In this step, we have in mind an active, two-way interaction between the leader and the trainee. The trainee knows he is being prepared to lead, and is absorbing everything he can learn by observing your ministry. Explaining your actions is very important. Take nothing for granted. Explain what you do and why you do it the way you do. Explain the ministry principles which guide your actions.

**C. Step 3: “We Do It Together”**

Be sure you have performed the particular ministry skill with your aspiring leaders to give them hands-on experience and to help them to see and learn from their mistakes in a secure environment with their mentor (you). This step is a bit like a child learning to ride a bike with the parent steadying it as needed. Your presence will give the trainees confidence that you can help if they have a problem, but they will also be able to test out the things they are learning from you. The length of time that this stage continues depends entirely on how soon you and the trainee agree that he or she is ready to try to lead by themselves.

**D. Step 4: “You Do It; I Watch”**

Observe your aspiring leader perform the ministry skill. Do not step in. Allow them to succeed or fail as they are able. Then, after the event and in private, objectively explain the strengths and weaknesses you have observed. Review the objectives at this point. It is important to explain both the positive and the negative, but whenever possible, emphasize the positive. Provide a learning activity to strengthen the weaknesses if necessary.

**E. Step 5: “You Do It”**

As soon as you think new leaders are ready, turn the task over to them. Don’t rush it, but usually our tendency is to wait far too long, and cripple the new leader by our continued presence. You should remain a close friend, treating the new leader as your equal. The process does not end with the training of another leader. We are interested in the multiplication of many leaders. Therefore encourage the new leader to soon begin to multiply himself in the life of another.

**Table 10.4 Five Steps**

<b>The Step</b>	<b>The Leader</b>	<b>The Trainee</b>
<b>Step 1</b>	<b><i>Do</i></b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Step 2</b>	<b><i>Do</i></b>	<b><i>Watch</i></b>
<b>Step 3</b>	<b><i>Do</i></b>	<b><i>Do</i></b>
<b>Step 4</b>	<b><i>Watch</i></b>	<b><i>Do</i></b>
<b>Step 5</b>	<b>-</b>	<b><i>Do</i></b>

These five steps do not always need to be followed in a strict fashion. Often, however, training fails because part of the process is not followed. Consider the young aspiring leader who was asked to preach a sermon, but was not trained in this process. His sermon was not very clear and every one concluded, including the young man, that preaching was not his gift. In reality, he just needed to see and receive a little guidance on how to prepare a sermon.

## QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION, REVIEW AND APPLICATION

- Why is leadership development important?
- How were you trained as a leader? Describe the formative activities that helped you develop your leadership ability.
- How many generations of leaders are described in 2 Timothy 2:2?
- How is Matthew 4:19 like 2 Timothy 2:2?

## ACTION PLAN

- Pick a common task that you know how to do well like driving a car, cooking pancakes, or building a wooden stool. Teach someone else to do it using the 5-step process described in this lesson. Describe the results to your trainer or mentor.
- In a small group with other trainees or with your church planting team, pick five objectives from Appendix 10A, "Qualities to Encourage in a New Leader." Describe how this 5-step process can be used with each training objective.

## SOURCES

- Allen, Roland. *Missionary Methods - St. Paul's or Ours?* Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1962.
- Steffen, Tom A. "Leadership: Ten Implications for Cross-Cultural Church Planters." N.p., n.d.



# Qualities to Encourage in a New Leader

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## I. GENERAL LEADERSHIP TRAINING OBJECTIVES

The following objectives are necessary for leaders at any level:

- Is building an intimate relationship with God.
- Demonstrates the fruits of the Spirit.
- Uses his/her spiritual gifts in ministry.
- Has a growing love for God and others.
- Demonstrates moral integrity.
- Is committed to the authority of the local church.
- Shows love and concern for those in his/her fellowship.
- Relates well to other bodies of believers.
- Applies biblical principles to relationships.
- Manages interpersonal conflict well.
- Listens to others and responds appropriately.
- Is convinced that the Bible is the word of God.
- Has a working knowledge of the Old and New Testament.
- Studies and applies the Bible.

## II. LEADERSHIP TRAINING OBJECTIVES FOR SMALL GROUP LEADERS

Small group leaders should also display the following abilities and character traits:

- Demonstrates a passion for souls.
- Practices personal evangelism.
- Relates well to the lost.
- Can present the Gospel clearly.
- Can give a clear personal testimony.
- Has been disciplined.
- Shows sensitivity to the newly converted.
- Shows love for his/her disciples.
- Forms disciples who in turn disciple others.
- Can lead a group inductive Bible discussion
- Understands the need for cell groups as a foundation for healthy growth.
- Is able to effectively lead a cell group meeting.

## III. LEADERSHIP TRAINING OBJECTIVES FOR LOCAL LEADERS

Local leaders also need to be characterized by the following traits:

- Is a model disciple worth imitating.
- Understands that the Church is God's vehicle for world evangelization.
- Knows the biblical basis for church planting and missions.
- Is able to use various methods and techniques of evangelism.
- Is able to conduct basic research in preparation for a church growth and planting.
- Is able to lead public worship.
- Teaches the Bible effectively in a group or one on one setting.
- Identifies and develops potential leaders of cell groups.
- Can organize believers into a self-governing, self-nurturing, and mission-oriented congregation.
- Understands how to put biblical functions into culturally relevant forms.
- Builds and works well with a team.
- Knows how to delegate responsibility.
- Sets goals, makes plans and establishes objectives to attain them.
- Develops the giftedness and abilities of others.
- Is pro-active.

#### **IV. LEADERSHIP TRAINING OBJECTIVES FOR REGIONAL AND NATIONAL LEADERS**

Regional and national leaders should reach an even higher standard of character and abilities:

- Is able to preach and teach.
- Will be able to provide spiritual guidance and counsel to a wide variety of situations.
- Has advanced understanding of the Bible and Theology
- Can train church workers for evangelism, discipleship, cell group leadership, stewardship, and worship or other areas of ministry as needed.
- Builds and uses cell groups to saturate a community and mobilize the body of Christ..
- Portrays a growth mentality.
- Demonstrates seeker sensitivity, assimilate new comers.
- Is able to administer baptism and the Lord's supper.
- Communicates vision which inspires others.
- Can lead others into discovering their gift(s) and applying it in ministry.





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# CELL GROUPS

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CELL GROUPS

10

LESSON

# Discussion of Cell Group Questions and Problems

## ☛ Lesson Purpose

The purpose of this lesson is to provide for a time of interactive discussion between the trainees regarding problems and questions they have about cell groups.

## ☛ Main Points

- Interactive discussion of real cell group problems.

## ☛ Desired Outcomes

When the content of this lesson has been mastered, each participant should . . .

- Understand some of the common problems which arise in cell group ministry.
- Use personal experience to provide answers to some of the questions or problems which are discussed.
- Apply answers and suggestions given by other trainees to help solve problems or answer questions in his own cell groups.

## ☛ Suggestions to Trainers

This lesson has been designed to provide for a time of interactive discussion between the trainees. Your role is one of a facilitator, or mediator, between the trainees. You will need to ask the trainees for their problems or questions. Do not provide answers or suggestions yourself – allow the answers to come from within the group, if possible. In the unlikely event that none of the trainees has any questions or problems, there are some suggested common questions given in the lesson. Try to use the experience of the trainees to answer the given problems and questions during this lesson time.

Emphasize that the trainees need to think about the solutions or suggestions which are discussed and determine how they can be applied in their own groups. Encourage them to write down specific, concrete ways in which they will try to resolve some of the problems in their own groups.

## I. THE REALITIES OF CELL GROUP MINISTRY

*Max has been leading a cell group for over four months. Although six people come regularly to the cell group meetings, they don't seem to be growing much in their faith, and the group does not express any interest in reaching out to people around them. They seem content to meet weekly, to talk about their problems, and to study the Bible a little. Max is growing more and more frustrated, and does not know what he can do differently in order to help the members of his group become more spiritually mature. Some days he feels like giving up on the group altogether.*

As "Max" has discovered, cell group ministry can be both rewarding and frustrating. When things are going well in a cell group, it can be very satisfying for the cell group leader. However, when problems arise, it can be very difficult for the leader to prayerfully work through them.

In any cell group, problems will arise at one time or another. The purpose of this lesson is to provide a time of discussion of various problems or questions which the trainees may have regarding their own cell groups. It is hoped that some of the trainees will have experienced similar problems or difficulties and will have some suggestions for the group. If questions arise which have no easy answers, the group can take as much time as is needed to discuss possible solutions or answers to those questions.

## **II. QUESTIONS AND PROBLEMS**

Begin discussing problems or questions in your cell group(s). The trainer will be responsible to mediate the discussion time. If the group of trainees has had extraordinarily good success with their groups and they have no problems, the following list can be used to discuss typical areas of problems in a cell group ministry. Remember, this list is only in the event that the trainees have no further questions or problems to discuss:

- The cell group is not growing spiritually.
- The leader cannot find an apprentice leader.
- The cell group does not want to multiply itself.
- The cell group cannot find a good place to meet.
- The cell group is not growing numerically.
- Some type of conflict exists between two or more group members, and the leader cannot seem to resolve it.

## **III. SOLUTIONS**

Every cell group is different, and each problem situation has its own unique characteristics. Even so, often there are common underlying principles or reasons for the problem. Each cell group leader should listen carefully to the suggestions or solutions which are offered during the discussion time of this lesson. If possible, he should think about how to apply the principles of the given solutions in his own cell group if he is experiencing a similar problem.

## **QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION, REVIEW AND APPLICATION**

- What is the largest problem or concern in your cell group(s)? Was a solution or suggestion given during this class time which you can use to help solve this problem?
- Do you know other cell group leaders who were not in this class but who might benefit from this time of discussion? How could you encourage them and share with them some of the things you learned?
- Who can you talk to about ongoing or future problems in your cell groups?

## **ACTION PLAN**

- Write down the three main problems you are experiencing in your cell groups.
- Based on today's discussion, write down at least two possible solutions to each of these problems.
- Pray for wisdom in implementing the solutions you just wrote down. Plan to implement them as soon as possible.

CELL GROUPS

11

LESSON

# Cell Group Multiplication

## ☞ Lesson Purpose

The purpose of this lesson is to equip the trainee with the skills and knowledge which are necessary to be able to facilitate multiplication in a cell group.

## ☞ Main Points

- Multiplication in cell groups is intentional.
- Clusters facilitate the natural process of cell division and multiplication.

## ☞ Desired Outcomes

When the content of this lesson has been mastered, each participant should . . .

- Understand why it is necessary for a cell group to reproduce itself.
- Understand how to use “clusters” to help with the multiplication process.
- Learn how to deal with several typical barriers which can make it difficult for a cell group to multiply.

## I. THE GOAL OF MULTIPLICATION

The group was meeting together for the last time. Things couldn't have been worse. Their leader was leaving, the apprentice was unreliable, others in the group were squabbling and vying for positions of prominence, and one member was about to be exposed for embezzlement, fraud, and disloyalty. Defeat and fear permeated the atmosphere of the room as the leader stood to speak. He said,

*"Don't let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God . . ."*

The leader was Jesus, the dysfunctional cell group was the twelve disciples, and the meeting took place just hours before His arrest, trial, and execution. In spite of the advanced deterioration of this group's morale during the multiplication stage, by the power of the Holy Spirit, it survived to multiply again and again. Within a generation, its numbers had increased exponentially to fill the Roman Empire.

In the same way, each cell group which is approaching the multiplication phase needs to consider Jesus' words: *"Don't let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God..."* (Jn 14:1).

No matter how difficult this transition may seem, multiplication in a cell group is for the greater good of the Kingdom of God. Our ultimate goal in cell group ministry is the fulfillment of the Great Commission. Our method of approaching that goal is through cell groups which evangelize, disciple believers, equip leaders, and reproduce. Without reproduction, this goal will never be reached.

Our ultimate goal in cell group ministry is the fulfillment of the Great Commission.

It has been stated before that cell groups can be used as “building blocks” for a larger ministry strategy. Cell groups which reproduce themselves can be used to strengthen existing churches and start new churches. In this way, they can be used as a foundation for a church planting strategy. In the same way, multiplying cell groups makes it possible not only to see new churches started, but also to help develop and advance a saturation church planting movement in a region or nation. Cell groups naturally contribute to the small “grassroots” activities of evangelism, discipleship and leadership development which are necessary in order to see a movement of new churches started.

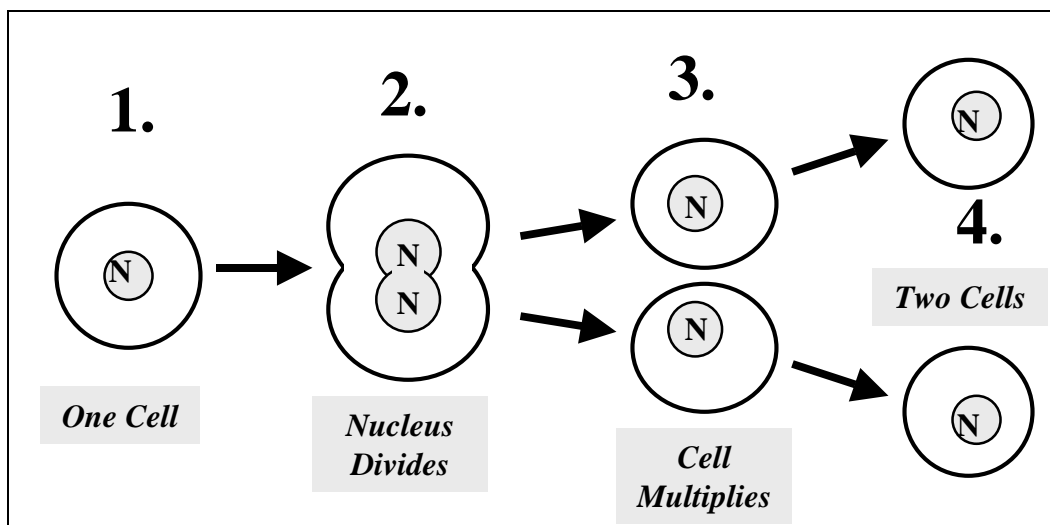
In many ways, multiplication is the culmination of many months of effort in a cell group. It is an important occasion for the group, and one which should be encouraged and celebrated. Although there are several things that the cell group leader can and should do to prepare the group for multiplication, perhaps the most important is simply to trust in God, that He will lead the one group to become two. By His power and the leading of the Holy Spirit, multiplication is a process which will happen over and over again in cell groups.

## II. THE PROCESS OF “NATURAL” MULTIPLICATION

### A. Biological Multiplication

In biology, cells multiply by a process of growing and duplicating themselves. Each cell has a nucleus (shown as “N” in Figure 11.1), which controls the activity of the cell. As the cell is nourished and grows, the one nucleus begins to grow and develop into two nuclei. When the right amount of growth has taken place, the one cell multiplies into two, each with its own nucleus. This process of growth and duplication continues over and over again, as long as the cells are nourished and can grow.

Figure 11.1. Biological Cell Multiplication



Multiplication in cell groups also happens in a way similar to biological cell reproduction. Each cell group has a leader, who provides the right “conditions” for the group to grow and be nourished. If the cell group is not nurtured and developed (i.e. spiritual growth and evangelistic outreach), the group will not grow. The leader provides the example, teaching, and incentive to the group members to reach out to the people around them. Through the working of the Holy Spirit, these friends and acquaintances are brought into the group and have opportunity to learn about Jesus and receive Him as their Savior.

As the cell group continues to grow in maturity, the cell group leader also begins to work with an apprentice leader. This new leader learns from the words and actions of his mentor, and in many ways becomes an imitator (1 Co. 11:1) of the mentor. When the apprentice leader is mentally and spiritually prepared to lead his own group, the original cell group will multiply into two groups. Each group has its own leader, and can begin the process of growing and multiplying again.

God created biological cells with the purpose and ability to duplicate themselves. However, without the right conditions for growth and development, this will not happen, and the cells will eventually die. Cell groups also have the potential to grow, develop and

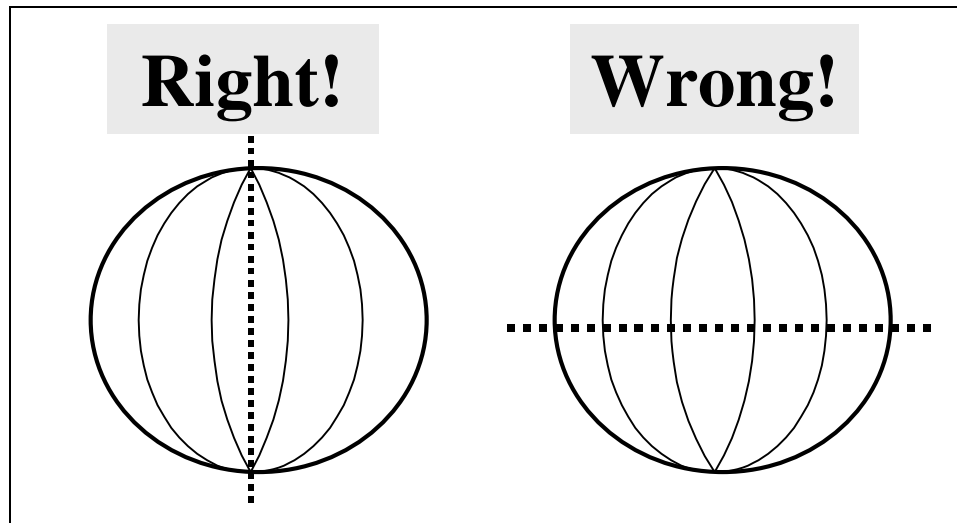
When the apprentice leader is mentally and spiritually prepared to lead his own group, the original cell group will multiply into two groups.

duplicate themselves. In the same way as a biological cell, without the right conditions for growth, this will not happen in a cell group.

## B. Natural Clusters

Imagine a cell group where the leader is holding two large, juicy oranges. He asks for two volunteers from the group to each peel one of the oranges and then divide it in half. However, they each must use a different method to do this. The first person must divide his orange in half crosswise, along its equator. The second person must divide his on the north-south axis, along the naturally occurring segments.

**Figure 11.2 Dividing an Orange**



You can imagine what will happen with each orange. A parallel can be drawn to what can happen in cell groups when it is time to form two groups from the one. A group torn apart, without regard for the naturally occurring friendships within the group, can make a big mess. If you split a group arbitrarily, by numbers, by geographical boundaries, or by some means other than natural relationships, you may end up with many injured group members.

However, if you identify naturally occurring clusters of relationships within your group and then divide the group by these clusters, the result will be much more beneficial. To encourage the formation of these clusters, start early in the group's life to experiment with different compositions. Observe how your members naturally divide into sub-groups of three, four, or five members. Note who gravitated toward whom, and who took leadership. Try this for three or four weeks to see if any specific clusters are naturally developing.

Identify naturally occurring clusters of relationships within your group and then divide the group by these clusters.

You may wish to plan for the formation of these sub-groups by drawing a diagram of the relationships. What groups of three, four, or five people are most alike? Who has children with similar ages? Similar jobs? Similar interests? Who has previously developed friendships or networks of relationships? You can allow these sub-groups to form on their own, or you can encourage certain people in the cell group to form a sub-group based on what you know about their personalities and interests. Clusters will be, in a sense, "mini cells." You will want to meet as a large group for most of the cell group meeting, but you can dismiss into clusters for Bible study, for prayer or for sharing.

Your apprentice leader should either naturally, or by your suggestion, begin to work with one of the clusters. If there are several clusters in your cell group, have your apprentice work with the cluster which seems to have the greatest potential for becoming a new "daughter" cell group. By being involved, the apprentice leader will develop closer relationships with these members and will be better prepared to lead them when it is time to start a new group. This also contributes to a better



pastoral care within your group. Many people will talk more freely in a smaller group of three to five than they would before a larger group of ten or more people. Linking people into a cluster means that their absence will be noticed more quickly. They will realize that their presence is needed, and they will be touched by the others in such a way that they will become more committed to the group.

Clusters can also be used to help identify potential apprentice leaders. Experience has shown that in a small group of people, one person will always naturally emerge as the leader if no one has been assigned that role. As a cell group leader is prayerfully determining who might become the apprentice leader, he or she can examine the clusters to see which members are naturally emerging as “leaders” of the clusters. These are people whom the leader should pray about and perhaps approach about becoming an apprentice leader.

### **C. Steps to Multiplication**

Multiplication in a cell group is intentional – the leader and members of the group must set this goal before themselves, and actively work towards reaching that goal. This is the only way that multiplication will be seen as a natural part of the life cycle of a cell group. If the cell group leader does not make multiplication a priority, the members of the group will not make it a priority, either.

#### **1. *Preparing Ahead for Multiplication of the Cell Group***

The cell group leader should prepare the cell for multiplication throughout the life of the cell. In order to provide the right “conditions” for growth and multiplication of a cell group, the leader has several responsibilities:

- The leader must continually give a vision to the members that their one group will develop into two. This vision must start when the group starts, not several weeks before it is time to multiply. He should explain why multiplication is good and necessary to help fulfill the mandate which Christ gave us in the Great Commission.
- The leader must encourage the group to reach out to the unbelievers in their network of relationships. Without numerical growth, there is no need to multiply.
- The leader must provide an environment in the group where discipleship takes place between the believers. Without spiritual growth, the need to multiply may not be clearly understood.
- The leader must mentor an apprentice leader who will take the responsibility for leading one of the two groups. As the time for multiplication approaches, the apprentice must develop an overall goal for his new group, as well as a plan for at least the first several meetings. The leader should review this with the apprentice and offer advice or suggestions.
- There must be a planned date when multiplication will happen. The leader must hold the group accountable to completing the process of multiplication on or near that date.

#### **2. *Implementing the Multiplication of the Cell Group***

Assuming that a cell group leader has done all these things, how should the cell group actually be multiplied?

- Discuss the upcoming changes with the group. People who have never before been in a group which has multiplied will be, in varying degrees, apprehensive about multiplication. They mistakenly believe that the strength of the group consists in who belongs to it rather than to Whom it belongs. Take their fears seriously and help them through. During the multiplication process, LISTEN, PRAY, & ENCOURAGE. Do all you can to keep discouragement or negativity from becoming the dominant force. Read and meditate on John 14-17 to gain spiritual insight on how Jesus handled the multiplication stage with his group of disciples.

- Determine who will lead which group. In some cases, when a cell group multiplies, the apprentice leader will become the leader of the “daughter” cell group. However, this depends entirely on the group itself, and it is just as acceptable for the current cell group leader to begin working with the new group, while the apprentice leader becomes the leader of the original group. This sometimes works well when the members of the new group are not as spiritually mature as are the members who stay with the original group.
- Decide who will join the new group and who will stay with the original group. The cell group leader needs to ask the group members to pray and decide which group God wants them to be a part of. He or she should not ask which leader they would like better. This can create competition, disunity, stress and an uncomfortable situation for everyone involved. The leader should not presume or choose which members will go with which groups. Any suggestions should be made carefully without even the appearance of coercion or manipulation. Rely on the Holy Spirit to arrange the groups the way He wants.
- Choose a meeting location for the new group. The new group needs to decide where it will meet. This might be in the home of the new leader or in the home of one of the new group members. It is important to decide on a location and to make arrangements to use it. The new group members need to feel a sense of stability, security and identity in the place where they will meet together.
- Plan to meet with the apprentice leader to continue to mentor him/her in the new group. The cell group leader must plan to spend time with his apprentice leader after multiplication happens. The first several weeks and months of the new cell group will be the most difficult for the new leader. Having a mentor close by to pray with and discuss problems with will be immensely helpful for the new cell group leader.
- As a group, decide when the last meeting date of the original group will be, and plan to make it a celebration! Review and give thanks for all the things God has done in and through the group. Pray for each other and for the future of both groups. Rejoice that through two groups, more people can be reached with the love of Christ. Show the group the importance of this step in helping to fulfill the Great Commission. Have a special “commissioning” for the new leader and group members – gather them together and pray for them, that God will use them mightily in their new group.

Sometimes when a cell group multiplies, the apprentice leader becomes the leader of the “daughter” cell group.

Each time a new cell group is started, there are naturally some doubts, fears and uncertainties. What if the new group is not as “good” as the original group? What will change? How will the relationships be different? It is important to remember that the new group will be significantly different from the old one. Don’t expect that everything will be the same as it was in the original group, because it won’t. The Holy Spirit desires to work through the lives of the believers in the new group in a unique and special way.

Perhaps most important is simply to trust that God is in control and that He will guide and direct both the old and the new groups. Jesus said in John 14:27, *“Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.”* These are words to live by, and especially during the time when a cell group has reached the phase of multiplication.

### III. BARRIERS TO MULTIPLICATION

The topic of multiplying cell groups is of great interest among cell group members and leaders. Two dynamics in cell groups wage war one against the other. The first is the fact that multiplying a group is healthy for both the group and the kingdom. The second is the fact that, left to their own devices, very few groups ever would multiply. Multiplying is perceived as a potentially painful event, a split which severs relationships. People want to get together and stay together. They rarely realize that the group that focuses only on its own members and needs will grow stale or die within one or two years.

Left to their own devices, very few groups ever would multiply. People want to stay together.

In any cell group, there are some common barriers which can prevent multiplication from happening. The following table describes some of these barriers, and offers suggestions to the cell group leader as to how he or she can overcome them. Of course, there may be other barriers or hindrances which are unique for your culture or context. If so, try to think about how you could possibly overcome those barriers so that multiplication can happen in your cell groups.

**Table 11.1 Barriers to Cell Multiplication**

<b>Problem</b>	<b>Suggestions</b>
The group does not understand the importance of multiplication.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The cell group leader must not only give a vision for multiplication, but he or she must also explain <u>why</u> multiplication is so important. The cell group members must understand what benefits there are for the group and for the advancement of the Kingdom of God.</li> </ul>
The group understands the need to multiply, but they are comfortable with each other and do not want to split.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pray that the Holy Spirit will give you wisdom in understanding your group and your unique situation.</li> <li>Stress the importance of multiplication and explain that it is the next step in the natural progression of the life of the group.</li> <li>Demonstrate how multiplication is being obedient to God's command to "go and make disciples" in Mt. 28:19. Through multiplication, your cell group has an important and active role in helping to fulfill the Great Commission.</li> <li>Pray about dividing the group along natural lines, using the cluster concept.</li> </ul>
There is no apprentice leader.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>First, the cell group leader must spend time in prayer, asking the Holy Spirit to give him wisdom about whom to choose. Then, he must purposefully make this choice and begin to disciple and mentor the apprentice.</li> <li>Use clusters in your cell group to possibly identify naturally emerging leaders. Pray about these people as potential apprentice leaders for a new cell group.</li> <li>For guidelines on choosing an apprentice leader, review the Cell Group lesson in Manual 3, "Training New Cell Group Leaders"</li> </ul>
There is disagreement about who goes with which group.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>If your group has several clusters, consider using one or more clusters to start the new group. Consider lines of natural relationships in the group.</li> <li>Ask each group member to pray and ask the Holy Spirit to make it clear to him/her which group to be with.</li> <li>Conduct an open and honest discussion in the cell group meeting to find out the reasons for the lack of unity in this decision.</li> </ul>
The cell group members feel the apprentice is not yet qualified to be a cell group leader.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Wait to start the new group until the apprentice is ready.</li> <li>Involve the apprentice in ALL aspects of ministry with you.</li> <li>Have the apprentice do more and more of the ministry in the group. Have the cell group leader do less and less ministry.</li> <li>Set a new date for the apprentice to become a cell group leader and strive to develop him or her mentally, emotionally and spiritually before that time.</li> </ul>

There can be barriers to multiplication in any cell group, but if the leader thinks about the possible problems beforehand and works proactively to overcome the barriers before they become problems, many of them can be avoided altogether. The most proactive thing which the cell group leader can do is to continually keep the vision and benefits of multiplication before the group from day one.

## QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION, REVIEW AND APPLICATION

- How does multiplication in cell groups help to advance a saturation church planting movement?
- What are “natural clusters” in a cell group? How can they be used to help a group move through the multiplication phase? What can happen when a group is ready to multiply and the members are divided arbitrarily, without consideration for the relationships in the group?
- How can clusters be used to help identify potential new cell group leaders?
- What is the most common barrier to multiplication in a cell group? How can it be overcome?

## ACTION PLAN

- Clusters in a cell group will sometimes just naturally occur. If your groups do not already have clusters in them, consider using them during different parts of the cell group meeting. Do you see any benefits to using clusters in your groups?
- Begin to think about what needs to happen in each of your groups in order to reach the goal of multiplication. Write down five things that you will do in the next three months in order to move your groups closer to multiplication.
- Think about potential barriers to multiplication in each of your groups. What can you do ahead of time to overcome them and to avoid problems when it is time to multiply?
- Develop a plan for multiplication in your groups. Be sure to include your apprentice leaders in this process so that they will also be equipped to plan for the multiplication of their groups. Pray about and include in your plan a multiplication date for each group. Find someone that will hold you accountable to implementing this plan for multiplication.

## SOURCES

- Portions of this lesson were quoted with permission from an article entitled, *Multiplication* by Dan Smith (Small Group Network, 1996. <http://smallgroups.com>).
- Logan, Robert. *Multiplication of Cell Groups*. Old Tappan, NJ: Fleming H. Revell Co., n.d.



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# DISCIPLE MAKING

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DISCIPLE MAKING

6

LESSON

# Disciple Making Workshop

## DISCUSSION OF PRACTICAL ISSUES RELATED TO MAKING DISCIPLES



### Lesson Purpose

The purpose of this lesson is to allow the church planters to interact on all assignments in this track and other practical issues related to disciple making.



### Desired Outcomes

When the content of this lesson has been mastered, each participant should . . .

- Have a broader understanding of practical issues related to disciple making.
- Have a greater respect for the creativity within the Body of Christ for addressing disciple making concerns.
- Have a stronger conviction of the importance of assessment and planning in the disciple making process.
- Have in hand an initial written draft of a plan to disciple the believers to whom he ministers.



### Suggestions to Trainers

Be sure to advise the person responsible for setting up Manual Four training sessions that all trainees must bring their completed Disciple Making Plan to be admitted to Manual Four training. This material will form the basis for discussions held in the first half of this lesson

Also advise the person responsible for coordinating Manual Four training sessions that all trainers should be prepared to participate in a disciple making workshop in the second half of the hour. This question and answer workshop should address practical questions from the church planters. In the event that church planters do not have questions, trainers should be prepared to comment on questions contained in this lesson

Create posters or blank overhead copies of the **Disciple Making Plan** (from Appendix 5A, Manual Three) for completion during large group discussion. This may be needed if the small group discussion is not workable because of poorly completed assignments. It is imperative that trainees work through the process and consider the issues and sequencing of disciple making. In order to make the best use of the time allowed for this session on disciple making, it is important that participants move quickly into small groups of 5 to 8.

For reference purposes, church planters should have in hand their completed **Disciple Making Plans** which they prepared during or after Manual Three training.

## I. SMALL GROUP DISCUSSIONS (1/2 HOUR)

Allow one-half hour for interaction on the process and product of developing a disciple making plan for individuals and fellowships. Appoint someone to steer the discussions, using the following questions as a guideline. Try to include everyone in the discussion.

1. Did you find this exercise practically useful in your ministry? How?
2. How did you determine the order in which you would address issues?
3. What elements of follow-up (skills, concepts, or values) do you believe must be included in the first months of a new Christian's life? Why are these so important? How can \_\_\_\_\_ (pick one of the elements) best be developed in the life of a believer or church?



4. How did you personally become convinced of the importance of \_\_\_\_\_ (issue/truth/skill or concept)?
5. What forms are you most comfortable with?
6. Have you attempted to balance the forms so that one or two are not over-used or ignored?
7. What are you doing to spread out the work of making disciples where you are? How are you preparing "disciple makers"?
8. What will you do next week to move disciples forward in their faith, hope and love?

## **II. DISCIPLE MAKING WORKSHOP (20 MINUTES)**

We can generally expect that the practical realities of ministry, combined with the stimulation of the training environment, will create in church planters a hunger to learn more about how to make disciples. If church planters are reluctant to ask questions, however, the following may serve to whet their appetites.

1. Describe an event, incident or activity in which you were involved early in your Christian life that decisively helped you advance in your walk with Christ.
2. What one nugget of truth would you pass on to those beginning to make disciples?

## **III. CONCLUSION (3 MINUTES)**

This is the last lesson in the disciple making track of church planter training. In this track, we have sought to bring to your attention the strategic importance of disciple making in the church planting process. We've looked at disciple making in terms of basic follow-up and preparing the eternal Bride of Christ. We have seen the goal of disciple making. We have talked about the need to assess the current spiritual condition of an individual or church. We have introduced a tool to plan to meet these needs practically, and created opportunities for you to develop and discuss your own plans.

We encourage you to continue to consider disciple making as a way to reproduce yourself in the lives of others and multiply able workers for reaching your villages, districts, cities and country for Christ.

## **ACTION PLAN**

In light of the discussion during this workshop, review and evaluate the disciple making plans you prepared after Manual Three training for each person you are discipling in your church planting ministry. Make any necessary changes to your plans based on what you learned during this workshop. Remember that the plans you have created are not static – they will and should change with time and with growth on the part of your disciples. Periodically review and update the disciple making plans you have for each of your disciples.

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# STEWARDSHIP

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STEWARDSHIP

1

LESSON

# Introduction to Stewardship

## Lesson Purpose

The purpose of this lesson is to explain the significance of our stewardship before God. All that we have is His. Therefore we are not merely required to give a portion back to Him, but rather to use all that we have for His work and glory.

## Main Points

- The key issue in stewardship is our faithfulness.
- Stewardship extends far beyond our money to include our possessions, our time, our spiritual gifts, etc.

## Desired Outcomes

When the content of this lesson has been mastered, each participant should . . .

- Know the principle of being a steward of God's possessions for Him.
- Understand that values are foundational to stewardship.

## Suggestions to Trainers

Begin the session by asking trainees what things God has given to them. List these things on a chalkboard or overhead transparency.

## I. WHAT IS STEWARDSHIP?

Stewardship is the term used to describe the activity of a steward. A steward was one who controlled the possessions of his master. His role was a very responsible one, and it was vital that he be a person of honest character. The possibilities for theft or misuse of his master's possessions were great.

As we look at the principles concerning the steward we will see that true stewardship involves how we deal with the resources God has entrusted to us. This includes our:

- money
- time
- possessions
- bodies
- families
- ministry

## II. WHY TALK ABOUT STEWARDSHIP? TWO ISSUES

### A. The Issue of Faithfulness

Stewardship is being responsible with what God has given us. From man's first day on earth, we have been stewards of God. Man was created to have dominion over creation (Ge 1:28). The Lord placed Adam in the garden to till and to keep it for Him (Ge 2:15). Although man usually does not understand that he is simply a steward of the Lord's creation, the Scriptures clearly state that the

earth and everything in it belongs to God (1Co 10:26). Whatever we possess is given to us by God to use for His glory. He is watching our faithfulness, and will reward us accordingly.

## B. The Issue of Values

How people relate to the items listed before (in point I) shows where their heart is. As Jesus said "Where your treasure is there will be your heart also." In other words you can tell a lot about a person's heart by the way he treats his money or his valuable things.

Our values are the ideals or things that we think are important in life.

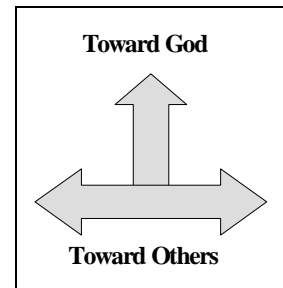
Our values are the ideals or things that we think are important in life. Some people value possessions or comfort. Others value family or service to the community. We literally spend our life and our time on those things that seem essential and vital to us personally. In Matthew 22:37-39 we find what is sometimes called the 'Great Commandment', in which Jesus summarized all of the Bible's values in a two-part statement.

### 1. *Our Highest Value Concerns Relationships with God—"Love the Lord Your God"*

Vertically speaking, we are to serve God. Loving and relating to God is our highest value. Since it is natural for us to spend time with those we love, each believer should spend personal time in study of God's Word and prayer. When we lose personal intimacy with the Lord, we miss God's blessing and lack power in ministry.

Serving God with all our ability is not an emotion for the moment, but a daily decision that involves all our resources. The more efficiently a believer utilizes his time, possessions, etc., the more effective he is in serving his Lord. Personal time with the Lord is something that needs to be planned into a church planter's busy schedule or it just won't happen. A healthy relationship with God is an essential prerequisite before moving on to serving others.

Fig. 1.1



### 2. *Our Other Values Concern Relationships with Others—"Love Your Neighbor As Yourself"*

Horizontally, we are to serve others. The relationship of love we have with God should spill over into love for others. 'Others' includes our families, co-workers, members of the church we belong to, and the lost with whom we share Christ. As stewards we should manage resources so that the needs of these 'others', those God has put in our care, are met.

Church planters are some of the busiest people in a community. Properly managing time, money and other resources will help a church planter be a better servant to others, by enabling purposeful ministry instead of allowing circumstances to control progress.

Before we can discuss stewardship in any more detail, we must check our values. The Great Commandment should be our guide concerning our values and priorities. Are you a person who loves God with all your heart and also loves others as yourself? If this is so, your stewardship should give evidence to that.

## III. STEWARDSHIP PRINCIPLES IN THE BIBLE

There are many examples of stewards in the Bible. Most of the wealthy people had stewards. Rather than personally concern themselves with administering their daily affairs, they would hire a reliable, capable man as a steward. The steward did not have his own possessions. Rather, he was permitted to live in the master's house, eat at his master's table, and clothe himself from his master's possessions. Rather than have his own possessions, the steward had access to all the wealth of his master.

### A. The Meaning of Stewardship

Several words are used in the Bible for the concept of stewardship. Translations vary, but the general meaning is still clear. Some of the terms used are as follows:

1. *Steward (oikonomos<sup>5</sup>)*

This is the most specific word for one who acted as a steward. He was responsible for the administration of his master's wealth. He had great authority in the household. The root of the word 'steward' is the same as the root of 'household.' This person was normally a slave, but was considered reliable enough to be chosen for this important task. This word is used in Luke 12:42, Luke 16:1-3, and 1 Corinthians 4:1.

2. *Overseer (epitropos<sup>6</sup>)*

This term seems to be used when the person is in a position of authority over other people. In Matthew 20:8 he is the paymaster for the workers. In Galatians 4:2 it refers to one who was responsible to tutor a child to maturity.

3. *Slave (doulos<sup>7</sup>)*

The slave belonged to another person. The steward was usually a slave, but not all slaves were called stewards. The slave did not necessarily have any authority over other slaves or over his master's wealth. If he did have this authority, the term 'steward' was appropriate. Examples of slaves who functioned as stewards are found in Matthew 24:45 and Matthew 25:14.

4. *Servant (doulos)*

In many translations, the same word is rendered as both 'slave' and 'servant.' It can carry both meanings. In the Bible times, there were slaves who existed in abject poverty and misery, and there were also servants who led a much better life. However, both belonged to another person, and so the same word was used.

5. *Stewardship (oikonomia<sup>8</sup>)*

Stewardship is the office or function of the steward, rather than the person. When we speak of our stewardship, we are referring to our responsibility to administrate something. Examples of this word are found in Luke 16:2, 1 Corinthians 9:17 and Ephesians 3:2.

The steward was a slave who was entrusted with the authority to administrate and care for his master's wealth.

From the usage of these words, we can form a reasonable picture of what stewardship means. The steward was normally a slave who was entrusted with the authority to administrate and care for his master's wealth, household, fields, business, other servants, or even to tutor his son.

## B. Joseph—An Example of Stewardship

Joseph may be the best example of a good steward. He first managed the household of Potiphar, the Egyptian official who had purchased him as a slave (Ge 39). Although Potiphar was not a believer, he soon saw that God was with Joseph and prospered all that he did. Therefore Potiphar committed all that he had into Joseph's hands, except for his wife (Ge 39:9).

As the steward of Potiphar, Joseph was able to feed and clothe himself from his master's goods. He lived in Potiphar's house and directed both Potiphar's household and his fields. But the story of his temptation by Potiphar's wife clearly shows that Joseph never forgot that all these things belonged to his master and that there were limits to what he could do. He could enjoy the fruits of his labor as long as his master was pleased with his stewardship, and as long as he did not sin against Potiphar.

<sup>5</sup> οἰκονομος

<sup>6</sup> ἐπιτροπος

<sup>7</sup> δουλος

<sup>8</sup> οἰκονομια

Later, Joseph again was made a steward, first of the jailer and then of Pharaoh himself. As steward of Pharaoh, he was the wealthiest man in Egypt after Pharaoh. However his position depended on his faithfulness to administrate the affairs of Pharaoh in a manner that pleased Pharaoh.

### **C. Stewardship in Parables**

Because the steward was so common in biblical times, Jesus used parables about stewards to convey truth about the believer's relationship to God. What is the truth that Jesus wants to communicate to us through the image of the steward?

#### *1. The Good Steward Is Faithful*

In Luke 12:42-48 Jesus teaches that a steward must be faithful even when his master is not present. If his master returns suddenly to find him occupied with his master's business, he will be rewarded. But if he is not prepared for his master's return, he will be dealt with severely. This parallels the situation of the believer. Our Lord is gone, and will return suddenly. We need to be faithful in His absence.

#### *2. The Shrewd Steward Uses His Position to Prepare for the Future*

Jesus told another stewardship parable in Luke 16:1-12. This parable is a bit surprising, since the steward is praised for cheating his master. The parable certainly is not intended to promote dishonesty. Rather, it teaches a very clear message about the wisdom of using the things in our possession now to prepare for the future. The wicked steward realizes that his position is temporary, as is our life on this earth. He decides to use everything in his power to prepare for a good reception for himself when his job is over. Jesus said that he acted more wisely than we often do. We should be using all we have on earth to lay up treasure in heaven.

#### *3. Stewards Will Be Evaluated According to Their Ability*

The parable of the talents in Matthew 25:14-30 is very familiar to us. Each servant is entrusted with money while his master is gone. They are therefore stewards of those talents. However, they are not given equal amounts. Rather, each one received according to his master's evaluation of his ability. When the master returned, he rewarded each one for his faithfulness. The one who was given two talents received exactly the same praise as the one who received five. Only the one who squandered his talent was judged. The key issue was the steward's faithfulness and not the amount of things that he was given.

### **D. The Accounting**

The Apostle Paul also clearly taught that we are stewards of Christ. Church planters and leaders are especially responsible to minister the mysteries of God (1Co 4:1-2; Eph 3:2; Tit 1:7). He also taught that our master is coming back suddenly, at a time when we do not expect him (1Th 5:2). When Jesus returns for His church, He will judge whether we have been faithful in our service for Him (Ro 14:4-12; 2Co 5:10). Each of these passages is specifically addressed to Christians. The fact that Jesus will judge believers is even more clear in 1Corinthians 3:10-15. In that text, Paul describes how fire will test our works, and we will either receive a reward or suffer loss, depending on how we have served. This obviously refers to believers, since even the one who has nothing worthy of reward will be saved (v. 15).

## IV. OUR STEWARDSHIP

### A. Our Money

Most believers know that they should give a portion of their money to the Lord. However, a true understanding of stewardship results in a different attitude. Not only should we give, but we should not waste money nor should we spend it on things that are not pleasing to God. After all, it is His money. We do not have any money. We only have God's money entrusted to us. Either by giving it to the church or by spending it on the things that would please Him, we in essence give it back to God.

We do not have any money. We only have God's money entrusted to us.

### B. Our Time

Our time is perhaps our most precious possession because there is no way we can increase it. We all have a certain number of days which have been given to us by God (Ps 139:16). He expects us to use them for His glory. When Jesus was taken up, the angels rebuked the disciples for standing around looking at the sky (Ac 1:11). They were to get busy with keeping His command to wait for the Holy Spirit and then to take the Gospel to all nations. Paul reminds us to be diligent to live godly lives, as the day of our salvation is drawing near (Ro 13:11-14). He also tells us to make use of every opportunity in these evil days (Eph 5:15-17). God has appointed tasks for each of us to do, and given us a limited time in which to accomplish them (Eph 2:10). We must carefully evaluate how we spend our time to make sure we do all that He desires for us to do.

### C. Our Possessions

Even sincere believers often neglect this area. They may think that God wants a portion of their money, but that is all. If they have a very small monetary income, they may feel they need not give. In reality, the Bible never limits our giving to our money. The Old Testament tithe was normally given from the increase in livestock or crops. A large portion of the sustenance of the New Testament believers would also have been in a form other than cash. God desires for us to give a portion of *whatever* we receive. It may be a salary, potatoes from our garden, milk from our cow, or some other kind of income. The source is not important. God is the ultimate source of all we have, and He expects us to remember that and to honor Him from it.

A large portion of the sustenance of the NT believers would also have been in a form other than cash.

Are you willing to use the possessions God has entrusted to you to please Him and minister to others? The members of the Jerusalem church sold the things they possessed in order to be able to give to those in need (Ac 2:44). We are first introduced to Barnabas in Scripture when he sells his land to give its value to the church (Ac 4:36-37). God richly blessed him and chose him as the companion for the Apostle Paul.

### D. Our Bodies

Few Christians think about this responsibility, but it is important. Our bodies are the temple of the Holy Spirit (1Co 6:19), and are for God's glory. Even though the Bible does not prohibit drinking alcohol, smoking or taking drugs, these things can damage that temple and hinder our ability to serve the Lord. Stewardship of this temple requires that we be careful to avoid that which is harmful to our health. This would also include lack of exercise or sleep, poor diet, or anything else that is harmful.

### E. Our Families

Our families are our greatest gifts from God. If we cannot manage our families well, then we are not qualified to manage the church (1Ti 3:4-5). Our families do not interfere with our ministry. They are to be a part of it, and our family life should prepare us to minister effectively. As we grow in our ability to care for our families and lovingly instruct them in the Word, we learn to more effectively care for and instruct our brothers and sisters in Christ.



## F. Our Ministry

1 Peter 4:10 tells us that all believers are to be faithful stewards of the grace of God by using their spiritual gifts to minister to others. A proper view of ministry will lift a burden from the shoulders of most church leaders. The ministry is God's ministry. It is His work and not ours. We are merely His servants, using His resources to complete the task. If we lack resources, He will supply them. If we are faithful, we will accomplish all that God desires. We need not feel a crushing burden if things are difficult. Rather, we need to wait on the Lord for His direction and strength.

It is imperative that we spend time with God each day. When we are sensitive to the Holy Spirit's leading, we will make better choices, and the ministry will be more effective. Even Jesus felt the need to commune with the Father for wisdom. This is especially evident when He had a major decision to make, such as where to work (Lk 4:42-44) or who to choose as a disciple (Lk 6:12-16). We need the same wisdom. If we never forget that we are merely servants doing God's will, we will listen to Him often.

## V. STEWARDSHIP AND THE CHURCH PLANTER

Good stewardship is extremely important for church planters. They will need to use all their gifts, possessions, time and money well in order to plant a new church. They will also need to understand their responsibilities to care for their bodies and families as they balance them with ministry. They must apply stewardship principles to themselves and teach them to others.

### A. Applied to Themselves

Church planters face a difficult task. They must rescue captives from the hand of a powerful unseen enemy and establish new strongholds for the Lord. They are not capable of such things in their own strength. But they are God's servants using His resources that He has provided for them to accomplish His work. He will provide all that is needed. Their responsibility is to use it carefully. Everything that they do, from giving to use of time, should be weighed in light of their need for His blessing and their role as His stewards.

Your example and consistent teaching will help new believers understand how to be good stewards.

If you have difficulty with stewardship it may be due to a lack of focus. Checking values can help bring focus to life in ministry. Are you characterized as a person who loves God and others? (Mt 22:37-39). Is the way you treat your time, possessions, body, family, ministry, etc. in harmony with this?

### B. Taught to Others

Effective church planting requires the involvement of each member. From the time of their conversion, we need to teach each new Christian about his responsibility as a steward before God. Do not assume that others will learn to be good stewards on their own. **Our example and consistent teaching** will help new believers understand how to be good stewards.

Specifically, new believers should be taught to:

- Give generously from their money and other possessions.
- Find and use their spiritual gifts in ministry to build up the church.
- Give of their time for the ministry to believers and unbelievers alike.
- Care for their families in order to know how to care for other believers.

## CONCLUSION

The Christian is a steward whether he knows it or not. All that we have is the Lord's and we are expected to use it for His glory. This principle applies to all believers—not just to church planters. But church planters have a special responsibility because we are the ones who must demonstrate this principle in our lives and teach it to others. To whom much is given, much will be required.

## **QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION, REVIEW AND APPLICATION**

- What are the resources that God has supplied for you? List them.
- What areas described in point IV are the hardest to manage? Why?
- Can a poor person really give to the Lord? Should he or she? How much?
- What should new Christians be taught concerning stewardship?
- How are values important in the discussion of stewardship?



STEWARDSHIP

LESSON 2

# Financial Stewardship

## ☛ Lesson Purpose

The purpose of this lesson is to show how sacrificial giving and self-supporting churches can enhance church planting success.

## ☛ Main Points

- God desires that we have the faith to give sacrificially to His work.
- Self-supporting churches grow faster than others.

## ☛ Desired Outcomes

When the content of this lesson has been mastered, each participant should

- Understand how being self-supporting helps a church grow and mature.
- Participate in giving to a greater degree, and teach others to do the same.

## ☛ Suggestions to Trainers

Try to avoid a heated debate on the issue of tithing. The main point of this lesson is that we are responsible to use money for God's glory. Focus on that issue, which is relevant no matter what someone believes concerning tithing.

Be alert in the event that some in the training have experience in budgeting and could share it with others.

## I. EXPLORING THE BIBLE

The Bible has a lot to say about money. We have selected the following passages to help us understand God's mind concerning our financial giving.

### A. Tithing in The Old Testament Law

The people of Israel were required to give a tithe, or ten percent of their produce, to the Lord and His work (Lev 27:30-32; Nu 18:23-24). In addition to these required tithes, there were also many other offerings and taxes that are called tithes. A serious Old Testament believer who attempted to keep the Law probably gave somewhere around 28 percent of his income back to God. This consisted mainly of livestock and produce from his fields.

Technical aspects of Old Testament tithing aside, the tithe was a personal spiritual discipline that God promised to respond to. Failure to give the tithe was considered by God to be robbery, since it belonged to Him. God challenged the Israelites to test Him on this, promising to pour out His blessing on those who brought the whole tithe to Him (Mal 3:8-12).

### B. The Free-Will Offering for the Tabernacle

The tithe was by no means the only method for collecting funds in the Old Testament. During the wandering in the wilderness, God instructed Moses to collect a free-will offering from the people to build the tabernacle (Ex 25:1-8). The people gave of their livestock, their personal things, and even their labor in response to this call (Ex 35:4-29). They were not compelled to give but gave willingly.

In fact, they gave far more than was necessary, so that Moses had to ask people to stop giving! (Ex 36:4-7).

### **C. David Models Giving for the Building of the Temple**

David understood sacrificial giving, so much so that he refused to give to God that which cost him "nothing" (1Ch 21:24). King David sacrificially gave of his riches so the temple of the Lord could later be built by his son Solomon (1Ch 29:1-5). David's giving was an inspiring example to others, and after him the leaders of Israel gave (1Ch 29:6-9). David's prayer following this offering indicates his attitude about giving (1Ch 29:10-20). We learn that David gave with a spirit of praise and thanksgiving unto God. David also indicates that riches and wealth—everything belongs to the Lord (1Ch 29:16). Giving is simply an opportunity to return to God a small portion of what He has given. David even wonders out loud how God could allow him such a privilege as giving (1Ch 29:14).

### **D. Giving Out of Poverty**

Jesus praised the widow who gave a tiny amount (Lk 21:1-4). He did this because her two small coins amounted to one hundred percent of her wealth. This event occurred before the church was established at Pentecost. Therefore even before the church age, when there is no question that God required a tithe, the Lord was pleased when believers freely offered more than that amount. It is also clear that He is interested and is watching to see how much we give.

There is another clear principle in this passage. The temple was an expensive building covered with gold (Mk 13:1; Mt 23:16). Certainly the temple did not need the poor widow's money. But Jesus was pleased that she gave it anyway because He considered that she gave it to God rather than to the temple. It did not matter that the religious rulers were hypocrites, or that He knew the Romans would destroy the temple in a few years. We give to God rather than to man. But we give to God through the church.

### **F. The Financing of New Testament Church Leaders**

Spiritual leaders in the New Testament were supported in a variety of means. Jesus and the disciples were supported, in part at least, by the women who traveled with them (Lk 8:1-3). When Jesus sent his disciples to preach the Gospel in Galilee He instructed them to expect to be provided for by those to whom they would minister (Mt 10:10; Lk 10:5-8). As a servant of God, the Apostle Paul had the right to be supported financially by those among whom he ministered just as the Old Testament priests were supported (1Co 9:4-14). Here and elsewhere (1Ti 5:18). Paul encourages churches to support those who minister to them. For his own reasons, Paul did not always exercise his right to receive financial support from those to whom he ministered. For example, Paul received no financial support from the Corinthians, even though he could have requested it (1Co 9:12). Instead, Paul mostly supported himself through tentmaking in order to not be a burden on the church (Ac 8:2,3; 1Co 4:12).

We learn as well that the Philippians gave to Paul's ministry (Php 4:15-20). It is interesting to note that the often repeated phrase "*my God will meet all your needs*" is found in the context of Paul congratulating the Philippians for their giving. Paul knew that God would supply all the needs of the Philippians because they had given generously to his ministry. In other words, God will supply when we have faithfully given.

### **G. The Collection for the Jerusalem Saints**

Paul set out to collect a special offering for the needy saints in Jerusalem who were experiencing a famine. In his first letter to the Corinthian believers he described exactly how the offering should be collected (1Co 16:1-2). He expected every believer to give willingly on the first day of each week (Sunday). No exact percentage was stated. Rather Paul asked for an amount "in keeping with their income."

In Paul's second letter to the Corinthians he again taught on this offering. Second Corinthians 8:1-6 and 9:6-11 contain perhaps the most challenging principles on giving in the New Testament. Paul

begins by using the example of the giving of the Macedonian churches (2Co 8:1-6). They gave generously out of poverty, even more than they could humanly give (trusting God). The Macedonians were inspired by the fact that they had first given themselves to God.

Those who give this way enjoy a wonderful promise from God that He will reward them in proportion to their giving. Indeed, God will generously provide for our needs if we have the faith to give generously to Him (2Co 9:6-11; Lk 6:38).

## II. PERSONAL GIVING

There is an important spiritual principle that runs through the Bible that every Christian should learn. The principle is very simple. In God's economy the ability to give and receive is not restricted to the available resources. In other words every believer, no matter how poor, should give. As explained in the treatment of many passages above, poverty is no excuse. Everyone is to give to God. Furthermore, when God's people give all they can in faith, it is always enough. God uses these gifts in miraculous ways multiplying them several times over. This is illustrated in the story of the widow of Zarephath (1Ki 17:7-16) and in the feeding of the 5,000 (Mk 6:30-44). In both cases, what was given was not much but it was all there was—and that was enough when in God's hands.

In God's economy the ability to give and receive is not restricted to the available resources.

Giving to God's work should be a regular practice of every believer's life. While most Christians are aware of this responsibility, opinions vary as to how much should be given. Is the tithe still required in the church age? If not, how much should we give? Many believe that tithing was a practice prescribed in the Mosaic law which, like the dietary laws, was not carried over to the New Testament (Ro 10:4; Gal 3:25). Others believe that since tithing pre-dated the Mosaic Law (Ge 14:19-20) and Jesus affirmed the practice, though showed concern about the motivation (Mt 23:23), that God expects us to observe the practice today.

All believers who have studied the New Testament passages on giving would probably agree that ten percent, a tithe, might be a good minimum for our giving to the Lord. It would seem that if a percentage was required in the Old Testament, the New Testament believer with his greater understanding of salvation might want to give more.

Regardless of the percentage of income that a believer decides to give, it is important to realize that income does not consist only of cash that is received as wages or salary. If all that we have belongs to the Lord, then a tithe should be given also for other types of income such as crops, livestock, etc. If a person receives little or no cash income, this does not mean that he is somehow exempt from tithing. He has other means by which he lives, and these resources should also be taken into consideration when he brings his tithe to the Lord.

The following principles guide giving for believers:

- Every believer should give.
- Our giving should be in proportion to our income, both cash and non-cash. Imagine if God made your income proportional to your giving!
- We are to give even in our poverty.
- We are to give with generosity and because we desire to – not because someone forces us. Giving must be from a willing heart in order to please God.
- We are to give more than we are able (trusting God).
- Our financial giving should follow the giving of ourselves to God. Giving is a demonstration of devotion to the Lord.
- God rewards us in proportion to our giving. God promises to generously provide for our needs if we have the faith to give generously to Him.

In Malachi, God promised the Israelites that He would open the storehouses of heaven and pour out His blessing if they gave. Today we have the same kind of promise. Stewardship means that all resources that have been entrusted to us belong to God. If we are faithful to give back to Him, then He will bless

us beyond our need. If we forget to whom it belongs, and are stingy with Him, we will miss out on blessings from God. We have no guarantee that the blessing from God will be financial. God may bless the giver spiritually.

### III. LOCAL CHURCH FINANCES

One of the responsibilities of the church is to handle the tithes and offerings of God's people with care and integrity.

#### A. Self-Supporting Churches

The tithe in the Old Testament enabled the temple, and later the synagogues, to support themselves financially. When all households gave 10% then, even with as few as 10 families, a new household, the household of God, could be established. With this in mind, it has been a Jewish custom to build a synagogue in any city that has 10 or more Jewish families.

Whatever one believes about tithing in the New Testament, the principle behind tithing, that a church can and should support itself, remains true. With the exception of the offering to Jerusalem due to a famine, it was normal in the New Testament for each church to take care of its own financial needs. For example, Paul told the Galatians to support their own teachers (Gal 6:6). He told Timothy to teach churches to care for their poor and widows (1Ti 5:3-10), and to pay their teachers of God's word (1Ti 5:18).

Churches which take the responsibility to support themselves tend to grow and multiply faster.

Research will show that churches who take the responsibility to support themselves tend to grow and multiply faster than those which do not. There are several advantages to self support:

##### 1. *Self Support Develops Maturity*

Dependency on others outside the local church can lead to a poor sense of dignity and lack of opportunity to develop. However, when a church supports its own ministry and manages its finances, it develops maturity through the decisions that come with such a responsibility.

##### 2. *Self Support Builds Responsibility*

It is common for a worker who receives funds from another church or agency to feel more responsible to those who pay his salary than to the church he ministers to. In such a situation, needs can go unmet as the leader focuses on the needs of his "employer" rather than the needs of the flock. The opposite is likely to be true as well. Church members may not feel responsible for the needs of their leaders and may take the leaders for granted. For whatever reason, givers tend to feel a sense of ownership for the things they give to (Mt 6:19-21). In other words, people highly value what they invest in. It is essential that local people own the ministry of the church for it to flourish in their community.

##### 3. *Self Support Exercises Faith*

Self-support may bring many trials and difficulties. However, the trials are opportunities to grow in faith (1Pe 1:6-7, Jas 1:3-4). Self-support really is a faith issue. The absence of self-support is often not due to poverty, but is due to lack of faith. There are examples of both poor people who are able to support their own churches, as well as people with riches who expect outsiders to support their church. The question is "Will God provide for His people or won't He"? People of faith will answer that affirmatively. Is it wise to pray for God's provision and not be willing to be the answer to that request? Obviously it is not wise. To do so would be "faith without works." However, when God's people give sacrificially and with faith, believing that God is faithful, God gives back in ways that they could not have imagined.

##### 4. *Self Support Improves Testimony to the Lost*

When a church is supported by foreign funds then the perception is that the faith proclaimed by the church is a foreign faith. This often hinders the community witness. This is especially true for salaries. When people receive salaries from a foreign source they may be considered

hired salesmen instead of true believers with an authentic faith. On the other hand, when members of the church support the ministry sacrificially there can be little doubt about their loyalty.

If a church expects outsiders to pay the bills, will they also expect outsiders to evangelize the community?

5. *Self Support Allows for Unlimited Growth*

When funds come from an outside source then there is nearly always a limit to the funds. Often the system requires investing resources to promote the ministry to potential supporters. In other words, it costs money to receive money. There is also the fear that funds could be cut off at any time. The result is that there is a limit to how much money can be received, and the church does not grow. On the other hand, in a self-supporting church where people are taught to give, funds will increase as new people are won to Christ and incorporated into the church. As the church grows the giving increases so that there is no limit on what can be done.

When a butterfly is born it must endure a great struggle to escape from the cocoon. A well meaning observer may wish to help the butterfly out of the cocoon. But if he does, he actually hinders the growth and development of the butterfly so that the butterfly is likely to die soon after emerging from the cocoon. According to God's design, the exercise of climbing out of the cocoon is just the exercise needed to develop the strength necessary for life as a butterfly.

The same can be true of a new church. If it does not learn to support itself early on, it may remain dysfunctional forever, never learning the joy and strength of self-support. Each new church should have the opportunity to mature in its own faith and follow God's plan of support and growth.

**B. Managing Church Finances**

Managing finances in the church must be seen not as normal business or administration, but as a spiritual ministry.

1. *Teach Systematic Giving*

Whatever you believe about tithing, emphasize the joy of giving, not the law of tithing! Biblical giving, whether a tithe or not, is an act of faith, a symbol that all one has belongs to God. When people give willingly they often give more and receive a greater blessing.

Leaders should give as an example to others. Recall how King David's giving was an example to other leaders and to the whole nation of Israel (1Ch 29:1-20). The pastor or church planter who does not emphasize giving in order not to appear greedy does not do others any favor. He deprives his people of the privilege of participating in the ministry, and the church loses the resources that God in His wisdom has provided.

Lack of stewardship can also hinder the planting of other churches. Small groups of even ten families who are giving ten percent or more of their income can easily support a pastor at the same level at which they live. However, if they do not understand their responsibility to give, the church planter will need to find resources elsewhere that could be used to plant another new church. It should be clear that this is not pleasing to the Lord, who wants us to saturate our countries with churches and disciples and thus fulfill the Great Commission.

The pastor or church planter who does not emphasize giving in order not to appear greedy does not do others any favor

2. *Develop an Acceptable System for Expenses*

Christians around the world have different methods for managing church finances. Regardless of the method, it is important that Church leaders estimate the cost (Lk 14:28-30) in planning for ministry. Many churches, taking this responsibility seriously, write a budget which is simply an estimate of how much money will be needed for a certain period of time. A budget might include expected expenses for the following:

- Administration/planning



- Charitable ministries
- Discipleship/training ministries
- Evangelism
- Facilities/equipment
- Missions
- Salaries
- Worship

Budgets may be written (perhaps annually) by those who handle the finances (finance committee) but should be approved by the spiritual leaders of the fellowship. Budgets should be written prayerfully with ministry goals in focus.

3. *Train and Release the Church Treasurer*

People will hesitate to give if they feel that the money will not be managed well. The guidelines in (Figure 2.1) are suggestions for managing finances in a responsible, honest fashion.

In your ministry you may or may not choose to write a budget. You may not choose to use the guidelines suggested. The important thing is not the form, but the function. A system for collecting and distributing funds should include: several people, prayerful planning, accountability, regular collecting, careful record keeping, and regular reporting.

#### IV. FINANCING AND CHURCH PLANTING MOVEMENTS

Church planting movements normally require finances to support ministry at a variety of levels, from the local mobilization level to the infrastructure at the highest levels. People must be trained and mobilized, material must be produced and disseminated, leaders must meet to pray and sharpen vision, research must be done, churches must be planted. All this requires finances. Where do these finances come from?

Since the advance of the Gospel requires funding, giving is an important component of church planting movements. A movement is driven by faith, and people of faith give or their faith is dead. Jesus described a spiritual mystery related to financial giving when he said, "*For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also*" (Mt 6:21). As a person gives financially and substantially *according to one's means*, the person becomes committed in the heart to their investment. If someone saves money and pours it into a house, or a car, or education—whatever they paid for—this is what they will treasure and love. The same will happen if someone gives to advance the Gospel from a heart of love for Jesus. Giving to God's work increases a person's interest in it *from the heart*, transforming them inwardly and outwardly.

Those who are involved in a movement must be willing to give sacrificially to it, or the movement has no heart-felt following. Something very powerful happens when people decide that a ministry or program is *theirs* and that its success or failure depends on God's work through them alone. Foreign financial support can help church planting movements, but in the long run foreign support means the agenda is set by outsiders. In essence then it belongs to someone else. This can kill a movement.

### Figure 2.1 Guidelines for Managing Tithes and Offerings

- Offerings should be received and accounted for by at least two members of the church.
- Accurate records should be kept detailing the amounts given at all offerings.
- All persons who count offerings should sign their names, indicating that the amount is correct.
- A finance committee of at least three members should be responsible for overseeing the disbursements of the offerings according to the guidelines established by the official church leaders.
- A treasurer should be appointed from the membership to keep a careful record of all church funds. The treasurer should keep church money in a safe place for future use.
- Offerings that are given for specific purposes should be used for only that purpose.
- Annual financial reports showing what was received and how it was disbursed should be made available to all members.

Is it possible for movements to be sustained by local financial support? The answer, as you might expect, is *"Yes, it is possible."* Where people have a burning vision and driving faith for church planting movements, God provides the resources, as can be testified to by believers around the world. India, one of the poorest nations in the world by most economic standards has several examples. The Friends Missionary Prayer Band is an indigenous movement that supports 1,000 Indian missionaries and has 30,000 prayer supporters. The ministry operates without outside funding. Instead, 10 members of a prayer band support their own evangelist.

### CONCLUSION

In God's design, individuals as well as churches are to develop in maturity and faithfulness before God. Remaining in a state of dependency does not promote the maturity and faith that is necessary for the mission God has given to us. Many believers find it difficult to trust God with financial matters. But God invites us to put Him to the test in this area. If you find it difficult to give to God's work then bring that before the Lord. He will prove faithful.

### QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION, REVIEW AND APPLICATION

- Are you willing to give above your means, like the Macedonians?
- What should new Christians be taught concerning giving?
- Do you determine the amount of your tithe based on your cash income only, or also on other resources with which God has blessed you?
- How would you explain giving to a non-Christian who thinks that churches only ask for money?
- What effect does outside funding have on a local church?

### ACTION PLAN

- Record your income from all sources (including non-cash) and your giving for a week or a month. This is between you and God. Calculate what percentage you give to Him. Are you pleased with this? Is He?
- Divide your church's total offerings for a month by the number of adults represented to find the average monthly giving per adult. Multiply that figure by ten to see how much each adult would have to live on each month if their giving really represented a tithe. How do you think your church is doing? Do they need more instruction in this area? If so, develop a plan to teach them. Remember that the purpose of this is to help them understand stewardship, and not to enact a legalistic requirement of giving which you will enforce. God loves those who give freely.

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STEWARDSHIP

3

LESSON

# Time Management

## Lesson Purpose

The purpose of this lesson is to demonstrate the importance and wise use of time from a biblical standpoint and to acquaint church planters with basic principles for using their time effectively.

## Main Points

- Keeping a time log can help the church planter wisely evaluate the use of his most precious asset—his time.
- Writing a schedule is another helpful time management technique.

## Desired Outcomes

When the content of this lesson has been mastered, each participant should

- Understand the biblical principles regarding time management.
- Know the principle of the importance of time and the need to take steps to use time wisely in all areas of life.
- Participate in using a tool that can help the church planter make better use of time.

## Suggestions to Trainers

It is highly recommended that the trainer begin preparing for this lesson far enough in advance in order to go through the “Practical Implementation” section himself. In short this lesson will take on much more significance if the trainer has personal and practical experience with this exercise. Take time to share your experience of successes/failures in tabulating and analyzing your schedule, as well as your goal setting, plus any new daily schedules that result from your working through this exercise. The more personal you can make this lesson the more impact it will have on those you are training.

## INTRODUCTION

There doesn't seem to be enough time in a day to accomplish all that is demanded. Your spouse says you need to spend more time at home with the children. New believers need some quality time to be discipled. A future leader of a cell group needs to see you. There are always those who are sick and need a visit. And don't forget about preparation time for the Bible studies and the Sunday sermons. The list of tasks, those time consumers, goes on and on. And don't forget about time for God. And what about time for yourself? You need time to contemplate your walk with God, your goals in life, your ministry and where it is headed. You also need time to rest.

**TIME:** A gift that God has given to each of us. It is a valuable resource; once it has been spent it is unredeemable. As a resource, time needs to be used wisely with a constant view to eternity. Proper time management can help you (with the Lord's help) control your time rather than time controlling you. We recognize that most research on time management is done from a Western perspective, and all the practices may not be able to be applied in your culture. But, to the extent that you can apply them, we believe you will find them helpful. This lesson will provide guidelines as to where you should spend your time and offer a practical way to manage your time in a way that honors God.

Proper time management can help you control your time rather than time controlling you.

## I. ESTABLISHING PRIORITIES—LEARNING HOW TO MANAGE TIME

Time management is largely an issue of values or, more specifically, *priorities*. Clearly understood priorities should be the basis for organizing time. *Priorities enable life and ministry to have purpose instead of a situation where circumstances control progress.* In essence, this lesson is all about establishing priorities in life and ministry.

### A. Biblical Principles for Managing Time

- Your life belongs to God; make Him the Master of your time (Ps 24:1; Jos 24:15).
- Time is a limited resource—use it wisely (Eph 5:15-17). Serve with a sense of urgency and with an awareness that your life may end at any moment (Ps 39:4-5).
- Set priorities and make time commitments based upon your God-given talents and gifts (1Pe 4:10; Pr 16:3). Time should be used appropriately (Ecc 3:1-8).
- Genuine stewardship of time results in bountiful blessings from the Lord (Mt 6:20; Ps 37:23-24).
- Use of time communicates a clear message about your real values (Eph 5:15-17).

### B. Priorities for the Church Planter

Time management is, in part, an issue of commitment. How one treats his time shows what he is committed to—even what he loves. If your schedule is such that you cannot spend time with people who need you, then it may show a lack of commitment to them. Commitment to others should be evident in the way we spend time.

Our love for God and others (Mt 22:37-39) should affect our time management. Specifically the following four priorities can be used to guide our time management.

#### 1. *Daily Time of Devotion and Prayer with God*

Fellowship with God should be your number one priority. Serving others in a right way is impossible without God's presence and power that comes from personal time with Him.

#### 2. *Time with the Family (1Ti 3:4-5; Tit 1:6)*

Time spent with family is valuable time. The quality of a church planter's family is directly related to his qualifications for ministry in the context of a church. Make family time a priority.

#### 3. *Ministry Activities Related to a Church Planting Ministry (Eph 4:11-13)*

You have a responsibility to evangelize, disciple, train and release others. The key to all these activities is developing relationships, which requires time. You will also need to prioritize time for Bible studies, sermon preparation, office administration, counseling, etc.

#### 4. *Ministry within the Community or Community Outreach (Mt 28:19-20, Ac 1:8)*

Church planting is an evangelistic activity. You must be out in the community among those you are evangelizing.

## II. PRACTICAL IMPLEMENTATION

### A. Log Your Current Use of Time

The most practical way to schedule your time is to first record how you spend your time each day over the period of one week. What do you do with your time? Use the table (Figure 3.1) following to write down, hour by hour, everything you do each day. This will help you determine your priorities. This is not an exercise to do everyday of your life, but rather is a tool to determine whether your actual use of time matches your priorities.

**Figure 3.1 Time Log**

<b>TIME LOG</b>							
	<b>Sun</b>	<b>Mon</b>	<b>Tue</b>	<b>Wed</b>	<b>Thur</b>	<b>Fri</b>	<b>Sat</b>
<b>6:00</b>							
<b>7:00</b>							
<b>8:00</b>							
<b>9:00</b>							
<b>10:00</b>							
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<b>23:00</b>							
<b>24:00</b>							

After filling out the time log in figure 3.1, categorize your activities. Use the table in figure 3.2 as a guide. Note that the list in this table is not exhaustive. You may want to develop your own categories that are appropriate to your own lifestyle.

**Figure 3.2 Use of Time Analysis**

USE OF TIME ANALYSIS	
<b>Instructions:</b> Based on the information you recorded on the time log, group your time usage into several main categories. Record the total number of hours spent for each category.	
Category	Total hours
1. <u>Morning routine.</u> Note how much time it takes to get dressed, eat, etc.	
2. <u>Daily devotions.</u> Note when and how much time you spend in daily devotions.	
3. <u>Spouse.</u> How much time do you spend with your mate? (for example: spending quality, one-on-one time reading together, praying together, etc.)	
4. <u>Family.</u> How much time you spend with your family (family devotions, helping children with homework, playing games, walking, etc.).	
5. <u>Ministry.</u> How you spend your day at your office or church (sermon preparation, phone calls, meetings, home, hospital visitation, etc.)	
6. <u>Meals.</u> When and where you have your meals and with whom.	
7. <u>Evening routine.</u> What you do each evening (Bible studies, evangelistic campaigns, hobbies, etc.)	
8. <u>Sleep.</u> When you retire for bed. Do you get enough sleep each night?	
9. <u>Other.</u>	

## B. Analyze Your Use of Time

Now that you can see clearly how you spend your time, your priorities will become evident. There is not a direct proportion between the measure of priorities and the amount of time spent, but there is a general correspondence. For example, if your spouse is a high priority and you do not spend any special time with him or her, then time needs to be rearranged to be sure that your relationship is a real commitment.

Ways to improve the use of your time should now be more obvious. Look at your time log (figure 3.1) and your time usage analysis (figure 3.2) and answer the following questions to identify patterns:

- What activities do you do repeatedly?
- Are you giving priority to the most important areas of your life?
- Are there any consistent blocks of wasted time?
- What specific changes would you like to make in your schedule?

You should be able to identify your current priorities: in other words, the major roles and responsibilities in your life. List the things that are most important to you in the following space:

Does your analysis of your use of time reflect these priorities? What adjustments would you like to make?

### C. Write a Realistic Schedule

Using the Time Log (figure 3.1) again plan your schedule for the next week, based on your priorities as well as what you have learned from the prior week's observations. If you feel that there were certain elements missing from your activities, then make time for them. It would be best to make changes to your normal schedule in small increments.

1. *Choose at least one priority and schedule specific time to meet that priority. Note these examples.*

#### **Example #1**

PRIORITY: *My relationship with the Lord.*

GOAL: *Arise one hour early three mornings each week to pray. This may mean going to bed one hour earlier to ensure the proper amount of sleep.*

#### **Example #2**

PRIORITY: *My relationship with my spouse.*

GOAL: *Arrange a special time every week devoted exclusively to one another.*

2. *Eliminate those things which are not an efficient use of time or a priority.*

Are you doing things that other people in the church are both more qualified and willing to do? Learn to disciple people and delegate responsibility to them. Help others discover and use their spiritual and natural giftedness. Guide them in their ongoing development as leaders. Delegating tasks to those under your leadership will not only save you time, but will help them mature in their Christian life.

3. *Schedule family time.*

Time spent with your family is very valuable. The quality of a church planter's family is directly related to his qualifications for ministry in the context of a church (1Ti 3:4-5).

4. *Schedule ministry activity*

This includes time for study, evangelistic outreach, church administration, discipleship, leadership training, prayer events, visitation, etc.

5. *Schedule a rest time.*

Keep in mind that you are not wasting time when you are resting. Rest will ensure better health and more energetic ministry throughout the entire day. You may need to take a nap in the middle of the day to have energy for a ministry that often ends late in the evening. You



also need to prayerfully and carefully consider scriptural commands to have a day of rest. As a church planter your Sunday (the typical "day of rest") will be a very intense day for you. Many pastors who face the same dilemma choose a different day, such as Monday, as their "day of rest."

6. *Strive for balance in your week.*

If you have a heavy schedule one day, schedule a lighter day the next day.

#### **D. Review Your Progress**

Your skill in making better use of time will improve as you practice these steps. You may want to make yourself accountable to someone regarding the goals you have set. If you really want to learn to manage your time in order to be a better steward, then you will take whatever steps are necessary to bring about the desired change. Consider placing in your schedule a regular time with someone whom you respect and who has agreed to make himself available to you. Mutual accountability and fellowship will be very valuable to your entire life.

### **CONCLUSION**

It is not a sin to plan, to manage your time, to schedule your day, week, year and even your life. In fact, it is just the opposite. Proper time management can increase ministry effectiveness and honor the Lord. The potential for sin is there if we minimize the importance of relationships in our managing of time. Time is a resource but an unhealthy focus on time can destroy relationships rather than build them. Be careful of extremes. Seek to be balanced in this area.

You are well aware that church planters, by the very nature of their work, are very busy people. Time management will help you, as a church planter, to be more effective. There is an old proverb that can sum up the subject of time management: "IF WE FAIL TO PLAN, WE PLAN TO FAIL!" Periodically evaluating your use of time, using the exercises in this lesson, can help you make sure that you are using your time wisely.

If we fail to plan, we plan to fail!
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We all want to hear from our Lord one day, "Well done, good and faithful servant." It is our hope that this lesson will assist you to achieve the "well done" in your life and ministry.

### **QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION, REVIEW AND APPLICATION**

- Read Luke 10:38-42. Note the priorities of Mary and Martha. How do these verses relate to this lesson? Which of these people are you most like?
- Read Luke 4,6,9,11. Note how Jesus set aside time to pray. Do you do this as well? Do you pray with your spouse on a regular basis regarding your life and ministry?
- A careful reading of Luke 9:51-62 shows that Jesus had a certain task that he had to accomplish within a certain period of time. What was that task? Did the importance of this task have any effect on his relationship with people? Do you think that he purposely planned for extra time in this task so that he could continue to focus on relationships?
- Read Exodus 18 and note how Moses solved his time management problem.
- Read the parable of the talents found in Matthew 25:14-30. Replace the word "talent" with the word "years" and your name for that of the first servant who received five talents. You have received five years from the Lord. Share how you have invested the Lord's time for which He praises you and that ultimately brings Him glory.

### **ACTION PLAN**

- Read the book of Nehemiah and look for instances where Nehemiah demonstrated any elements of time management which have been brought out in this lesson.

- Begin to tabulate your daily activities for one week. Analyze the results and then set a goal to implement a change in time usage. Tell either your spouse or a close friend what your goal is and keep that person updated on your progress in achieving your goal.
- Develop a plan to decrease your time involvement in some aspect of your ministry by delegating it to others. Share this goal with someone and keep them updated on your progress.



STEWARDSHIP

4

LESSON

# Strategic Planning Process

## Lesson Purpose

The Purpose of this lesson is to introduce trainees to a practical method of strategic planning which can be used for any phase of ministry and will allow them to prioritize and link ministry activities to their ministry purpose.

## Main Points

- Strategic planning is a process.
- Strategic planning is a tool to help you stay focused on your ministry purpose.
- If you fail to plan, you plan to fail.

## Desired Outcomes

When the content of this lesson has been mastered, each participant should

- Understand how to develop a strategic plan for a church planting ministry.
- Know how to define objectives and set measurable goals.
- Participate in the process of preparing a strategic plan for a church-planting ministry.

## I. WHAT IS STRATEGIC PLANNING?

Strategic planning is a means to help the church planting team be most efficient and effective in their work of church planting. It is a process by which church planting team members link themselves, their families, their ministries – everything – to the strategic “Z” that they have identified for their church planting ministry. After working through a strategic plan, the church planting team should be able to understand and differentiate between “best” activities – those which will take saturation church planting work farther, faster – and “good” activities – those activities which have a place in church life but do not rapidly bring an entire region to the knowledge of Jesus Christ. Strategic planning helps the team to define its direction, its organization and its resources to accomplish specific activities toward reaching “Z.” Strategic planning is not about being better organized; it is about living purposefully, focusing our time and energy on the “best” activities of what God is calling us to do: to see our regions filled with living churches.

### Biblical Examples of Strategic Planning

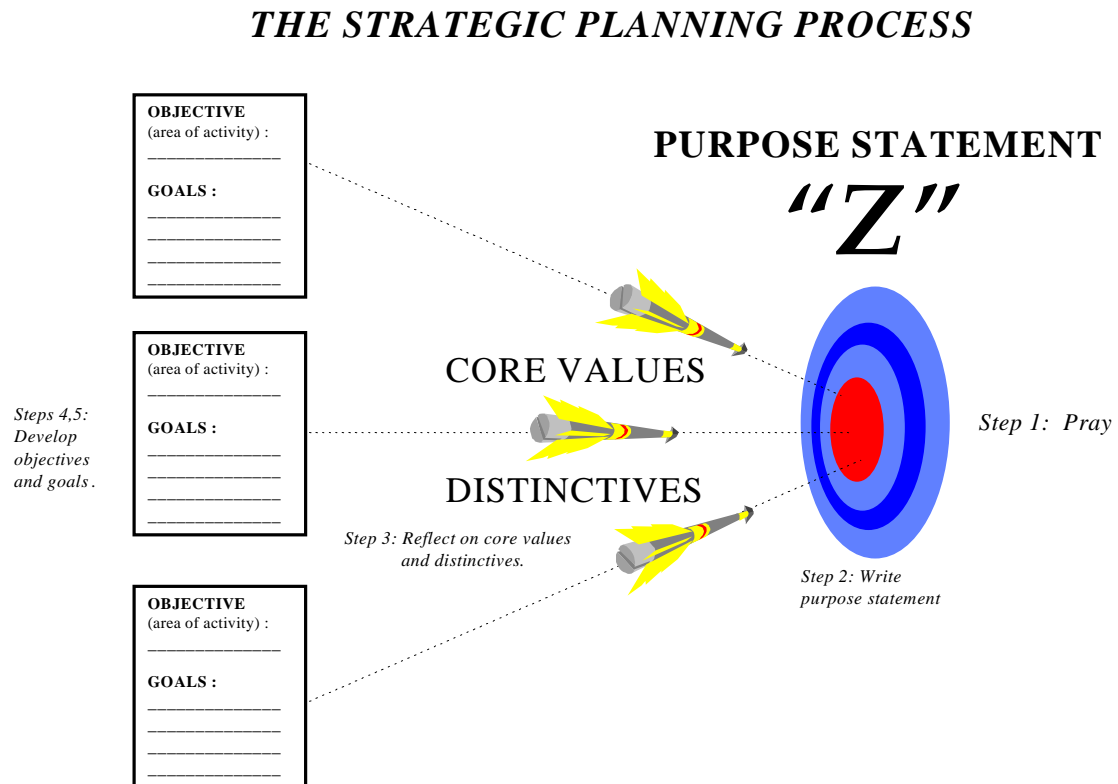
In both the Old Testament and New Testament, strategic planning is evident.

- Joseph, with God-given wisdom, developed and implemented a plan to save the Egyptians and surrounding nations from starvation during seven years of famine (Ge 41).
- Nehemiah surveyed the destruction of the city of Jerusalem and developed and implemented a plan for rebuilding the city wall in spite of many obstacles and risks.
- Jesus’ life and ministry reflect that He had a very definite purpose and definite means to fulfill that purpose. For example, Jesus confidently directed His steps toward the cross (Mt 16:21-23). He focused His ministry on the 12 disciples and among the Jewish people.

## II. THE STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS

Strategic planning is a multi-step process and contains five major components: purpose statement, core values, distinctives, objectives and goals. Together they comprise a strategic plan. This plan is developed and updated regularly according to the process outlined below. Planning should not be done without much prayer before and during the planning process. Church planting is spiritual work and so requires a dependency on God for wisdom and to have the mind of Christ (Jas 1:5-7; 1Co 2:16). The strategic planning process is best done at least by two persons.

**Figure 4.1 The Strategic Planning Process**



It is important to remember that the resulting strategic plans are not unchangeable. Rather, they are a working plan of what you and your team see as the best activities to do, at this moment in time, in order to progress towards your strategic "Z." As you begin to implement the activities identified in your plan, you may recognize other issues or concerns which might cause a modification to your strategic plan. That is why it is important to review your strategic plan on a regular basis. A plan is only useful if it helps you to live more purposefully and keep your ministry focused on the most important activities.

### A. Step 1: Pray

With your church planting team, pray for wisdom and clarity of vision from God. Ask God to guide and direct your planning time, to help you to listen to one another, and to have the "mind of Christ" in your planning. In addition, enlist several friends to pray for your team as you work through the process.

## B. Step 2: Write or Review Your Purpose Statement

The purpose statement is the foundation of your planning. Review the region you have targeted for your ministry, whether a neighborhood, a village, a city, a county, or a country. Review also the kind of ministry which God has called you to do – church planting, prayer mobilization, literature distribution—based on your targeted region and your ministry.

Review the purpose statement you prepared earlier for your ministry. If you haven't done this yet, then write your purpose statement. Your purpose statement should be only one or two sentences and should answer the question, "Why does our team (or group) exist?" and should reflect both your target region and your ministry.

Some examples of purpose statements are:

- This team exists to enable evangelicals to fill Romania with reproducing congregations. (National church planting facilitation team).
- This team exists to fill this county with reproducing churches. (Church planting team).
- This team exists to assist local prayer ministries in this city to pray together and to more prayerfully support the work of church planting in the city. (Prayer team).

Have the recorder write the purpose statement on the chalkboard (or paper) so that you can look at it collectively. With your team take time to review this purpose statement and ask yourself the following questions:

- Does this statement still reflect our purpose, or has it changed?
- Is this statement in agreement with our core values and distinctives? If not, what do we need to change to make it agree?
- Is the purpose statement clear and concise?
- Does the purpose statement define our "Z" – the target region or people group we are trying to reach and the type of ministry we are called to do?

If necessary, make changes to your purpose statement in answer to the above questions. Keep the finalized purpose statement in front of the team to refer to during the rest of the planning process.

## C. Step 3: Reflect on Core Values and Distinctives

**Core values** are the fundamental, biblically based concepts that you are committed to and highly esteem. As you and your team determine what your core values are, the only way to be on safe ground is to base each value on Scripture. These values will help you clarify what you do and what you do not do. Any strategies which you develop that are not in line with your core values are either likely to fail or to be destructive.

*Some examples of core values are:*

- *Local Church:* We believe that the local church is God's primary instrument for evangelism and nurture, i.e. the main method He uses for doing His work.
- *Multiplication:* A multiplication model, rather than an addition model, is the only church-reproducing model which can ever reach the goal of whole-nation disciple-making.
- *Servant-Leadership:* We believe servant-leadership should be developed by empowering and releasing gifted people.
- *Accountability:* As a team we believe we must be mutually accountable to each other, to a local church, and to our leaders. We believe that through our accountability to these groups, we can maintain a close relationship with our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.
- *Integrity:* We are committed to the following ethical values as we conduct ourselves in this work: excellence, honesty, integrity in finances...

**Distinctives** are the things that make you unique. They help to define your identity. They reveal what you are known for and how you relate to others. They may provide boundaries that affect cooperation with others, positively or negatively. They should protect you from going off in directions away from your purpose.

Some examples of distinctives are:

- We work only among Muslim people.
- We focus our efforts on training trainers of church planters.
- We seek to cooperate with all evangelical denominations and organizations working in our target area.

**Identify the core values and distinctives of your ministry team.** This is a good activity for brainstorming. Have team members say what they think are the values and distinctives of the team. The recorder should write down every idea that is shared. Next, take a look at the list. Evaluate the values and distinctives which were named during the brainstorming activity. Do they reflect biblical values? Does the team agree that this is a value or distinctive of your team? Cross out or rework any values or distinctives which are not representative of your team. Have the recorder write out a finalized list of core values and distinctives on large paper so that they can be kept in mind during the rest of the strategic planning process.

#### **D. Step 4: Identify Your Objectives**

Once you have identified your purpose, your core values and distinctives, the next step is to identify your objectives. Objectives answer the general question, "What will you do?" What are the major thrusts of your ministry? What are the general directions in which your team will direct its efforts? Objectives are the general categories of activities you will be involved in as you work toward fulfilling your purpose. Some examples of objectives for a church planting ministry are:

- Research the target region and people
- Mobilize prayer for church planting
- Evangelize
- Train and mentor leaders for the emerging church
- Train and mentor other church planters
- Develop reproducing cell groups
- Mobilize other churches in the region for church planting

This is a good activity for brainstorming as follows:

- Ask the team, "What areas will we continue to concentrate our energies on over the next three years?"
- Have team members say what they think the team's objectives are. The recorder should write down every idea that is shared.
- Next, take a look at the list. Evaluate the objectives which were named during the brainstorming activity. Do they agree with your purpose statement, core values and distinctives? Cross out or rework any objectives which do not help you fulfill your purpose statement or are not reflective of your values and distinctives.
- Prioritize this list and cut it down to no more than seven objectives. Most teams or individuals usually cannot work on more than seven different objectives at a time.
- Have the recorder write out a finalized list of objectives on large paper with space so that goals can be added.

#### **E. Step 5: Set Goals**

In goal setting, you actually define the specific steps you will take in a specified time period (three months, six months, one year...) to achieve your objectives. While objectives are general in nature, goals are specific in nature. Goal-setting helps you move from fire fighting to fire prevention – from simply responding to the urgent to managing the important. Defining specific, clear, measurable goals will allow you to think through the steps, A, B, C...which eventually reach "Z," your purpose. A goal that is well written can be taken by any person and explained perfectly to someone else, even

though that person had nothing to do with the writing of the goal. Good goals have the following characteristics:

- **Time Limit.** A good goal needs to have a definite time limit for its completion. The amount of time will depend on what you consider necessary for finishing the task. If you are doing strategic planning on an annual basis, the maximum time limit for completing your goals should be within the next year. EXAMPLE: By the END OF JUNE...
- **Able to be Accomplished.** A good goal will make the person "stretch" in order to accomplish the task. At the same time it will not put the task outside the reach of the person. If goals are unattainable, there will always be a hesitancy to even try to accomplish the goal. EXAMPLE: PREPARE THREE INDUCTIVE BIBLE STUDIES...
- **Measurable.** A good goal will include a way to measure as to whether or not the goal has been reached. There are many ways to measure: by writing, by speaking, by performing some task, by observing certain things...If you do not have a measuring device, then there is no way to know if or when the goal is attained. EXAMPLE: LEAD THE PREPARED STUDIES IN MY CELL GROUP...
- **Clear Language.** A good goal will use clear, precise language to communicate what is the precise task to be accomplished. Many times words like "know" and "understand" are used in writing goals, but these words are open to many interpretations. For example, how many ways are there to "know" something? We know things by our senses, so there are at least five ways to "know." If "knowing" is qualified by "how," then it might be permissible to use. Again, how can you measure "understanding"? Words need to be chosen carefully to make sure they convey what was intended.

**Example Goal**

By the end of June I will prepare and lead a series of three inductive Bible studies in my cell group on the theme of "The Great Commission and Church Planting in our City."

It is quite common for there to be several specific goals for each objective. While your team might decide on four or five main objectives, you might end up with ten or more specific goals that will help you reach your objectives. You will need to determine how many goals need to be set for each one of your objectives to be effectively met. You should answer the following questions as you work on your goals:

- What measurable thing(s) will we do this year toward accomplishing this objective?
- How will we accomplish these things?
- How will we measure our success?
- What will happen if this goal is not reached? (This will help you evaluate the priority of the goal.)
- What advice, resources, or training do we need to accomplish this goal?
- What obstacles or problems need to be overcome to achieve this goal? (This will help you to evaluate how realistic is your goal.)
- Who will work on this goal? When should it be finished? How will you know when you have accomplished this goal? (Unless someone takes responsibility for the goal, it will not get implemented.)
- Who can help us to be accountable for our goals?

The recorder should write down the team goals for each objective along with the projected completion date and the responsible party.

When you have completed the above exercise, you will have finished the strategic planning process. You now have in your possession a ministry purpose statement, a listing of your core values and distinctives, your overall objectives, and your specific goals. Use this "document" as a starting point for future strategic planning sessions with your team (group).



## **CONCLUSION**

- A strategic plan is useful only if it is seen as a working document and reviewed on a periodic basis. If you have goals which have short deadlines, you may want to review your strategic plan quarterly, but definitely semi-annually or annually. Usually your purpose statement, core values, and distinctives do not change. They are the foundations of what God has called you and your team to do. Until that purpose is fulfilled, it remains the same. However, as you continue to work towards your purpose, and your understanding of it grows, you may find yourself refining your purpose.
- The objectives and the goals are tools to help you keep focused on achieving your purpose. They help you to prioritize your work, to concentrate on the important activities God has called you to do, and to think through practically what must be done in order to achieve your purpose.
- Finally, you must remember that no plan is perfect. It is a guide to help you stay on the right track. The best-laid plans are nothing if the Lord is not in your work. As the writer of Proverbs reminds us, "Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make your paths straight" (Pr 3:5-6).

## **QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION, REVIEW AND APPLICATION**

- What is the difference between strategic planning and being well organized?
- Can you think of other areas of life in which strategic planning may apply?
- What are some other examples from Scripture, or from your own life, in which you have seen effective planning lead to effective results?
- How would you respond to the statement, "Hazy goals produce, at best, hazy results"?
- What are ways in which people in your culture brainstorm about ideas to solve problems?

## **ACTION PLAN**

Do strategic planning with your church planting team or the leadership of your emerging church. Be prepared to share your strategic plan at the next training session.

STEWARDSHIP

LESSON 5

# Strategic Planning Process Workshop



## Lesson Purpose

The purpose of this lesson is to provide practice for the trainees in carrying out a strategic planning session in a team setting.



## Main Points

- Strategic planning is critical to church planting ministry.
- Strategic planning is not a difficult task.



## Desired Outcomes

When the content of this lesson has been mastered, each participant should . . .

- Know how to carry out a strategic planning session in a team context.
- Be more confident about how to do strategic planning.
- Be committed to doing strategic planning with the church-planting team.

During this hour we will put into practice the concepts we learned in the previous lesson about strategic planning. You will be formed into groups of four or five persons each and will work as if you were a church-planting team. Because of time constraints, we are assuming that your “team” has already developed its ministry purpose statement and decided upon its core values and distinctives.

As a team you have set as a ministry objective to have a **weekend youth retreat**. The task now is to develop the following types of goals using as a model the characteristics studied in the previous lesson.

- Develop a general goal for the weekend retreat.
- Develop a goal for a specific activity during the retreat.

Be sure to check your goals against the characteristics presented in the last lesson to make sure they meet the qualifications of good goals.

You have thirty minutes to work on this activity. At the end of this time we will let each group share its goals for review and evaluation by the class.



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# THE FAMILY

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## THE FAMILY

# 1

### LESSON

# Biblical Roles in the Family

## ☛ Lesson Purpose

The purpose of the lesson is to present a clear biblical and foundational teaching for marriage and the role of the husband, wife and children in a family.

## ☛ Main Points

- In marriage, God is able to complement the strengths and weaknesses of the husband and wife to make them complete, which enables them to best serve Him.
- The ministry of a church planter includes his family, since the family is a visible and biblical indicator of leadership ability and discipling effectiveness.

## ☛ Desired Outcomes

When the content of this lesson has been mastered, each participant should:

- Understand the purpose of marriage from the perspective of the One who ordained it.
- Have a better understanding of the biblical teaching about the roles of the husband and the wife in the marriage relationship.
- Understand family relationships as an analogy of the Church.

## INTRODUCTION

The Church has become the centerpiece of God's kingdom on earth. Within this community of believers, God has called all of His children into loving relationships with Himself and with each other. Some have been called to serve the Lord and the Church in a state of singleness and others in a state of marriage. But whether married or single, everyone has been placed in a family.

The family is one analogy used to describe the Church. Your understanding of the relationships in physical families will influence the way you look at the family of God. It is important, therefore, that you as a church planter understand biblical roles within the family for your own life and ministry. Moreover, Paul, writing to his young leader Timothy, reminds Timothy of the responsibility of a leader within the church. Paul asks, "If a man does not know how to manage his own household well, how will he take care of the church of God?" (1Ti 3:5). This thought-provoking question challenges all church leaders, especially the church planter, to evaluate his own ministry within his family. How is his management of his family if his family is a proving ground for his leadership ability in the church?

"If a man does not know how to manage his own household well, how will he take care of the church of God?" (1 Timothy 3:5)

As you are busy with responsibilities for doing evangelism, discipling, and training leaders, seeking that the new church plant grows well, you must also remember that your own family remains the clearest indicator of leadership ability and discipling effectiveness. If the church planter develops habits that fail his ministry to his family, these may carry over to the new church as well. A church planter must give attention to his family relationships as part of his overall work of ministry.

## I. THE MARRIED COUPLE

The basic unit of the family is the married couple. Reading the story of creation in Genesis, we see that when God created man in His image He created him male and female. These two people living together

as one (Ge 2:24) were a reflection of the image of the triune God who lives in perfect unity in diversity. As one, they were to live in a loving relationship that would result in reproducing children. They were given a task to perform: to rule over the fish, birds and animals of the earth. When they sinned, disharmony entered the loving relationship, reproduction was with pain, and instead of ruling over the earth they tried to rule over each other.

Part of the redemptive work of Christ is the restoration of the image of God within the marriage relationship. There are three principals that will serve as a foundation for the discussion of the roles within marriage.

### A. Three Guiding Principles

1. *Husbands and wives have equal worth.*

From Galatians 3:28 we realize that God has designed *husbands and wives with equal worth*. A person's value is not based on function, or role, but rather on the fact that he or she is created in the image of God.

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2. *The husband and wife are to be interdependent.*

In 1 Corinthians 11:11, we see that God has designed *the husband and wife to be interdependent*. The church is made up of men and women of all kinds of personalities. One of the distinguishing factors of the church is that its members coexist in unity. There are different depths in these relationships, but the marital relationship may be one of the most complex. In a Spirit-filled marriage, interdependency will be beautifully modeled. And of course this witnesses to the interdependency that exists in the Godhead.

3. *There is an order of responsibility in the family.*

From 1 Corinthians 11:3, we understand that God has designed *an order of responsibility in the family*. Just as there is a functional order in the Godhead, there is as well a functional order in marriage. God is the head of Christ, who is the head of every man, who is the head of his wife.

## II. THE ROLE OF THE HUSBAND

### A. To Be the Head of the Wife: Ephesians 5:23

Paul states that the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the Church. This leadership involves responsibility and accountability before God for the family. Since the emphasis of the passage is on the husband's love for his wife, this is the most important part of his responsibility.

Husbands are to seek the best for their wives, even at their own expense. Headship defined this way becomes a high and holy calling. As church planters, the future of your marriage and/or of those who will be a part of your ministry depend on absolute clarity about this role. Headship is a calling to empower another human being; it's not a license to indulge one's self. One very practical outworking of this concept is in the area of spiritual gifts. The husband should be actively involved in assisting his wife discover her spiritual gifts. This will be an ongoing adventure as a wife's gifts are discovered, developed and released into ministry.

However, some people argue that according to Genesis 3, man is supposed to rule over his wife. The actual text of Genesis 3:16 does state: "...your desire will be for your husband, and he will rule over you." The Hebrew word translated "rule" means to dominate, to keep beneath, to rule over as an absolute sovereign. The word is used of kings and public officials throughout the Old Testament. But keep in mind that Genesis 3:16 is a statement of the curse, not of the kingdom. It foretells how fallen men will dominate women and subjugate them to positions of lower status. This has been the case in thousands of cultures over thousands of years.

Harsh dominance is not the way of Christ. So when Paul says that a man is the head of his wife as Christ is the head of the church, he's not supporting the curse—he's breaking it! He's showing how men can break the cycle of misery and the "me-first" mentality that the fall inaugurated.

So what was the leadership style of Christ?

This style is outlined in Luke 22:25-27 and is described as servant-leadership. "Servant" and "leader" are not terms that combine naturally. They seem to be in opposition. Yet, in God's kingdom, to be the "head" is to be this unique blend of leader and servant. It's true that men have been given authority to lead their wives, but the style is to be that of a servant, not as a lord. The aim, then, is to be a source of life to them. The husband's leadership of his wife is to be modeled after Christ's leadership of His bride, the Church. Christ doesn't exploit the Church. He doesn't dominate her, or force His leadership on her. On the contrary, He earned the right of leadership by expending Himself for His bride, and ultimately by dying for her. According to the model of Christ, leadership of the husband over his wife is characterized by:

The husband's leadership of his wife is to be modeled after Christ's leadership of His bride, the Church.

- Responsibility, not rank
- Sacrifice, not selfishness
- Duty, not domination

## **B. To Care for the Core Needs of the Wife**

Consider Peter's admonition in 1 Peter 3:7, "Husbands, in the same way be considerate as you live with your wives, and treat them with respect as the weaker partner and as heirs with you of the gracious gift of life."

Wives need their husbands to live with them in an understanding way. This means that husbands need to relate to their wives knowledgeably, aware of the fact that they are different from men. Besides the obvious physical differences, there are vast psychological and emotional differences. Husbands should then give attention to the following three core concerns.

### **1. *Companionship***

The first is that wives need companionship. God designs women for deep, ongoing relationships and they expect their husbands to meet that need. They want and need the companionship, availability and interest of their husbands.

### **2. *Security***

The second need is security. A woman needs the security of a man. She needs to know he can protect and provide for her. She needs to be able to trust him. Biblically, these things are the responsibility of the husband (1Ti 5:8).

### **3. *Significance***

The third need is for significance, which is a need shared by both husband and wife. The husband often receives significance from his job, his role in the church, or other activities outside the home. But so much of what the wife does is hidden from view. The one person who can really appreciate her unique contributions, the one who can honor her accordingly, is her husband. She is a friend, a nurturer, and a soul mate. Part of the leadership role is to make her feel honored and not taken for granted.

## **C. To Carry Out the Duties of a Father**

The main responsibility of a father is to bring up his children in the training and instruction of the Lord (Eph 6:4). This includes teaching them the ways of the Lord (De 6:7), and disciplining them as necessary (Pr 19:18, 22:6, 23:13,14, 29:17).



### III. THE ROLE OF THE WIFE

Proverbs 31:10 asks the compelling question, "An excellent wife, who can find?" For a woman to be an 'excellent' wife is for her to understand God's design for a wife and, by His grace, to be conformed by Him to that design.

#### A. A Helpmate

God created the woman to be a helpmate to man (Ge 2:18). She is the emotional and physical complement that makes a man more suited to His purposes and service before God. She does not make him whole in the spiritual, emotional or physical sense. However, she does make him more complete than he was by himself without her. She brings to him perspective, emotions, gifts, and weaknesses he himself does not possess. Together, sealed and gifted by the Holy Spirit, the husband and wife are complete and are best able to serve the Lord.

Together, sealed and gifted by the Holy Spirit, the husband and wife are complete and are best able to serve the Lord.

#### B. Supportive

As she is complementary to her husband, the wife is also a support to him. Support of him is part of her "chaste and respectful behavior" (1Pe 3:2) toward him. She knows his strengths and weaknesses, and she builds him up for his work. Proverbs 14:1 shows that a woman can build up or tear down her house. She can build up the emotional strength and resolve of her husband, or she can help to destroy him, shaming him and being as "rottenness in his bones" (Pr 12:4b).

#### C. Submissive

The wife also has the responsibility to be submissive to her husband. There is no more often repeated command for the wife than for her to be submissive to her husband (Eph 5:22, Col 3:18, 1Pe 3:1), a characteristic of godly women such as Abraham's wife, Sarah (1Pe 3:6). And yet, her position of submission is a very powerful one. By faith she submits to her husband and appeals to her heavenly Father. Like the king's heart (Pr 21:1), the husband's heart is in the hand of God. As she submits to her husband, she submits to God and allows His hand to move in the life of her husband. By her acts of submission, she allows God to win her husband to greater obedience to Himself (1Pe 3:1). She is not commanded to rebel to sway her husband's opinion. She is commanded to submit by faith in order to release God's hand to work in her husband's life and her own.

#### D. A Manager

Scripture gives the model of an industrious wife who labors for her husband's and her household's profit (Pr 31:10-31, especially verse 11). Unlike the wives of Samaria who, in Amos' time, oppressed the poor and needy and made insatiable demands upon their husbands (Am 4:1), the woman of Proverbs 31 fears the Lord (v. 30), serves her husband (v. 12), builds up her house (v. 27), causing her husband's reputation to increase (v. 23) and for him to trust in her (v.11). Her secret is that she is an able support for her husband, caring for and managing his household, making it a harmonious and profitable place that produces much good for him. She serves him, holding him in esteem, though managing his home more ably than he could. The husband can only glorify God for His goodness in giving her to him (Pr 19:14).

#### E. A Mother: Titus 2:4

The core role of a woman doesn't stop with loving her husband. Titus 2:4 goes on to encourage her to be a "child-lover." Children, especially young ones, need tremendous doses of personal attention, support, and of course love. Children need the awesome power of their mother's presence. According to many childcare experts, healthy, normal child development requires a close, loving, and sustained relationship with at least one person during a minimum of the first two years of life. Titus indicates that the mother should provide that care, but the dominant cultures of

our day are, for the most part, abandoning these Scriptural principles and instead are *seeking their own self-interests*.

#### **IV. THE ROLE OF CHILDREN**

##### **A. To Obey Their Parents in the Lord**

Ephesians 6:1 says, "Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right." This instruction from Paul to the church in Ephesus raises several questions that the church planter should address:

- Is he referring to minors only?
- Should adults continue to obey their parents, even if no longer living in their parents' home?
- If an adult remains in his or her father's house, does this apply?
- Does the "in the Lord" mean that if a parent is not a Christian, the child does not need to obey him or her?

##### **B. To Honor Their Father and Mother**

Paul's instruction quotes from the Old Testament and reminds the Ephesians that this is the first commandment with a promise: "that it may go well with you and that you may enjoy long life on the earth" (Eph 6:2-3, De 5:16).

#### **CONCLUSION**

This lesson is of value to you either as a single or married church planter. As you understand the biblical roles with the family, your own life will be strengthened, your entire congregation will be helped and the community in which you live will see the oneness and love of God modeled through you personally and through the teaching and counseling opportunities that God will give.

#### **QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION, REVIEW AND APPLICATION**

- If you are a single person, how can this lesson be of benefit to you in your ministry?
- If you are married, can you say that your marriage mirrors God's image by demonstrating oneness?
- Are you experiencing companionship in your marriage? What does this look like?
- What factors in society and within marriage make it difficult today to be an effective spouse? What is the greatest struggle in being a good spouse?
- What factors in society and in the Church make it difficult to live as a single person today? What is the greatest struggle in being a single person?

#### **ACTION PLAN**

- Read 1 Peter 3:8-12. The attitude of selfishness destroys unity. Taking this into consideration, read once again the passage above and then list things you should do when your mate is selfish.
- A husband's servant-leadership is the only thing that makes a wife's submission reasonable. A passive husband makes submission impossible and a domineering husband makes submission intolerable. Servant-leadership, on the other hand, makes submission a joy. In light of these thoughts, answer the following questions:
  - How would your becoming a servant-leader affect the ability of your wife to be submissive?
  - How would she respond in other areas if you were more of a servant-leader?
  - Does the Bible teach anything about to whose leadership single women are to submit? What guidelines can you find?
- In his letter to the church at Philippi, Paul addressed the issue of oneness among Christians. Read Philippians 2:1-4 and then think about how verse 2 explains how to achieve oneness in a relationship.

How can you apply these principles in your family life, whether in a marriage or in other family relationships?

- As church planters you will have many opportunities to provide biblical counsel to unbelievers and believers who have suffered from failed marriages or who are presently experiencing disunity within their marriage. As well, you will have opportunity to provide counsel to men and women who are contemplating marriage. Start a small group discussion with some unmarried men and women of your age that are contemplating marriage in the future. Guide them in discovering the biblical patterns discussed in this lesson and the practical outworking of these patterns.

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THE FAMILY

LESSON 2

# Parenting

## Lesson Purpose

The Purpose of this lesson is to help church planters understand and apply biblical principles for parenting.

## Main Points

- Parenting requires walking by faith.
- God's Word gives us some principles that should be applied to parenting.

## Desired Outcomes

When the content of this lesson have been mastered, each participant should:

- Know what the Bible teaches about parenting.
- Be able to evaluate his or her own parenting by biblical standards.
- Develop ways to improve his or her parenting

## Suggestions to Trainers

Use this material to give the trainees the basic biblical principles. Resist the urge to "tell them how to do it." Leave time for discussing the questions at the end, either in small groups or all together.

## INTRODUCTION

Christian bookstores are full of books with instructions for Christian parents. These books contain many specific models, each claiming to be THE biblical way. But although the Bible does give us certain directives, what it does not give is step-by-step instructions for raising children. In this lesson we will look at some biblical principles that can be applied to parenting situations. Because each child is a unique person with unique needs, how parents apply the principles is a matter of prayerfully seeking wisdom from the Lord. Like the rest of the Christian life, parenting is a walk of faith.

In the Great Commission, Jesus instructed His followers to make disciples of all nations... teaching them to obey all things He had said. The role of a parent is like that of the church planter: to make disciples and to teach them obedience to God. For church planters who are parents, the parenting role has great significance: it is significant for the family members themselves, it is significant for their testimony to the world, and it is significant for the church. The way parents relate to their children is reflected in the way they relate to the church (1Ti 3:4,5). For church planters who are not parents, this lesson is still important because the same principles apply to helping spiritual children within their ministry.

## I. SOME INITIAL OBSERVATIONS

### A. No Guarantees

Contrary to what is often thought, the Bible does not make any guarantees that if parents do everything right, children will love the Lord and serve Him. A verse that is often cited as a promise from God is Proverbs 22:6, "Train a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not turn from it." If their children grow up and reject the Lord, they feel that the Lord has betrayed them.

Please notice that this verse is stating a principle of cause and effect: if you do "X" then "Y" will result. The book of Proverbs, which was written to help guide youth to righteous living, has many similar statements. Training children when they are young will start them down the path to righteousness. Rather than a promise that is true in all cases, this verse states a general principle that if parents train their children to obey the Lord when they are young, when they are old they will continue on His path. The fact that sometimes children do depart from the Lord in no way diminishes the principle or the parents' responsibility to train their children in the Lord's ways. Most children who receive such early training do continue in it.

### **B. No Perfect Children**

Why then do some children who have started out walking in the path of righteousness "turn from it"? Every person is a sinner who has choices to make. Proverbs 1: 29 speaks of those who "...hated knowledge and did not fear the Lord." Ultimately, every person must choose for himself whether or not he will follow the Lord. Even children with good training may make the wrong choice.

### **C. No Perfect Parents**

God is the only perfect parent; earthly parents are not perfect. No matter how much they love the Lord and their children, they will sometimes fail (1Jn 1: 8-10). No one has all the answers. Parents need to be constantly and prayerfully seeking the Lord's wisdom for training children in the way they should go.

## **II. SOME BIBLICAL PRINCIPLES**

Although there are no guarantees because of the sinful nature of both children and parents, God has given us certain principles to guide us in the training of children.

### **A. Model Love and Obedience for the Lord (Dt 6:4-9, 17)**

In the Old Testament, God commanded Israel to "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength... Impress (His commandments) on your children... Be sure to keep the commands of the Lord." They were to do this at home, walking along the road, when they lay down and when they got up. Loving God and keeping His commandments was to be a lifestyle that the parents should develop and pass on to their children.

### **B. Direct Your Children to Keep the Way of the Lord (Ge 18: 19)**

When speaking about the parents' responsibility to direct their children, the Bible often equates this with discipline. Verses like Proverbs 3:11,12 and Hebrews 12:5-11 remind us that discipline is necessary. But the reason for it is because the father (both Heavenly and earthly) loves the child. Whenever discipline is administered, it should be done with a love that has the best interest of the child in mind. The child must be able to discern that love in the midst of the discipline. The desired result is that the child learns to keep the ways of the Lord.

### **C. Do Not Exasperate Your Children (Eph 6:4)**

Many parents are so intent on the second part of Ephesians 6:4, bringing up their children in the training and instruction of the Lord, that they forget the first part, do not exasperate your children. Stories of Christian workers whose children have become bitter and turned from the Lord are numerous. These children often tell stories of parents who were overly strict, unfair, demanding and authoritarian: parents who exasperated their children in their zeal to train them to love the Lord. Unfortunately, often family devotions are seen as times the parents can preach at the children. The result is children who are bitter and resentful toward their parents and toward God.

## QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION, REVIEW AND APPLICATION

- What are some practical ways you can make love for and obedience to the Lord a lifestyle in your home?
- What are some practical ways you can check to see if your discipline is done out of love? What do you consider the biggest hindrance to that kind of discipline?
- What are some practical things you can do to make your family devotions a time the children will enjoy?

## ACTION PLAN

List some characteristics you desire your children to have spiritually, socially, mentally and physically when they are 18 years old. Then write the name of each child on a separate sheet of paper. List what you are doing or need to do to help that child attain each of these characteristics.

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# *Omega Course:*

Practical Church Planter Training

## **Manual Five**

By

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# MANUAL FIVE

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# PREFACE

## THE PURPOSE OF THIS MATERIAL

Church planters are often recruited and sent out with little or no training for the task that is before them. Church leaders who are overwhelmed with ministry difficulties often lack a clear vision of what God desires to accomplish through them. Both church planters and church leaders need training and vision, but Bible schools and seminaries are not realistic options for many.

This material is designed to provide not only vision for the church planter and church leader, but also the biblical foundation and practical ministry skills in order to see that vision become reality. It is not an educational "program." Rather, it provides necessary biblical and educational foundations, as well as practical ministry skills, which are required for church planting. Although the *Omega Course* was designed for Central/Eastern Europe and the Former Soviet Union, we've been encouraged by reports that it is already being found useful when adapted for use in other contexts.

This curriculum has been designed to accomplish two goals:

1. To provide the necessary training for churches to be planted.
2. To encourage mobilization in the whole Body of Christ toward a church planting movement.

Today we see church planting movements taking place in many countries throughout the world, including Brazil, Romania, the Philippines, Nigeria, and others. We believe that the local church is God's primary instrument for world evangelization, and that church planting based upon multiplication principles is the most effective means of working towards the completion of the Great Commission. New churches must be planted with a vision for multiplication and the ability to plant other new churches. When this happens, there is potential for a movement of churches which is able to sweep across a nation and transform the lives of people throughout the land.

A church planting movement needs people involved in all levels of the church planting task, from young believers who are excited about their new faith, to leaders of denominations. Church planters by themselves can never be the catalysts for a church planting movement. This material is applicable and has much benefit for all levels of church workers and church leaders who can directly and indirectly support the efforts of church planters as they strive to fulfill the ministry to which God has called them.

## CURRICULUM OVERVIEW

This manual is one of five manuals, each of which contains approximately 26 one-hour lessons. In order to accomplish the goals stated above, the curriculum covers a wide range of subjects that are necessary for the church planting task. These include SCP vision, cell group ministry, discipleship, Church, evangelism, inductive Bible study, leadership, prayer, spiritual character and more.

The curriculum was divided into five manuals in order to provide an ever-expanding approach to the learning process. As each participant completes a manual, he or she spends time before the next manual putting into practice the principles that have been learned. Therefore many of the later sessions build upon principles and skills which have been learned and practiced in earlier lessons.

In other words, the curriculum has been designed to be learned and used in parallel with the actual planting of churches. As the participant actively works towards starting a new church, he or she will need certain skills and knowledge, and will encounter various problems along the way. The skills and knowledge needed at the beginning of the church plant are provided in the first manuals, while the activities and principles needed at a later stage in a church plant are presented in the later manuals. Each manual has been designed to provide skills, answer questions, and discuss potential problems that relate to the corresponding phase of church planting in which the participant is actively working. After this Preface you will find a list of key development activities or "thresholds" that trainees are prepared for and expected to apply between training seminars.

The lessons are grouped by subject, and each of the five manuals includes lessons from some subjects. Some of the themes, such as "vision" and "church" are included in all five of the manuals. Others, such as "discipleship" occur later in the curriculum, when the participant is at the point in his or her ministry when these themes are necessary. A curriculum overview containing a list of the lesson titles for each of the five manuals is included later in this section.

## **USING THE MATERIAL**

### **Advice for the Participant**

Much time, prayer and effort has been put into the preparation of all five of the manuals in this curriculum. Each manual is designed to address specific ministry skills and knowledge that are required during the process of starting a new church. Therefore it is highly recommended that you begin with the first manual, and not with one of the later manuals. In the same respect, each lesson has been carefully chosen and crafted to be useful, applicable and indispensable for the church planting task. It is to your benefit not to skip lessons.

Be aware that real learning takes place when you apply the concepts presented in these lessons to your personal life and ministry. Most lessons include an action plan at the end. These action plans are designed to help you apply the ideas in the lesson and should be completed before you begin working with the next manual. It can be extremely helpful to have a mentor to encourage and advise you as you apply yourself to church planting. A mentor can also serve your need for accountability as you apply the concepts being learned to your life and ministry. Having someone to come alongside you is not only effective pedagogy, but many church planters testify to the help this provides in their life and ministry. Therefore, we strongly encourage you to prayerfully seek some form of mentoring to enhance and strengthen your church planting ministry.

### **Advice for the Trainer**

This material can be used in a variety of settings such as a Bible school, seminary or a church-based seminar. However this is not primarily educational material. It is training material. Education focuses on knowledge and information. The intent of the material is not merely to impart knowledge, but to motivate toward action employing biblically sound ministry skills. This manual is for 'doers.'

Although the method you choose to teach the lessons for each manual will depend on your particular context, each manual can be taught in a weeklong seminar. From this ideal, many training locations have successfully used other arrangements that fit better with the flow of life and existing ministries. They have sometimes opted for two intensive weekends or regular weekly sessions. It is recommended that the action plans at the end of each lesson be emphasized so that they are completed before the next seminar. Four to six months is a reasonable time to expect between seminars. The advantage of this type of training method is that it combines principles learned in the seminar with hands-on practice between seminars.

During seminars it is not necessary to teach every point of every lesson since participants can read the material on their own. Sometimes having trainees read the lesson and interact on how it relates to their own experience is a good method. At other times, a lecture from someone who is an expert in the subject being covered may be the best way to impart the concepts. But **DO NOT DWELL ON THE LECTURE APPROACH**. Be creative as you try various methods to convey the principles and skills contained in the lessons. Other trainers have found variations such as discussion groups, workshops and role playing to be helpful and interesting.

You have a sacred trust. The Lord of the Church wishes to disciple the nations, and leaders are needed. You have the awesome potential of helping to equip many who could foster church planting movements and to facilitate others in ministries of church multiplication.

### **Further help**

Do not hesitate to contact us if we can be of further assistance to you in spreading the vision of saturation church planting or practically equipping church planters.

Jay Weaver, General Editor  
Budapest, Hungary, January 2000  
JayWeaver@compuserve.com



## ABOUT THE ALLIANCE

This curriculum has been prepared by *The Alliance for Saturation Church Planting* in cooperation with Project 250 of Peter Deyneka Russian Ministries. *The Alliance* is a partnership of churches and mission agencies committed to mobilizing believers to saturate each country in Central/Eastern Europe and the Former Soviet Union with evangelical churches. Saturation Church Planting is a strategy that seeks to establish local churches in every town, village and neighborhood so that those who accept Christ will have a local fellowship in which to grow in Christ and be equipped for ministry. *The Alliance* is built on the premise that joining forces will increase effectiveness, reduce duplication, and demonstrate unity within the body of Christ.

### WHAT WE BELIEVE:

- The local church is God's primary tool for evangelism and discipleship.
- Partnership with churches and mission organizations is crucial for the multiplication of local churches and the development of saturation church planting movements.
- Training leaders is essential to church planting and church growth.
- The Lausanne Covenant is the statement of faith for *The Alliance*.

### WHAT WE DO:

#### Church Planter Training and Mentoring

*The Alliance* provides skill-based training in seminar fashion with practical ministry assignments geared towards starting reproducing churches.

#### Information Gathering

Accurate information leads to good decisions in the church planting task. *The Alliance* can help with training and consultation for your information gathering needs in the areas of church planting and church growth.

#### Prayer Movement Consulting

A church planting movement starts with vision, which is discovered and refined through seeking God's heart in prayer. *The Alliance* can help you better understand the role of prayer movements in the church planting task, and how you can facilitate a prayer movement in your region.

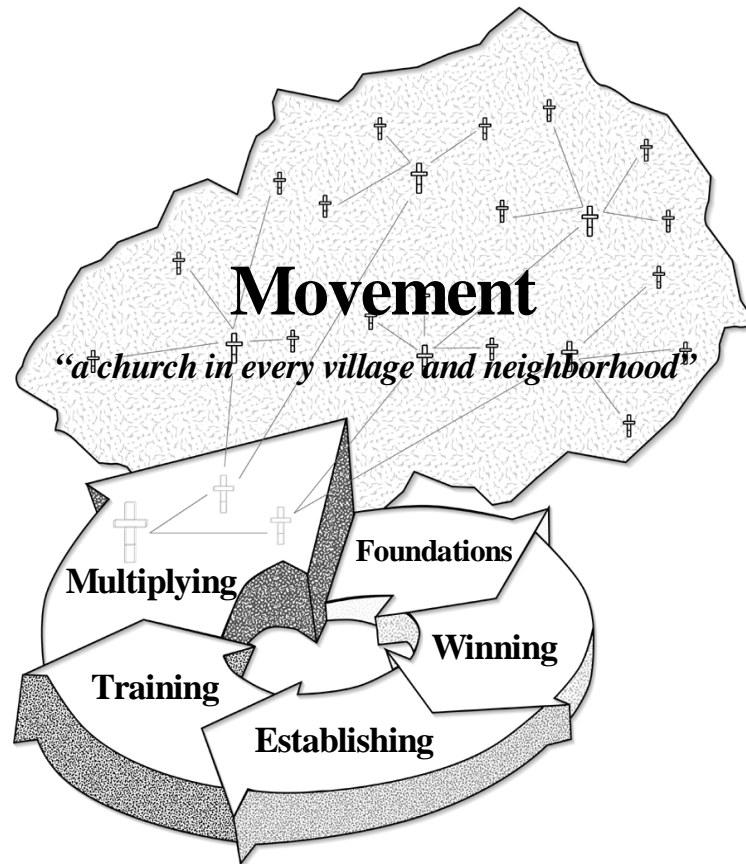
#### Vision Casting

What does God want for your country? He wants churches everywhere! *The Alliance* can help foster a vision for new churches with conceptual seminars on the principles of saturation church planting.

### FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:

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## THE CHURCH PLANTING CYCLE



Church planting is not a randomly connected series of events and activities; it is a goal-driven process. This process requires the coordination of activity, the combination of skills, a commonality of philosophy, and competence in leadership. Development in these critical areas is the goal of church planter training. The "Church Planting Cycle" is a diagram of the church planting process that visualizes, from a particular point of view, the interrelationship of the key principles and practices at work within that process. This represents a kind of 'roadmap' for the church planter, allowing one to always determine from where they've come and where they are headed.

# THRESHOLDS

## For the *Omega Course* Church Planting Curriculum

**Thresholds** are concrete ministry activities which have been incorporated into this curriculum. Each threshold can be thought of as an individual stepping stone within the larger process of starting new congregations. The thresholds provide concrete action points which help the trainee to practically apply the concepts contained in the *Omega Course*. They are both milestones that indicate progress, as well as signposts which help give further direction. Following is a list of thresholds and emphases in the *Omega Course*.

### **MANUAL ONE: Emphasis On SCP Vision, Purpose Of The Church, Inductive Bible Study, and Research**

#### **Specific action items:**

- Examining the purpose of the Church in light of the Great Commission
- Developing an overall ministry strategy based on "Z-thinking" vision
- Investigating "form and function" in the early Church and in today's Church
- Learning and practicing inductive Bible study
- Writing and sharing a personal testimony
- Initiating prayer support groups for evangelism and church planting
- Completing a comprehensive research project for the target area

### **MANUAL TWO: Emphasis On Evangelism and Cell Groups**

#### **Specific action items:**

- Sharing of findings from the research project with others in the target area
- Writing a church purpose statement
- Developing a philosophy of church planting ministry
- Developing a personal evangelism strategy, including one-on-one evangelism
- Beginning cell groups with an emphasis on evangelism
- Using inductive Bible study personally and in the cell groups

### **MANUAL THREE: Emphasis On Discipleship, Spiritual Warfare, Teams and Teamwork**

#### **Specific action items:**

- Identifying and training potential leaders for cell groups
- Spending time in prayer and fasting
- Evaluating the worldview of the church planter as compared to the biblical worldview
- Using scriptural truths to withstand spiritual attack in the life and ministry of the church planter
- Creating individual disciple making plans for the people involved in the church planting ministry
- Performing team development and evaluation activities
- Analyzing the spiritual gifts of the church planter and the church planting team

### **MANUAL FOUR: Emphasis On Leadership and Stewardship**

#### **Specific action items:**

- Evaluating the strengths and weaknesses of the church planter's leadership style, with an emphasis on methods of personal interaction with others
- Incorporating principles of servant leadership into the life and ministry of the church planter
- Tracking the use of time in the life and ministry of the church planter, setting priorities, making schedules
- Evaluating the financial giving of the church planter, as well as that of the church plant itself
- Reviewing the biblical roles of a husband and wife and the responsibilities that church planters have to their families
- Leading existing cell groups through the process of multiplication
- Preparing a strategic plan for working towards saturation in the church planting ministry

### **MANUAL FIVE: Emphasis On Multiplication, Mobilizing Others, and Promoting SCP Movements**

#### **Specific action items:**

- Initiating ministry cooperation with other evangelical groups in the target area
- Planning and implementing a supervisory structure for cell groups that will promote ongoing growth and multiplication
- Teaching people to pray for saturation church planting; mobilizing prayer at a city, regional, and national levels
- Developing and implementing a plan for the church planter to train and mentor new church planters
- Empowering and releasing new leaders for church planting ministry
- Promoting a vision in new churches for missionary involvement not only in their target area, but also to "the ends of the earth"

## CURRICULUM OVERVIEW

### MANUAL ONE Overview

Addresses primarily the **FOUNDATIONS** phase of the Church Planting Cycle

SCP Vision (VI)	The Church (CH)	Spiritual Character (SC)	Prayer (PY)	Bible Study Methods (BS)	Evangelism (EV)
<b>Lesson 1:</b> "Z" Thinking  <b>Lesson 2:</b> The Great Commission and Church Planting  <b>Lesson 3 (3A):</b> Church Planting Cycle 3A: Church Planting Models  <b>Lesson 4 (4A,4B):</b> Principles of Research 4A: Understanding Your Target Area 4B: Sample Questionnaires	<b>Lesson 1:</b> Biblical Foundations for the Church  <b>Lesson 2 (2A):</b> The Purpose Of The Church 2A: Great Commission Worksheet  <b>Lesson 3 (3A):</b> Form And Function 3A: Form & Function Applied  <b>Lesson 4:</b> Defining The Local Church	<b>Lesson 1 (1A):</b> Justification by Faith  <b>Lesson 2:</b> Living by the Gospel  <b>Lesson 3:</b> Christian Growth  <b>Lesson 4:</b> The Transforming Power of the Gospel  <b>Lesson 5:</b> Keeping a Spiritual Journal	<b>Lesson 1, 2:</b> Concert of Prayer: Praying for Revival  <b>Lesson 3 (3A):</b> How To Facilitate Prayer 3A: Prayer Triplets	<b>Lesson 1 (1A):</b> Intro to the Inductive Bible Study Method 1A: How We Got The Bible  <b>Lesson 2 (2A):</b> Observing God's Word 2A: The Language of the Bible  <b>Lesson 3:</b> Observation Workshop  <b>Lesson 4 (4A):</b> Interpreting God's Word 4A: Bible Charts  <b>Lesson 5:</b> Interpretation Workshop  <b>Lesson 6:</b> Applying God's Word  <b>Lesson 7 (7A):</b> Application Workshop 7A: Ephesus - an I.B.S.	<b>Lesson 1:</b> Introduction to Evangelism  <b>Lesson 2, 3:</b> Developing Your Personal Testimony
4	4	5	3	7	3

Numbers in brackets ( ) refer to appendices

Addresses primarily the **WINNING** phase of the Church Planting Cycle

## MANUAL TWO Overview

SCP Vision (VI)	The Church (CH)	Spiritual Character (SC)	Prayer (PY)	Leadership (LD)	Cell Groups (CG)	Bible Study Methods (BS)	Evangelism (EV)
<b>Lesson 5:</b> Biblical Foundations of Saturation Church Planting  <b>Lesson 6:</b> Research Workshop  <b>Lesson 7:</b> Mobilizing Resources through Research	<b>Lesson 5:</b> The Nature of the Church  <b>Lesson 6 (6A):</b> Corporate Functions of the Church 6A: <i>Baptism in the New Testament</i>  <b>Lesson 7:</b> Developing A Church Purpose Statement  <b>Lesson 8 (8A):</b> Philosophy of Church Planting Ministry 8A: <i>Developing a Philosophy of Church Planting Ministry</i>	<b>Lesson 6:</b> Living Like Sons Instead of Orphans  <b>Lesson 7 (7A):</b> Learning to be Sons 7A: <i>Orphans vs. Sons</i>	<b>Lesson 4:</b> Concert of Prayer: Worship and Meditation	<b>Lesson 1 (1A):</b> Biblical Principles of Leadership 1A: <i>Leadership Case Studies</i>  <b>Lesson 2 (2A):</b> Profile of a Leader 2A: <i>The Leader</i>	<b>Lesson 1:</b> Functions and Benefits of Cell Groups  <b>Lesson 2 (2A, 2B):</b> Principles of Cell Group Leadership 2A: <i>Cell Grp Ice Breakers</i> 2B: <i>Sample Activities</i>  <b>Lesson 3 (3A):</b> Starting a Cell Group 3A: <i>Planning Worksheet</i>  <b>Lesson 4 (4A):</b> Cell Group Evangelism 4A: <i>About "Oikos"</i>  <b>Lesson 5:</b> Cell Group Demonstration  <b>Lesson 6:</b> Philosophy of Cell Group Ministry	<b>Lesson 8 (8A):</b> Various Ways to Use Inductive Bible Studies 8A: <i>Biographical Study - Barnabas</i>  <b>Lesson 9 (9A, 9B):</b> Leading Inductive Bible Studies 9A: <i>Study of Mt 20:17-28</i> 9B: <i>Study of Lk 15: 1-7</i>  <b>Lesson 10,11 (10A):</b> Workshop Leading Inductive Bible Studies 10A: <i>Passages for IBS</i>	<b>Lesson 4 (4A):</b> Evangelism and Church Planting 4A: <i>Evaluating Evang Strategies</i>  <b>Lesson 5 (5A, 5B):</b> Barriers to effective Evangelism 5A: <i>"A Church in Every People"</i> 5B: <i>Answering Common Objections</i>  <b>Lesson 6, 7 (6A, 6B, 6C):</b> The Process of Conversion 6A: <i>Profile of persons to Evang</i> 6B: <i>Three Principles</i> 6C: <i>Examining Jesus' Approach</i>
3	4	2	1	2	6	4	4

Numbers in brackets ( ) refer to appendices

Addresses primarily the **ESTABLISHING** phase of the Church Planting Cycle

## MANUAL THREE Overview

SCP Vision (VI)	The Church (CH)	Spiritual Character (SC)	Prayer (PY)	Leadership (LD)	Cell Groups (CG)	Evangelism (EV)	Disciple Making (DI)	Spiritual Warfare (SW)
<b>Lesson 8:</b> The First Advance  <b>Lesson 9:</b> Elements of Church Planting Movements	<b>Lesson 9, 10:</b> The Church and Spiritual Gifts  <b>Lesson 11:</b> Social Dynamics of the Church	<b>Lesson 8,9:</b> The Law and The Gospel  <b>Lesson 10 (10A):</b> Repentance as a Way of Life 10A: The Sinner's Place	<b>Lesson 5:</b> Prayer and Fasting  <b>Lesson 6, 7:</b> Concert of Prayer: Praying to Spread the Gospel	<b>Lesson 3:</b> Spheres of Leadership  <b>Lesson 4:</b> Introduction to Team Work  <b>Lesson 5:</b> Team Development	<b>Lesson 7 (7A):</b> Cell Group Discussion Dynamics 7A: Discussion Questions  <b>Lesson 8:</b> Caring for People in a Cell Group  <b>Lesson 9:</b> Training New Cell Group Leaders	<b>Lesson 8:</b> Relational Evangelism	<b>Lesson 1:</b> Introduction to Disciple Making  <b>Lesson 2(2A):</b> Your Role in Making Disciples 2A: Character-istics of Christian Love  <b>Lesson 3(3A):</b> Know Your Goal, Know Your People 3A: Faith, Hope & Love  <b>Lesson 4(4A):</b> Helping Disciples Grow Spiritually 4A: Spir Grth Need Evaltn  <b>Lesson 5(5A):</b> Forms for Disciple Making 5A: Disciple Making Plan	<b>Lesson 1:</b> Understanding Worldview  <b>Lesson 2 (2A):</b> Dynamics of Spiritual Warfare 2A: Study of Eph. 4:17-5:21  <b>Lesson 3 (3A, 3B):</b> Spiritual Battles 3A: Bible Study 3B: Case Studies from Around the World
2	3	3	3	3	3	1	5	3

Numbers in brackets ( ) refer to appendices

Addresses primarily the **TRAINING** phase of the Church Planting Cycle

## MANUAL FOUR Overview

SCP Vision (VI)	The Church (CH)	Spiritual Character (SC)	Prayer (PY)	Leadership (LD)	Cell Groups (CG)	Disciple Making (DI)	Stewardship (ST)	The Family (FA)
<b>Lesson 10 (10A,10B):</b> Strategy Components for a Church Planting Movement <i>10A: Faith and Obedience Vs Fear and Unbelief</i> <i>10B: Things that Promote Natural Growth</i> <b>Lesson 11:</b> Signs of a Movement <b>Lesson 12:</b> Shepherding within a Movement	<b>Lesson 12:</b> Dynamics of the Emerging Church <b>Lesson 13:</b> Characteristics of Growing Churches <b>Lesson 14:</b> Church Government And Church Offices	<b>Lesson 11:</b> Love as the Foundation for Ministry <b>Lesson 12:</b> Understanding the Father's Heart <b>Lesson 13:</b> Grace is for the Humble	<b>Lesson 8,9:</b> Concert of Prayer: Praying Biblically	<b>Lesson 6 (6A):</b> Servant Leadership <i>6A: The Leaders Checklist</i> <b>Lesson 7:</b> Leadership Dynamics <b>Lesson 8:</b> Styles of Interaction <b>Lesson 9:</b> Leadership Needs <b>Lesson 10 (10A):</b> Training New Leaders <i>10A: Qualities to Encourage in a New Leader</i>	<b>Lesson 10:</b> Discussion of Cell Group Questions and Problems <b>Lesson 11:</b> Cell Group Multiplication	<b>Lesson 6:</b> Disciple-making Workshop	<b>Lesson 1:</b> Introduction to Stewardship <b>Lesson 2:</b> Financial Stewardship <b>Lesson 3:</b> Time Management <b>Lesson 4:</b> Strategic Planning Process <b>Lesson 5:</b> Strategic Planning Process Workshop	<b>Lesson 1:</b> Biblical Roles in the Family <b>Lesson 2:</b> Parenting
3	3	3	2	5	2	1	5	2

Numbers in brackets ( ) refer to appendices



Addresses primarily the **MULTIPLICATION & MOVEMENT** phases of the Church Planting Cycle

## MANUAL FIVE Overview

SCP Vision (VI)	The Church (CH)	Spiritual Character (SC)	Prayer (PY)	Leadership (LD)	Cell Groups (CG)	Preaching (PR)	The Family (FA)
<b>Lesson 13:</b> Vision and Telescoping <b>Lesson 14:</b> Mobilization <b>Lesson 15:</b> Next Steps <b>Lesson 16:</b> Training As Part Of A Church Planting Movement <b>Lesson 17:</b> Mobilizing Leaders Through National Initiatives	<b>Lesson 15:</b> Church Discipline <b>Lesson 16:</b> Corporate Worship In The Local Church <b>Lesson 17:</b> How To Lead Corporate Worship <b>Lesson 18:</b> The Local Church and the Bigger Body of Christ <b>Lesson 19:</b> The Historical Impact of the Church in _____ (History of the Church in country context)	<b>Lesson 14:</b> Reconciliation Ministry <b>Lesson 15:</b> Moral Integrity of Church Planters	<b>Lesson 10:</b> Facilitating Prayer for a Church Planting Movement <b>Lesson 11, 12:</b> Concert of Prayer: Thanking God for His Faithfulness	<b>Lesson 11:</b> Releasing Leaders <b>Lesson 12:</b> Movement Leadership 12A: <i>Movement Leaders</i>	<b>Lesson 12:</b> Cells That Saturate Through Local Churches <b>Lesson 13 (13A):</b> Supervising Cells 13A: <i>Final Step</i>	<b>Lesson 1:</b> Biblical Preaching I: Understanding the Message <b>Lesson 2:</b> Biblical Preaching II: Understanding the Audience <b>Lesson 3:</b> Biblical Preaching III: Understanding Yourself	<b>Lesson 3:</b> Ministry to the Family
5	5	2	3	2	2	3	1

Numbers in brackets ( ) refer to appendices

**TOTAL CURRICULUM HOURS: 127**



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# SCP VISION

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SCP VISION

13

LESSON

# Vision And Telescoping

## TAKING THE GOSPEL INTO THE WORLD

### ☛ Lesson Purpose

The purpose of this lesson is to motivate local churches to reach out in local, regional, cross-cultural and worldwide ministry.

### ☛ Main Points

- Christians must look at the world with a vision for God's harvest.
- Churches should be involved in ministry locally, regionally, cross-culturally and internationally.

### ☛ Desired Outcomes

When the content of this lesson has been mastered, each participant should . . .

- Understand how to have a biblical vision for advancing the Gospel beginning locally and going to the "ends of the earth."
- Know the principle of using telescoping to maximize church resources in world evangelization.
- Participate in implementing a biblical vision locally, regionally, cross-culturally and worldwide.

### ☛ Suggestions to Trainers

Have trainees take time to think through and fill out the telescope in Figure 13.3 at the end of this lesson. This will help them to see their "Judea, Samaria and ends of the earth." The Lord might use this lesson to challenge some of the trainees for cross-cultural mission work themselves or to pray for cross-cultural workers to be sent from their emerging churches.

## INTRODUCTION

The church must obey the great commission by making disciples *of its own and all the nations*. This specific lesson will work from Acts 1:8 which compels the church to be Jesus' witnesses in Jerusalem (locally), Judea (regionally), Samaria (cross-culturally), and to the ends of the earth (new cultures, languages, and places).

## I. DEFINITIONS OF VISION AND TELESCOPING

For local churches to effectively participate in the Great Commission, they need **vision**. Vision is the ability to see beyond what is to what could be. Spiritual vision for reaching the world for Jesus Christ is the ability to see nations, regions, and peoples of the world as places and peoples where the Gospel will advance by means of evangelism and church planting.

A vision is only a nice idea unless it becomes a reality. **Telescoping** is a metaphor which describes the various types of penetration into the world (geographic and cultural) which the church must make in order to fulfill the Great Commission. The church extending and reaching out is like a telescope that extends and increases, bringing objects further and further away into sharper focus. Each type of penetration will require local churches to take concrete steps of sacrifice and commitment to advance the Gospel. Local churches need to be taking the Gospel to people in their communities, nations and overseas.

The church extending out is like a telescope ... bringing objects further and further away into sharper focus.

## II. LOOKING WITH A VISION FOR GOD'S HARVEST

Jesus calls the church to have vision for His harvest of men's souls. Jesus also used the harvest metaphor in Matthew 9:38 commanding his disciples to pray that there will be enough workers for this great harvest. On Pentecost, Israel celebrated the wheat harvest. With the coming of the Holy Spirit on that day, the harvest vision transformed when the church was born. Instead of rejoicing over the wheat harvest, the church proclaimed the glory of God to the nations in their own languages, harvesting men's souls- three thousand the first day! These people coming to Christ, the new meaning of God's harvest, made them a part of the new church.

Could we use *church planting* terminology and say Pentecost was the first New Testament Church plant? The church that started on Pentecost has reproduced itself over a million times throughout every inhabited continent on earth! The harvest must still go on however, as several million more churches must be planted. Jim Montgomery, in his book, *DAWN 2000*, says that about seven million more churches need to be planted to reach the whole world. The vision we have is to preach the Gospel, plant churches, and bring people into the church as followers of Jesus Christ. The church obtains vision for God's harvest by "opening her eyes" and "looking at the fields" of the world. Vision is the beginning of the church's adventure to fulfill the Great Commission.

...about seven million more churches need to be planted to reach the whole world for Jesus.

## III. TELESCOPING FOR GOD'S HARVEST

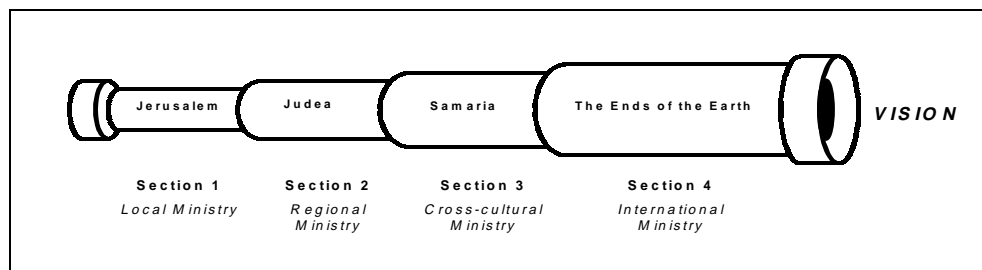
Acts 1:8 describes the progressive growth of the church from Jerusalem to the ends of the earth and even provides an outline for the book of Acts (see Table 13.1).

**Table 13.1 Acts 1:8**

ACTS 1:8:	"Jerusalem"	"Judea"	"and Samaria"	Ends of the earth
Meaning	the local city	the region	the neighboring region	the world
Outline of Acts	Acts 1-8 (Ac 5:28)	Acts 8-12 (Ac 8:5)		Acts 13-28 (Ro 15:19)
Biblical example	"Thessalonica" 1 Th1:6	"Macedonia" 1 Th1:7	"and Achaia" 1 Th1:7	"everywhere" 1 Th1:8

In the old days of shipping, an able navigator could extend his vision further by using his telescope. As he extended his telescope, far away places that he could remotely see with the naked eye became nearer and clearer to him. Applying this analogy to the fulfillment of the Great Commission, picture a telescope with four extending sections (Figure 13.2). Notice in the figure that each section of the telescope relates to Jesus' command to his disciples in Acts 1:8: "...and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

**Figure 13.2 Penetrating The World With The Gospel (Telescoping)**



## A. Section 1: Local Ministry

Opening the telescope to the first section, we can look at the local ministry of the church. The disciples who first heard this command obeyed it locally by filling Jerusalem with teaching about Jesus (Acts 5:28).

As one of the first assignments of this training program, you identified a "target area" where you are now seeking to plant a church (Manual One, Vision Appendix 4A "Understanding Your Target Area"). Your church planting ministry has focused on a village, a town or a neighborhood of a city within that target area. Once your church is established, it will continue to minister to the people of that local geographic area. This is that local church's "Jerusalem."

The nature of your Jerusalem will determine how you reach out to them. Very few cities are homogeneous. Most cities are comprised of people of varied age, education, culture, ethnic background, language, etc. It is unlikely that one single church can respond to the wide range of needs that this situation presents. Also, many cities are so large that travel to and from a central location hinders attendance. Our task is a local church within access of everyone. The presence of one local church in a city seldom means the task is complete. The multiplication of the church to reach others is the best method to complete the task.

The presence of one local church in a city seldom means the task is complete.

Our mandate is clear. We are to reach out to the lost. It is not the responsibility of the lost to come to us. With God's help, a growing local church will begin to pray about the lost in their city that have no witness, and actively be a witness for them.

## B. Section 2: Regional Ministry

Opening the telescope further to the second section allows for the church to see beyond its own local context into a wider geographic area. This principle corresponds to being a witness in Judea as described in Acts 1:8. This kind of outreach mobilizes the body of Christ to plant a new church in another nearby geographical area, where the culture and language are likely to be the same as that of the members of the local church. This kind of outreach would result in a "daughter" church of the first one.

In a sense the true 'fruit' of a church is not a new convert, but a new church.

Every church from its beginning should already consider that its purpose is to reproduce. In nature all living things sooner or later plateau, and even die, while their fruit or offspring lives on. The principles are similar in church ministry. In a sense the true 'fruit' of a church is not a new convert, but a new church. The most effective way for a church to have a regional impact is through reproducing itself, planting daughter churches.

### Example

In Brazil, over a twenty year period one church filled a geographical area with 200 congregations. A missionary that these churches sent to Albania was teaching on multiplying churches to church planters there and he said, "Our church growth was slow compared to others, but even so, when we plant a new church immediately that new daughter church plans to plant other daughter churches as soon as possible. Our churches know their purpose is to plant new churches from the very beginning." It is this kind of thinking and purpose that can mobilize churches from their beginning to be ministry minded within their own congregation and beyond.

When the church has the desire and the faith to fulfill the vision for telescoping by planting daughter churches it will have to take some necessary steps. It takes a greater commitment and sacrifice among the members of an existing church to plant a daughter church. These steps would include training workers, sending them, raising funds, and most importantly, continuing in prayer toward completing the vision through telescoping.

### **C. Section 3: Cross-Cultural Ministry**

The opening of the telescope to its third section can be compared to witnessing in Samaria. This describes advancing the Gospel cross-culturally. Although the Samaritans were not geographically far from the Jewish believers in Jerusalem and Judea they were a different culture and ethnic group. They had many different customs and traditions as well as their different religious practices. Although Jews were antagonistic to the Samaritans, Jesus loved them both! The early disciples, Philip in particular, in fulfilling the Great Commission took the Gospel to Samaria (Ac 8:4-25).

The church is responsible to reach out cross-culturally to different people groups. We can reach out to nearby ethnic groups for Jesus, even when political and ethnic tensions may exist. This will often require that those whom the church sends out take cross-cultural training, learn the language, and study the people's culture where they will plant the church. It is this extra effort that will often cause the new work to grow and reproduce.

### **D. Section 4: International Ministry**

Opening the telescope to its complete length refers to the ends of the earth mentioned in Acts 1:8. This is extending the ministry of the church to people who are distant geographically, culturally and linguistically. The best early church example of obedience to this command is found in Acts 13 and following when Paul and Barnabas (later others) were sent out to have a cross-cultural and international church planting ministry.

By praying, giving, and sending missionaries to the ends of the earth, a local church completes the entire telescoping process. It has ministry happening at all levels—"Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria and the ends of the earth."

Our task is not completed until the Gospel has penetrated the whole earth, presenting the message of salvation to every person. It is not "natural" to be concerned for the lost condition of strangers. However, this is God's desire, and our responsibility. As the new group is transformed into a church, it is not finished with its work. Rather, it has just taken the first step in an exciting and rewarding journey for the Lord.

It is important and biblical to pray for people groups (Ro 10:1; 1Ti 2:1-2; Eph 6:19) and churches should be praying from the beginning for the Gospel to advance to "all the nations" (Mt 28:18-20) and for workers for the harvest. Do people in your church have this vision? Are there people praying for the nations?

From this missions vision it is also possible to telescope through financial giving to missions. The Philippian church gave financially to Paul's missionary and church planting outreach (Php 4:17-19). In this way a church can telescope through financial support of missionaries who are working in a faraway place even if they are not from that congregation.

#### **EXAMPLE**

Luis Bush (who led a movement in Latin America for churches to send missionaries), and others traveled all of Latin America proclaiming the vision for missions as part of the COMIBAM (the acronym stands for, Ibero American Cooperation in Missions) movement. The cry rang out, "Latin America, from a mission field to a mission force!" At this time, Latin American countries were going through economic hardship and many could not see how it was possible to send missionaries to other countries if they were struggling financially. Luis used the example of Abraham, whose body was good as dead but his faith was alive. It was his faith that brought the promise of a son. In this way he compared the financial powerlessness to Abraham's body saying, "In Latin America, we don't have the money- BUT WE HAVE THE FAITH!" Church after church accepted the missionary call and since COMIBAM in 1987, thousands of missionaries have been sent by churches in Latin America. They have had the faith and God has provided the money!

It is a great and joyful experience when a church sends missionaries to the world from its own and its best. A congregation more deeply owns and identifies with God's love for the nations when sending someone out who is dear to them. Not every church may be able to support a missionary on its own. However, it is possible to partner with other local churches to send out missionaries



from your own congregations. By sending out its own missionaries, the members of the local church are able to feel both the joys and the hardships of advancing the Gospel among an unreached people.

#### IV. SPIRITUAL POWER AND AUTHORITY

From planting a church in a local target area to planting one at the ends of the earth, the church does so under the authority of Christ and with the power of the Holy Spirit. When Jesus gave the Great Commission to His followers, He began by saying, "All *authority* in heaven and on earth has been given to me" (Mt 28:18). He ended by assuring them that, "I am with you always, to the very end of the age" (Mt 28:19). Sandwiched in between these promises is the disciples' task—to make disciples of all nations.

Shortly before returning to heaven, Jesus promised His disciples, "But you will receive *power* when the Holy Spirit comes on you" (Ac 1:8). The result of receiving this power was that the disciples would be witnesses of Christ to the ends of the earth. Both the authority and the power of God are given to His children to enable them to make disciples to the very ends of the earth. The rest of the book of Acts shows how the believers went out under this authority in spite of being warned not to do so by earthly authorities. They were determined to obey God rather than man. As they did so, under the power of the Holy Spirit, the word of God spread throughout the whole region.

We can confidentially reach out to our neighbors and beyond, knowing that God will give us all we need to disciple the nations.

As believers, we too have the authority of Christ who lives in us. We have the power of the Holy Spirit. We can confidentially reach out to our neighbors and beyond, knowing that God will give us all we need to disciple the nations.

#### CONCLUSION

Vision and telescoping are characteristics of an obedient church. Vision looks to the future to fulfill the great task the Lord has given His church to expand the Gospel to the ends of the earth. Telescoping is a picture of the obedient church, obediently penetrating the world. It is a picture of the local church taking concrete steps (praying, giving, going) to reach out both geographically and culturally to see the "glory of the God cover the earth" (Is 11:92:14). A local church does not need to completely reach its neighborhood before it should be praying and working towards planting other churches and sending out missionaries to other parts of the world. This should be happening simultaneously in the life of a local church. In addition, it is important that newly planted daughter congregations, as modeled by the mother church, should also have planted in them a desire to penetrate the world with the Gospel. From one location it is possible for a church to make a significant impact and contribute to a movement that will fulfill the promise of Acts 1:8.

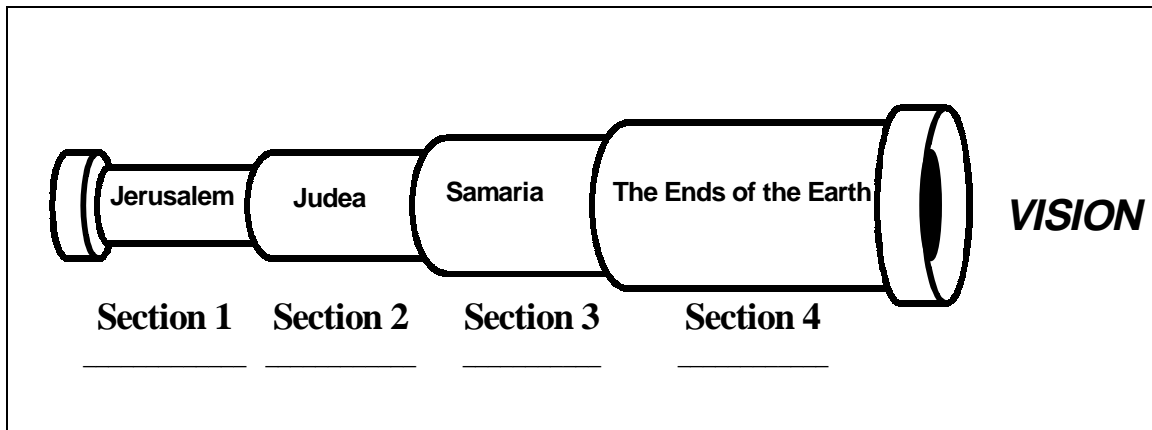
#### QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION, REVIEW AND APPLICATION

- What are hindrances to vision and how can you overcome them?
- How can you promote vision and telescoping in your new churches?
- Why is one church rarely enough to reach a whole city for Christ?
- How far extended is your own telescope? The telescope of your church?

#### ACTION PLAN

- Using the telescope shown in Figure 13.2, begin to share vision with your church(es) about reaching out more and more with the Gospel.
- Look at the telescope in Figure 13.3 below. For each section of the telescope, write what is your "Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria and ends of the earth." In what sections is your church actively working? If there is a section of the telescope in which your new church is not involved, what can you do to promote this?

**Figure 13.3 Telescoping For A Local Church**



## SOURCES

Montgomery, Jim. *DAWN 2000: 7 Million More Churches To Go*. Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 1989.

SCP VISION

LESSON 14

# Mobilization

## ☛ Lesson Purpose

The purpose of this lesson is to help church planters understand the strategic role of mobilization in a church planting movement.

## ☛ Main Points

- To "mobilize" simply means to assemble people into readiness to participate where they best contribute in a common cause with a common goal.
- Believers should be mobilized in order to fight at full strength.
- Effective mobilizers are characterized by vision, faith and encouragement, and influence.

## ☛ Desired Outcomes

When the content of this lesson has been mastered, each participant should . . .

- Understand the importance of mobilization.
- Know the characteristics of effective mobilizers.
- Participate in mobilizing individuals and local churches for church planting.

## ☛ Suggestions to Trainers

This lesson may be taught as a discussion. Take time to discuss the definition of mobilization, look at the biblical examples, and discuss how mobilization can be done practically in local churches. Be prepared with stories, ideas, and resources concerning mobilization which can be shared with the trainees.

## INTRODUCTION

During a time of war, the sense of urgency and need to survive dominates everything people say and do. Whether people are on the front lines in the heat of the battle or at home, far from the battle, the war affects their interpersonal relationships, their thoughts, and the management of their time and resources. The cry during war is to MOBILIZE! To "mobilize" simply means *to assemble people into readiness to participate where they best contribute in a common cause with a common goal*.

As the church strives to grow, the eternal destiny of millions is at stake. Mobilizers see the expansion of the Church as it truly is—a spiritual war. With military-like zeal they cry out for mobilization. In this lesson we will discuss the importance of mobilization as well as some practical ways in which mobilization can encourage churches to be more effective in fulfilling the Great Commission.

### I. WHAT IS MOBILIZATION? MOBILIZATION INCLUDES:

#### A. Common Vision

Mobilization is impossible without common vision. Why should people work together when they are not trying to accomplish the same things? Without vision, what do people mobilize around?

A common vision provides the focus for mobilization. A common vision can only come from God—only a vision from the Lord can hold people united in the spiritual battle. As has been said

repeatedly throughout this track, prayerfully asking "what does God want?" is perhaps the most helpful way to stir up vision toward mobilization.

## **B. Training**

A common vision does not automatically result in mobilization. People must be trained and equipped for the fulfillment of the vision. Training naturally follows vision. How many people do not evangelize because they have never been trained in how to share their faith? When people have not been trained to serve God as they should, then they are not mobilized. Mobilization can only happen when people have been trained.

## **C. Resources**

How many would like to serve God as missionaries but do not have the financial support? How many others would share Christ with their neighbor if they only had the right tool? When people lack the resources to do what God has called them to do, they are not mobilized. Resources come in many forms. A woman gives her bicycle to a church planter so he can travel to a part of the city that has no Gospel witness. This is resourcing. An international mission agency provides a church planting team with the *Jesus* film, a projector and screen. This is also resourcing.

What resources can you think of that are needed to start and further church planting movement? Take a moment and list some of them now.

## **D. Strategic Positioning**

An army is not mobilized when it has its orders (vision), has been trained and supplied (resourced). Rather, mobilization can only take place when trained personnel are in *position* to carry out orders. When people are mobilized they work in a variety of places in different ways but toward the same goal. If all the churches in region are duplicating one another's efforts and channeling resources and workers toward the evangelization of a particular people group to the exclusion of another, then the churches are poorly mobilized. Research can show where the church is, and is not, putting their efforts revealing the most strategic needs.

# **II. WHY SHOULD BELIEVERS BE MOBILIZED?**

Jesus prayed that His followers would be united (John 17). He designed the Church to work together as a body (1Co 12, Ro 12). God has called the whole church to take the Gospel to the whole world. Therefore, God empowers every believer with spiritual gifts for the purpose of mobilization.

Mobilization then is not simply a nice idea, it is essential. No part of the Body can fight the spiritual war alone. The Church works best when every part is mobilized toward the attainment of the goal. Without this kind of mobilization, the Church fights from a position of weakness without making use of all its members as God intends.

No part of the Body can fight the spiritual war alone. Without mobilization Churches fight from a position of weakness.

The Church is God's agent for mobilization. When the whole body of Christ will consciously mobilize around the cause to witness for Christ, God will accelerate the church toward reaching the goal of making disciples, both in their own nation and also out to other nations! Each part of the body must understand their role and each gift must discover its expression. In this all the members of the body join the cause and pursue the goal.

# **III. BIBLICAL EXAMPLES OF MOBILIZERS**

## **A. Nehemiah**

Nehemiah mobilized the Jewish people after the exile to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem. He did this by giving vision, providing resources as well as placing people in strategic positions so they could use their giftedness. Nehemiah's vision and goal to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem came to him as a result of information (research), having heard about the conditions in Jerusalem, and through

prayer (Ne. 1:2-4). He secured resources for the project from King Artaxerxes (Ne. 2:7-9). He wisely had people rebuild the part of the wall nearest to their own homes (Ne. 4:22-23).

The mobilization of the Jewish people in Jerusalem resulted in synergism so that the results were more than the sum of the parts. The wall was completed in 52 days, amazingly fast, instilling fear in those of the surrounding nations (Ne. 6:15-16). When God's people unite and work strategically to accomplish God's plan, God blesses in amazing ways.

## **B. Barnabas**

Barnabas' name was Joseph, but because he used his gift of encouragement so effectively, the apostles called him "Barnabas", meaning "son of encouragement." He was also generous and gave financially to the Lord's work in Jerusalem (Ac 4:36-7). Barnabas had a desire to see the Gospel advance throughout the world. He served the church in Antioch and then worked as a church planter in Cypress and Asia Minor.

Barnabas' greatest contribution to the advance of the Gospel was his mobilization of the apostle Paul into effective ministry. After Paul's conversion on the Damascus road, Paul went to Jerusalem and tried to join the disciples, who, doubting he was a true disciple, were afraid of him. But Barnabas believed in God's transforming power in Paul's life. Risking his own reputation and potentially, the safety of the believers in Jerusalem, Barnabas brought Paul to the apostles. Barnabas explained how the Lord had appeared to Paul and how Paul had preached the Gospel fearlessly in Damascus (Ac 9:26-31). Based on Barnabas' affirmation, Paul was accepted by the apostles.

After the church was established in Antioch, Barnabas, seeing a great opportunity and need for Paul's gifts, went to Tarsus and brought him back to the church at Antioch. Paul became one of the leaders of that church and from there launched his church planting ministry throughout Cypress and Asia Minor (Ac 13:1-3). In all this, Barnabas mobilized Paul so that Paul would do his part in the advance of the Kingdom. Imagine if Barnabas had not taken the role of mobilizer. Many churches may not have been planted, many New Testament epistles may not have been written. Do you know a Paul who needs to be encouraged and mobilized?

## **C. Paul**

Clearly the apostle Paul had a great commitment to the mobilization of the Church. Paul mobilized many of the churches in Macedonia, and Achaia to give to the Jerusalem Church during her time of need (Ro 15:25-27). In his epistles, Paul often taught on spiritual gifts (Ro 12, 1Co 12, Eph 4) and made the churches aware of the potential they themselves possessed to do what God wants (1Co 1:4-9, Ro 15:14).

Paul mobilized many others in pursuing God's call on him. Paul trained Timothy, challenged him to boldly exercise his spiritual gift and instructed him to mobilize still others (2Ti 2:2). Timothy, is by no means, the only one to have been mobilized by Paul. The last missionary journey of Paul seems to have been a training/discipleship/ mobilization trip during which we read of seven people traveling with Paul, most of them learning from him (Ac 20:4). In his epistles, Paul mentions Epaphras, Demas, Archippus, Titus, Phoebe and many others. In Romans 16, Paul greets 27 people, many of whom he had influenced or some way facilitated in ministry, giving more evidence for the vast network of people Paul had mobilized in his travels.

## **IV. CHARACTERISTICS OF EFFECTIVE MOBILIZERS**

Mobilization does not happen by accident. It takes people who are especially good at mobilizing others. These people, mobilizers, create conditions so that the church will naturally accept the vision, pray for it to happen, train and release leaders and workers to carry out the task. They have the following characteristics:

## A. Vision

Mobilizers have a vision for the world. They help others who may find it difficult to look beyond the local visible needs, to encourage them to believe that God has bigger plans than they could ever conceive. Some regions are not mobilized because the local churches lack vision. In such a situation, once God's vision is proclaimed it can be a rally cry, or a call to action leading to mobilization.

## B. Faith and Encouragement

Mobilizers are people of faith. Faith means looking past present reality to what God can and wants to do. If faith moves mountains, can it not also wake up the body of Christ to join the cause of Acts 1:8 and pursue the goal of Matthew 28:18-20? Faith believes Jesus when He said that He would build His church. A person of faith will have a passion for the church.

A mobilizer's faith affects the way in which he or she treats others. Like Barnabas, the "son of encouragement", many mobilizers have the gift of encouragement. They are able to see through setbacks and discouragements and focus on positive things. Mobilizers help Christians to realize that they are special because they belong to God, that God has gifted them for ministry to others, and they can, by God's grace and through His power make a difference in the world.

## C. Influence

Mobilizers are people of influence and they invest this influence to see God's purposes advanced. People listen and respond to them because they have credibility—they have a good reputation in the church, a servant's heart, and ministry experience. Many mobilizers are people oriented and have the unique ability to remember names, faces and the abilities of people they have met only briefly. They are then able to link people to resources and opportunities that can help to advance God's Kingdom.

Mobilizers are people of influence and they invest this influence to see God's purposes advanced.

# V. EXAMPLES OF MOBILIZATION

A local church is mobilized when the people in that church catch a vision for evangelizing the lost and then act on that vision. Mobilization aims at people's hearts—helping them to see the world through God's eyes. Most mobilization happens at a grass-roots level, among the members of a congregation.

Below are some simple ideas for mobilizing members of local congregations to help them catch a vision for reaching the world with the Gospel. These are not exhaustive, but rather, are listed to encourage your thinking. You will likely come up with other ideas of your own.

## A. Corporate Prayer

One of the most important ways in which to mobilize people for world evangelization is to have them pray together. Maps and research data can encourage specific prayer for unreached peoples and areas in your own nation and around the world. As people begin to pray and learn about the lost, they will want to become involved in reaching lost people. As mentioned in other lessons, prayer walking and concerts of prayer can also be invaluable tools for allowing God's spirit to touch people's hearts and give them a burden for the lost.

### Example

Each week at a prayer group meeting, one person would share a small report about a particular country or people group and they would spend time praying for the Gospel to penetrate the hearts and minds of that particular people. They would pray for missionaries to be sent to these unreached people and for churches to be planted among them. This prayer group also prayed that the Lord would send out from the members of their church a church planting team to work among an unreached people group. As they prayed for different unreached people groups, the Lord gave this group a special burden for the Kazak people of Central Asia. Within a two-year time period,

three members of that prayer group became missionaries to the Kazaks. The members of the congregation then adopted the Kazak people as a special focus of outreach and began to send short-term teams of medical workers, construction workers, children's workers, musicians and business people to Kazakhstan. Eventually, the church sent a long-term church planting team to work in western Kazakhstan. The original prayer group has dissolved and a larger group of people now meets monthly to pray for the Kazak people.

## **B. Children's/Youth Programs/Sunday School**

If we want our children to have a heart for the world and to be involved in God's Kingdom work, we need to give them opportunities and experiences of that while they are children. Children are an important element of mobilizing churches for world evangelization. They are often links into unsaved families. Children who grow up strongly committed to the Lord are often used by Him in significant ways as adults.

Music, drama, visiting missionaries, role play, and community service can all be used to teach children about the world and God's love for and desire to reach lost people. Mobilizers and church leaders should send their Sunday school teachers and children's workers to conferences and seminars where they can get resources and training for teaching children about world evangelization. Often, adopting a missionary family to pray for, corresponding with them, and raising money for special projects can help children be involved in world evangelization as well as get a glimpse into missionary life.

One of the best ways to give youth a heart for the world is to get them involved in practical ministry. Church leaders can provide opportunities for them to get involved in community service, such as working at an orphanage, helping the elderly, the disabled, local refugees, or other types of community service. These opportunities give young people a chance to look beyond their own needs and concerns and to develop a heart for other people. Youth teams can potentially help church planting teams through music, drama and just spending time sharing the Gospel with unsaved youth in an area where your church is trying to plant a daughter church. Youth meeting to pray for their schools and unsaved classmates is also an effective means for helping them to see that God can use them as His ambassadors at school.

### **Example**

An example of this happened in 1992. A drama team of youth from Holland came to Hungary to help a short term evangelism team who were helping a Baptist church with evangelism. On the evangelism team were two students from the Reformed teachers college who caught the vision of starting their own drama team. They recruited seven others and started performing in the area churches. Through their ministry several people were saved and joined the group. In the next three years, 20 were trained and participated in the drama group. All of those 20 are now active members in local churches and five are involved in full-time mission work.

## **C. Mobilizing Adults**

In 1722 the Moravian Brethren, on the verge of extinction due to severe persecution, found freedom to worship and grow on the property of a German Count named Nicolaus Zinzendorf. On the foundation of an agreement emphasizing unity, prayer, the necessity of acceptance and forgiveness among believers and the priority of evangelism, God's Spirit energized the group in 1727 into the first missionary movement of modern times. By 1800 this movement had sent almost 1000 missionaries to every continent of the world forming new congregations everywhere they went. It was their example that infused William Carey in 1791 with his vision to carry the message of the Gospel to the Far East, launching the mighty movement of missions in the nineteenth century.

Remember that to mobilize means *to assemble and prepare people into readiness to participate where they can best contribute in a common cause with a common goal*. Adults must be convinced of the importance of world evangelization (the common goal) and they must see how they fit into that picture. Mobilization needs to happen through biblical teaching on the nature and purpose of the church, the Great Commission, and the role of the believer in world evangelization. In addition,

biographies of missionaries and stories of the advance of the Gospel in the world can motivate and inspire people to participate in evangelism and church planting.

Finally, giving people hands-on opportunities to participate in evangelism and church planting activities can help them to find their place in God's harvest.

#### **Example**

One local church helped Cambodian refugees find homes, furniture, and work. When the Cambodians asked to repay the kindness, the church said, "come to our services." The Cambodians came, but there was a problem—not knowing the language, they politely sat in the pews, understanding nothing. In response to this problem, the church arranged simultaneous translation so that the Cambodians could participate in the service. Vietnamese, Chinese, and Spanish speakers also asked for and received translation. When deaf people attended services the church arranged for sign language translation. Through interaction with peoples of various cultures, the members of the congregation gained a heart for the world. Today, this church has sent over twenty families to the mission fields of the world and contributes substantially to their financial support!

### **CONCLUSION**

Mobilization is a spiritual work. Effective mobilizers have vision, faith, influence. They are encouragers who help people realize their God-given potential. They desire to see God's glory fill the earth. They advance the cause of Christ in the world and not their own agendas.

A church planting movement will not succeed without effective mobilization. It helps to focus and release existing resources to the task of world evangelization—the establishing of new churches among unreached peoples within a nation and also out to other nations. When the body of Christ is not mobilized—it cannot fight at full strength.

### **QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION, REVIEW AND APPLICATION**

- Why is mobilization important?
- Do you practice your spiritual gifts with enthusiasm as Barnabas did?
- Do you know someone who wants to serve the Lord that can be mobilized?
- Do you know someone who could be an effective mobilizer?
- What are some specific ways in which you can help mobilize the people in your church for evangelism and church planting?
- Which qualities of a mobilizer do you best fulfill? Which is the most difficult for you?
- How can you help your church mobilize to advance the Gospel, reproducing by planting new churches?

### **ACTION PLAN**

- Begin serving God in your spiritual giftedness toward advancing the Gospel.
- Ask God to put someone in your heart who wants to serve the Lord and begin to befriend and mobilize them.
- List three steps you can take toward mobilizing your church for evangelism and church planting.



SCP VISION

LESSON 15

# Next Steps

## PLANTING MORE CHURCHES

### ☞ Lesson Purpose

The purpose of this lesson is to help the church planter think through the decisions concerning future ministry that face himself, the church planting team and the newly planted church.

### ☞ Main Points

- When a church has been planted the leaders should rethink their role in the church planting movement
- Newly formed churches should understand their role in the church planting movement.

### ☞ Desired Outcomes

When the content of this lesson has been mastered, each participant should . . .

- Understand the options for future ministry for himself, the church planting team, and the newly planted church.
- Work with the church planting team to move into the next steps of ministry.
- Participate in helping the newly planted church realize its responsibility to send out church planters to plant daughter churches.
- Consider involvement to facilitate others toward a church planting movement in his city or region.

### ☞ Suggestions to Trainers

This lesson is best taught as a discussion session. Share from your own experience how you handed ministry over in a church plant. Allow trainees to ask questions and share concerns which they are facing in their own ministry situations.

## INTRODUCTION

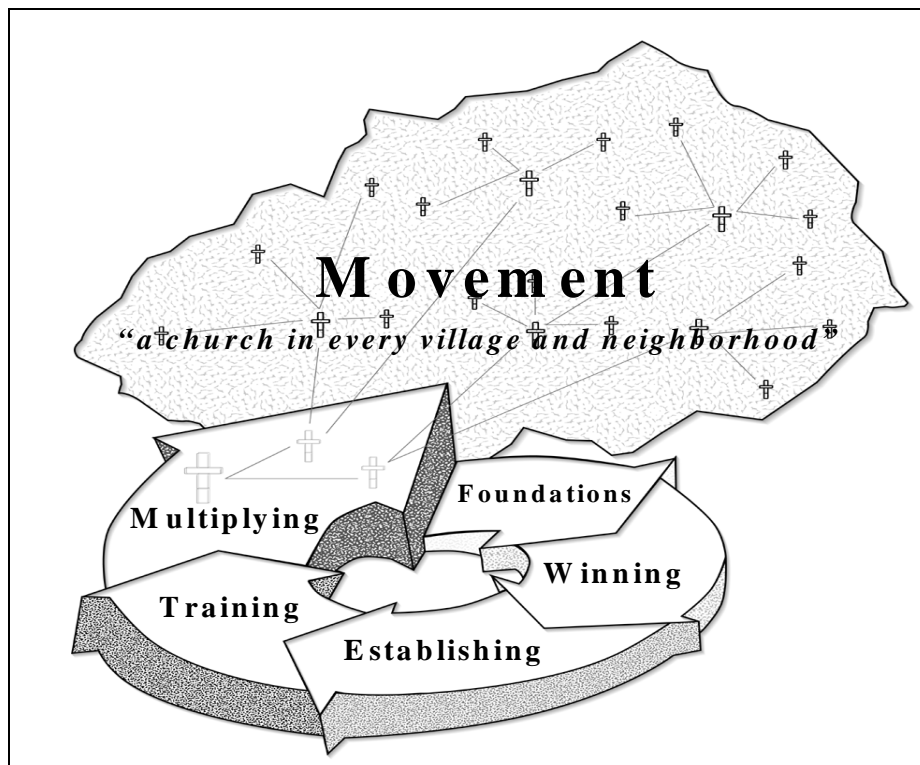
You have now come to the end of church planter training. Perhaps by now a church has been or will soon be established. This means an important goal has been achieved. However, this is only one step in the process. The goal of the Great Commission is not the planting of *one church*, but rather the *multiplication of churches* throughout the world, with each of them making disciples who are wholly obedient to the Lord.

This lesson discusses both the role of the newly planted church in a church planting movement and also ministry options which the church planting team needs to consider as part of the next step of ministry in working towards a church planting movement within that team's city or region.

## I. THE CHURCH PLANTING CYCLE

The Church Planting Cycle (Figure 15.1) demonstrates the progressive nature of our task. When an individual believes in Christ, he or she is expected to win others to the Lord. As a church is planted, it is also expected to begin planting other new churches. The task will not be finished until all are reached.

**Figure 15.1 The Church Planting Cycle**



## II. THE ROLE OF THE NEW CHURCH: MULTIPLICATION—PLANTING DAUGHTER CHURCHES

As a church reaches its initial goal of establishment, it has some serious decisions to make. The first concerns how the new church will reach out and begin *one or more other churches*. Hopefully, through your work, the newly planted church is a "pregnant" one—ready to work toward planting other churches. As we understand God's purpose, the vision should be for a movement of Church planting extending to geographic areas and/or entire people group(s).

The newly planted church has a role to play in helping to fulfill the Great Commission in its local community, nearby unreached communities, and in other parts of the world (see SCP Vision Lesson 13, "Vision And Telescoping"). This requires the leadership of the newly planted church to prepare the congregation for church planting, raise up and send out church planters and missionaries from its own membership, and to work with other local churches to help them to fulfill their God-given mandate of evangelizing the lost.

### A. Keep The Vision Alive

The vision that inspired the newly planted church may die with it once the new church has been planted if people become satisfied. But re-asking that question "What does God want to do among this people group or in this region?" can rekindle desire for more churches. We know that God wants all to hear the Gospel. Churches who know their call are committed to planting churches among entire regions, nations, and people groups.

When you look beyond the local church you see the larger picture. Paul's vision to reach the province of Asia was geographic (Acts 19:10). You can also have vision for reaching a people or ethnic group. In Galatians 2:7-8, we see that Peter worked with the Jews and Paul the Gentiles. In Romans 11:13 Paul boldly declares, "I am an apostle to the Gentiles." What area has God called you to reach? What people groups living in that area must be reached with the Gospel?

The leadership of the church needs to constantly keep before the people the purpose of the church, and the role and responsibility of that church in fulfilling the Great Commission. As the leadership

of the church equips believers for the work of ministry they will grow spiritually and practically, developing ministry skills and vision. This should lead to ministries of outreach among the unevangelized.

The Gospel will have a greater impact, in the long run, when the whole body moves forward together. Some people catch a vision more quickly than others. Those with vision need to keep encouraging others to move ahead. Those who move slower can add stability to the movement. As they understand the importance of church planting in seeing the Great Commission fulfilled, these "process thinkers" can help make sure that every step forward is a serious and sound one. It takes both kinds of people working together in order for a church to continue reaching out into new areas with the Gospel.

Work with your congregation to think through the responsibility of your church in the world. Define your Jerusalem, Judea and Samaria and ends of the earth (see SCP Vision Lesson 13, "Vision And Telescoping"). Encourage members of the congregation to learn about different parts of the world, the need for evangelism and church planting, and the work of missionaries. If you have a Sunday school, encourage the teachers to incorporate lessons about the world and missionary life as part of the curriculum.

## **B. Send Out Church Planting Teams**

The church planting model you use to plant other churches will determine how you will train workers, fund projects, recruit outside help, etc. The SCP Vision appendix 3A, "Church Planting Models" in Manual One summarizes several ways in which your congregation can plant other churches.

If you have been using the cell group model, then planting daughter churches is quite simple. As cell groups multiply, they can send out a strong new group which can, under the guidance of the leadership, transition to a new church which reaches people in a different target area. Some churches maintain about 15 active cell groups and whenever five new cell groups develop they send them off under the cell group leadership (including the zone leader) as a new church.

*The following recommendations can help with most any model:*

### **1. Pray for and look for those whom God is calling to church planting.**

Prayer is one of the most powerful tools God will use to stir up vision among His people for ministry to the world. A new church should pray for world evangelization and specifically that God would raise up laborers for the harvest for church planting work.

The Church is God's primary instrument for world evangelization and church planting is a task which belongs to the whole church. Therefore, we can expect that God will want to set apart members from our own congregations for the work of church planting just as in the early church (Acts 13:1-3). Look for people in your church who sense that God wants them to be involved in church planting. The apostle Paul often spoke about his calling (Ro 1:1, 1Co 1:1, 2Co 1:1, Gal 1:1,15-16). This awareness of "being called" by God keeps a person serving when there are no objective reasons to continue or when the feelings say, "I quit!"

This "call" to ministry includes:

- a growing vision for ministry;
- a testing of one's character, vision and ministry;
- affirmation by one's local church, one's elders, one's ministry team, and other church planters;
- the empowering of the Holy Spirit for putting the calling into effect (1Ti 4:15, Eph 3:7, Col 1:28-29).

In addition to the above qualities, look for a willingness to sacrifice for the sake of the Gospel. Church planting is work on the front lines of the battle for the Kingdom of God. Most of the original apostles died as martyrs for the faith. Church planters will make sacrifices. This does not always mean dying a martyr's death, being shipwrecked or imprisoned, but it could mean

being misunderstood, giving up personal comforts, etc. The apostle Paul spoke about the willingness to relinquish personal rights in order to reach people for Jesus (1Co 9).

2. *Determine where to send out the church planting team.*

Pray and seek the Lord's guidance as to where you should send out church planters and church planting teams. Research both the geographic area and the people groups living in the target area. (See SCP Vision Lesson 4, "Principles Of Research" in Manual One.) Use your research results to determine the training needs of the members of the church planting team, mobilizing the congregation for prayer, financial support, and for developing evangelism and church planting strategies for that target area.

3. *Mobilize the resources of the church for involvement in church planting.*

Planting churches happens best when the resources of the church are mobilized for that cause. These resources include the people who will be on the church planting team, finances to support the church planting team, materials, and transportation necessary for the church planting ministry, and short-term helpers. Get as many people active in the actual church plant as possible, even for short time periods. Members of the congregation can serve the church planting team by prayer walks, music, evangelistic activities, and social ministries. This will not only help carry the burden of the church planting team, but will help to increase the vision for church planting and reaching the lost among the members of the sending church.

4. *Train, care for and mentor the church planting team.*

Determine the training needs of the church planting team. Do they need church planter training, cross-cultural training, or vocational training? Most of the required training can be gotten informally, but some formal training may also be required depending on the needs of the people in the target area. Once the team has been fielded, it is important that they have regular visits by someone in church leadership with pastoral gifts. This will help to keep the church and church planting team stay accountable to each other. This will provide the team with spiritual and practical help in working through interpersonal issues and concerns which will arise as the team serves and works together. In addition to pastoral care, it is important that the church planting team have a mentor or several mentors who can help the team work through the different phases of the church planting process.

### **III. THE ROLE OF THE ORIGINAL CHURCH PLANTING TEAM: STARTING OVER—PLANTING NEW CHURCHES**

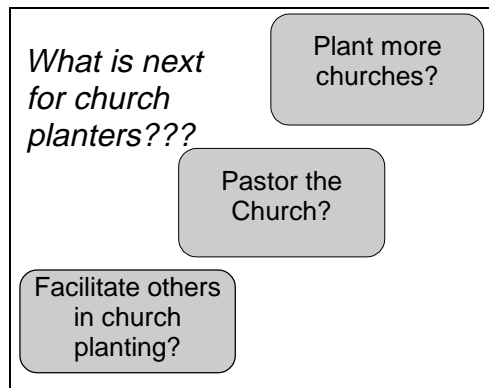
Should a church planter continue to work as an "apostolic" or "pioneer" church planter by moving on to start another church, or should he stay and pastor the new church? The answer will depend partly on his gifts. Is he called to be a pastor or an apostolic/pioneer church planter? Pastoral ministry occupies itself chiefly with the work and people of one local church. Apostolic/pioneer church planters are front line evangelists who move from place to place and may establish several churches during their life time. This decision concerning future ministry also depends on his sense of the Lord's will for him. This is determined through prayer.

Consider the following possibilities:

## A. The Church Planting Team Moves On

*The church planter(s) turns the church leadership over to others and then returns to the sending church or moves on to plant a church in another location.*

When church planters have apostolic gifts they will want to plant more churches. They should be encouraged to do so if the Lord wills. Pioneer church planters, as spiritual parents, share in the responsibility for the spiritual lives of those who are part of the new church and therefore should take departure very seriously. To start the church and leave it prematurely is like a parent abandoning a young infant. The apostle Paul had an on-going relationship with the churches he had planted—writing letters, and giving advice when problems arose. He also initially appointed the elders who led those newly planted churches ensuring that there was ongoing care of the church. This must be one of the considerations when deciding the next ministry step for the team.



The significant question in this option is, "To whom will the leadership of the church be given?" Church planters must prepare the church for the future leadership. Leadership may be found right in the new congregation. It is wise for the newly established church to develop and recruit leadership from those who have had some part in the church's life from the beginning. Or, if a pastor or leader is chosen from outside the church, he should have good pastoral gifts, as well as the same kind of vision and faith that you have instilled in the church.

People do not shift allegiance easily or quickly. There should be bonding between the appointed church leadership and the people. It is good to have a gradual plan to walk the new leadership into a close relationship rather than cause an abrupt change which may be like throwing them into ice cold water.

## B. The Church Planting Team Remains To Pastor The New Church Plant

*The church planter(s) stays in the new church and becomes the pastor of the new church.*

The primary consideration here is, "Does the church planter have pastoral gifts?" If a pioneer type of leader stays on as pastor not having pastoral gifts, the members of the church may fail to receive the nourishment and nurture that they need.

In any case once a shepherd is found the pioneer leader might stay on in the church to organize, train and lead new church planting teams to go out from the church. If the new pioneer leader is also able to ably pastor the new church as well, great opportunities exist to advance the Gospel through further church planting. This kind of pastor will usually not only pastor the new church but will develop other church planters and a church planting ministry from within the new church.

## C. The Church Planting Team Becomes A Facilitation Team

*The church planter(s) facilitate others for church planting in the region.*

Facilitation means helping people see their role in filling towns, cities and nations with churches, and showing them that *they can do it* as God shows them how. Facilitating others is a necessary strategy for advancing the Gospel in an entire region. This includes giving vision for church planting and then training, equipping and mobilizing those who are envisioned. A facilitation team is a group of people who work together to give people a vision of what God wants to do through them and then to help those envisioned in the fulfillment of that vision.

### 1. Promote the Vision

The role of a facilitation team is to continuously share the vision of

Facilitation means helping people see their role in filling towns, cities and nations with churches, and showing them that *they can do it* as God shows them how.

"What Does God Want for this region, city, nation or people group?" Promoting the vision (or vision casting) includes preaching and teaching on the purpose of the Church, the role of leadership in the church, and the nature of the Great Commission task. Churches and believers need to constantly be reminded about God's priorities, desires and passion to reconcile lost people to Himself. As people respond to this vision, the facilitation team then needs to be able to help them to act on that vision.

2. *Begin Organized Prayer Efforts*

Prayer links our efforts to God's efforts. Church planting is spiritual work and requires spiritual labor. As people respond to the vision of seeing their nation, region or city filled with churches, the facilitation team can begin to call these people together to pray for the fulfillment of this vision. This may be two or three individuals or a group within the church, people from different churches who have the same vision or whole churches praying together. The goal is to have an ever-enlarging circle of people praying for church planting.

3. *Train and Mentor People for Church Planting Ministry*

One of the best ways to facilitate church planting among other churches is for the newly planted church to become a training center for the region. By hosting training, the church leadership has the opportunity to influence others toward a church planting movement. (See SCP Vision lesson 16, "Training as Part of a Church Planting Movement.") The church planters being trained are sent out by the churches and denominations from which they come.

4. *Develop Church Planting Partnerships*

Often, local churches feel they do not have the resources to fully train and support church planters themselves. But they still have a responsibility and need to participate in the fulfillment of the Great Commission. The facilitation team can help churches to form partnerships and together support and send out missionaries and church planter to work among a particular people group or in a particular region. This allows for especially smaller churches to participate more fully in the Great Commission than they might be able to on their own.

## CONCLUSION

As the newly planted church is established, it must understand its role in a church planting movement. It should have a desire to reproduce itself through the training and sending out of church planters from its midst, through prayer for world evangelization. The church planting team has to make decisions concerning its future role and the transition of leadership in the newly planted church. The growth and multiplication of the new church and the teams involvement in a church planting movement are important considerations in the church planting team deciding their next steps of ministry.

Facilitation is a key means for helping to encourage church planting movements. A facilitation team is a group of people who work together to give people a vision of what God wants to do through them and then to help those envisioned in the fulfillment of that vision. Its role is to cast vision, resource, train and encourage believers in every way to become involved in a church planting movement. Facilitation is necessary for region-wide or nationwide church planting movements to occur.

## QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION, REVIEW AND APPLICATION

- What role in the church planting task should you now assume?
- Does the church you are planting have a vision for a daughter church? If not, what steps will you take to pass on that vision?
- Describe the differences between an apostolic/pioneer church planter and a pastor in terms of calling and giftedness.
- What sacrifices will you have to make to see churches multiplied?

- How can you help facilitate others in either your sending church or in the new church to be church planters?

## **ACTION PLAN**

- With your church planting team and mentor, pray and consider what should be your next step in ministry.
- Identify one or two potential church planters in your newly planted church. Spend time talking with them about their vision and mentoring them in preparation for church planting work as part of a church planting team.





SCP VISION

# 16

LESSON

## Training As Part of a Church Planting Movement

### PASSING IT ON

#### ☛ Lesson Purpose

The purpose of this lesson is to give trainees practical ideas and guidelines on how to continue to train additional church planters as part of fueling a church planting movement.

#### ☛ Main Points

- Training As Part Of A Movement
- The Process of Training Church Planters
- Additional Types Of Training

#### ☛ Desired Outcomes

When the content of this lesson has been mastered, each participant should . . .

- Understand how to get started in training church planters.
- Know the principle of training toward a movement.
- Participate in giving vision to, training, and multiplying a church planting movement.

#### ☛ Suggestions to Trainers

Share a case study of how this church planter training site or other church planter training sites were established in this country or a similar context. Highlight the various activities of this lesson (prayer, sharing vision, talking with leaders, etc.) and how they worked out in the establishment of the site in the case study.

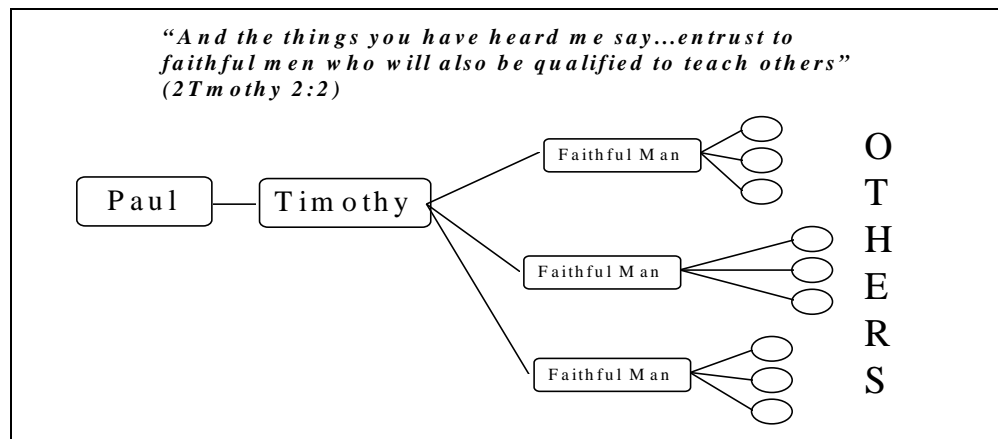
Ask God to give you the faith to believe that this training can reproduce itself.

## I. TRAINING AS PART OF A MOVEMENT

For saturation church planting to happen new churches have to be planted everywhere! Someone must plant those churches, and therefore there must be enough church planters to do this task.

According to 2 Timothy 2:2 what Paul taught Timothy was not only for Timothy, but for him to pass on to others. Timothy was responsible to find and teach faithful men. These faithful men were responsible to find and teach others. Paul, Timothy, faithful men, others...four generations of teaching! (See Figure 16.1). This is how multiplication takes place.

**Figure 16.1 Training As Part Of A Movement**



This means that it is not only important to train all believers, but that each one of them should then begin to train and disciple someone themselves. This training seems to be more in the context of personal relationships rather than a formal institution.

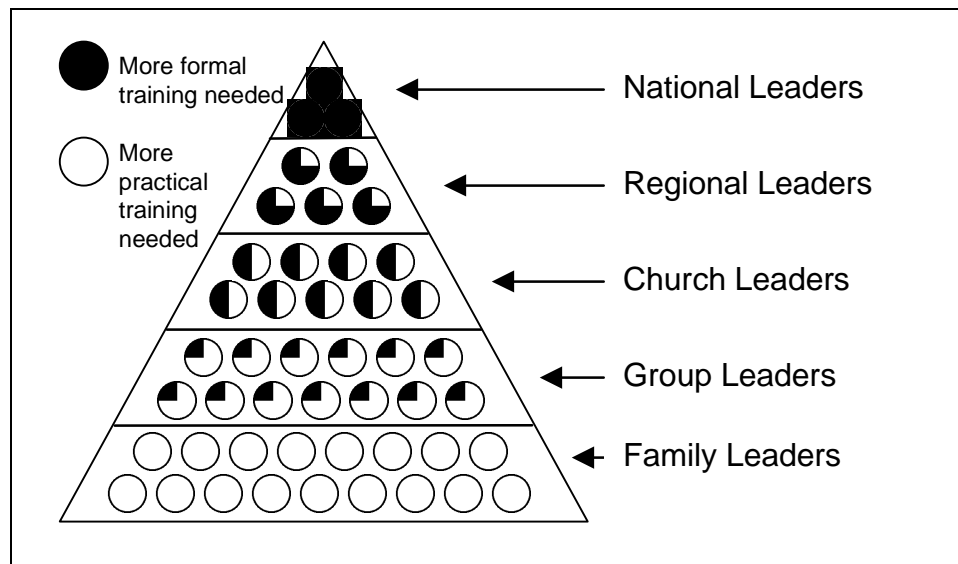
Similarly, in order for a church planting movement to develop and continue into succeeding generations, church planters must continuously be training others. Just as the apostles became leaders and teachers of others, some church planters will also need to train others—able to train and mentor other church planters.

How do you know if you should be involved in training church planters?

- Has God used you in touching people's lives?
- Is one or more of the subjects in the training interesting to you?
- Do you want others to learn what you have learned in your training?
- Are you completely convinced that God wants new churches to spring up?
- Are you willing to try with the Lord by your side?

While formal theological education has an important role in the Church, it is not for everyone. However, the process of a more mature believer training a less mature one *is* a process for everyone. The amount of formal training needed for every level of leadership rises, even as the number of leaders decreases. Figure 16.2 shows this relationship. The Church needs many family leaders, but these need little formal or theological education. Rather, they need helpful practical training that they can use right away in their family relationships. The family leadership role is informal but very real. This leadership influence is strong, even by youth (1Ti 4:12). National church leaders at the other extreme, however, should have a considerable amount of formal training in the areas of theology, ministry, administration, finance, etc. Fortunately, fewer national church leaders are required so that the Church is not excessively burdened with their training.

**Figure 16.2 Training for Church Leaders**



It becomes increasingly difficult to provide training as we move to higher levels of leadership. In many parts of the world, the Church is simply not able to provide the training needed for leaders at regional and national levels, so leaders may need to travel abroad. In any case it is important to at least be aware of the needs for leaders at these levels so that provision can be made as the needs arise.

Every church planter is also a trainer, always equipping others to learn and minister in their many roles from evangelism through local church leadership. To further the potential of church multiplication it is always important to be identifying and training others in the important role of starting new congregations. Others need to be getting the training you are getting in this curriculum regardless of the form of the training process

## **II. FOUNDATIONS FOR TRAINING CHURCH PLANTERS**

Church planter training does not "just happen." It takes hard work and prayer to challenge local churches to send people for training, prepare materials for the training, and then actually train and mentor these new church planters. The following describes some of the foundations required for seeing church planter training continued and passed onto others as part of a church planting movement.

### **A. Motivate Prayer**

A church planting movement is an act of God. Prayer shows that we expect God to work and wait for Him to do His part in making unbelievers receptive and getting believers to participate in the task. Rally prayer support within and outside the nation. Pray and encourage others to pray for workers for the harvest, conditions for the harvest, and people groups who would turn to Christ as commanded in Matthew 9:38, 1 Timothy 2:1-5, and Romans 10:1.

### **B. Raise Vision**

Give people a vision concerning God's will for their nation, region, city or town. Help them to embrace a vision that everyone hear and see the Gospel in a culturally relevant way through the witness of a living church in their community. Help them work toward planting churches that will multiply, grow, and saturate the nation in God's time as He gives conditions, freedom, and workers for the harvest.

Sharing vision with others can be done in a variety of forms: one-on-one through personal networks of influence, in small group settings, or in large group settings, as God gives you opportunity.

### **C. Meet With Leaders And Pastors**

Visit leaders and pastors. They are the ones with the authority and influence to sponsor and encourage people to get involved in church planting. Also, they are the ones who will know which members in their churches or organizations have the potential to be effective church planters.

When you meet with pastors and leaders, tell them boldly, "We train church planters" and ask them, "Do you know someone in your group with an interest in church planting?" Discuss with them the benefits of church planter training and how they can be involved in and oversee the expansion of the church!

### **D. Produce And Disseminate Literature**

Produce literature that deals with topics related to church planting movements and church planter training. Literature brings legitimacy to what you are doing and carries your work beyond your presence. It also speeds up multiplication of leaders. The church planter training manuals you have received during the church planter training sessions will begin to serve this purpose. Media, such as newsletters, magazines, radio, e-mail, and video, will also help to serve this purpose. The production quality of your literature or media does not need to be "state of the art", but it should be of similar quality to the existing media and literature in the country.

### **E. Find Leaders**

Find other like-minded leaders who will embrace the saturation church planting vision. These are usually leaders with a youthful vision, unencumbered by a great many on-going responsibilities, and rising in their leadership skills and role.

### **F. Network with other training programs**

In addition to church planter training, other types of training are essential in order for a church planting movement to continue to advance. Training on such topics as saturation church planting, prayer movements, evangelism, how to train and send out missionaries from your local church, spiritual warfare, youth ministry, outreach to children, etc., are all important for the growth and development of a church planting movement in a country. One of your roles in church planter training might be helping to connect the church planters which you are training with other training resources they might need in order to help their church planting ministry succeed.

Many types of training are important.
---------------------------------------

### **G. Expect Results**

Church planter training should produce churches. From the beginning it is important to expect nothing less than that those who are involved are confident that the Lord will build His Church through them. Make sure that the clear objective of planting new cell groups and churches is the foundation for organizing church planter training. When there is an expectation of new churches and cell groups, those who begin to participate will find their place as prayer warriors, organizers, financial backers, encouragers, helpers, and church planters. They are all necessary components of a church planting movement and the training should help them find their place and work toward planting churches.

## **III. THE PROCESS OF TRAINING CHURCH PLANTERS**

### **A. Begin Training**

You can train church planters by responding to an invitation or by setting up and organizing training sessions with your team. When you are invited to do the church planter training, it is better to let the host dictate the approach, protocol, and logistics. If you are hosting the training, you can experiment with different forms. However, make sure that you determine the content of the training material to be taught and who will be the trainers.

Do not be discouraged by the results of your first round of training. It takes time to find the best trainers and environment for training. Learn from your mistakes and continue to press on with the training. God may surprise you with the results of a "difficult" training session.

#### **B. Discover New Trainers**

Use the training sessions to discover new trainers from among your trainees. Get *them* to do training as soon as possible. Those who become trainers should be able to understand the subject matter and know how to equip others in any aspect of the specific material they would teach.

#### **C. Decentralize Training Sites**

Develop a geographic strategy for the training. Find strategic zones in the country or region where there is receptivity to church planter training. Those in the zone can carry out the training for church planting there. To do this, you must find leaders from the training who are active in church planting and want to mobilize others in their own zones. Help them to establish training in their zone. Encourage them to find and equip leaders from the local region. This will help the training multiply and will be a positive step towards a movement.

#### **D. Pass On Leadership**

Walk others into leadership and oversight of the church planter training movement. Keep finding other people with a vision to fill the land with churches and give them opportunities to lead in church planter training. Try to back out of your leadership and develop gradual but definite steps to pass it on to others. Be a mentor to them, helping them lead as they grow in their vision and capability to implement that vision through training other church planters. Encourage them to reproduce your mentoring with others they train, multiplying towards a movement.

#### **E. Develop Funding Structures**

Develop a funding structure for the work. As the movement grows you will need to fund the production of materials, travel costs, and at times support leaders to work full time. A healthy mix of local giving and outside funds should work together to support the needs of this work. Deliberately foster internal giving. It is very important to raise local and in-country funds. Church planting movements around the world are sustained by local giving. This includes teaching on the subject of stewardship. (See the lessons in the Stewardship Track of Manual 4).

### **IV. MENTORING CHURCH PLANTERS**

Training church planters is not just a matter of seminars. Mentoring is a valuable and necessary supplement to seminars. Mentoring is fundamentally a purposeful relationship when someone with more life experience guides and directs another to accomplish his or her goals and objectives with greater personal effectiveness. A mentor, then, is a person who affects and influences the development and growth of another person toward certain ends. The mentoree, the person being helped, is guided so as to reach his potential, to maximize his gifts, talents and abilities, and to do his best. The Christian mentor strives to help the Christian mentoree reach his God-given potential and to accomplish God's goals for his life, for the glory of God!

Training church planters is more than seminars.

The mentoring of church planters is strategic. Reports from those in church planter training seem to indicate that where mentoring takes place, more churches are planted. Conversely, where no mentoring takes place, often there are few resulting churches.

The goal of mentoring is empowerment. Empowerment is the sharing of appropriate God-given resources at the right time, resulting in progress or development in the mentoree's life and work. The benefits of having a mentor include:

- Promotes genuine growth and change (2 Timothy 1: 7-8).
- Provides a model to follow (1 Peter 2:21).

- Helps you reach your goals sooner (Romans 16:1-2).
- Plays a key role in the maturity process (Hebrews 13:7).
- Benefits others through you (2 Timothy 2:2).

The mentoring process should be linked to the practical training for church planting and be intentional from the start. It involves a clear agreement on the relationship and includes the following when meeting: review, refocusing, resourcing. Mentors need to constantly develop their own skills of listening, asking questions, taking notes and giving wise counsel.

There is more training available on mentoring. Please inquire of the people who brought you this practical training material for church planting. A Godly life and growth in Christian character is the essential outcome of mentoring for the long term, while the short term should produce local churches planted! Thus a model of training can be 'caught' for the future.

## CONCLUSION

**One of the most valuable things you can do as you come to the end of this training to pass the training on to others.** Do not hesitate to propagate the training you are now completing and be careful to identify and mentor other potential church planters who could benefit from your zeal and growing experiences. Just as Timothy was asked by Paul to pass on what he had learned so it is now your responsibility to pass on what God has taught you.

## QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION, REVIEW AND APPLICATION

- How does insistence upon *formal* training inhibit the growth and multiplication of churches?
- Why is training such a key part of what a church planter does?
- Why should church planter training be decentralized?
- Why is mentoring an effective part of church planter training?

## ACTION PLAN

- Think about the context in which you are church planting. With whom could you begin the training of church planters?
- How can you begin to raise vision in your target area, region, city or nation?
- Prayerfully choose a location where you could begin church planter training. Talk with church leaders there and develop a plan to begin training. Begin training church planters according to your plan.



# Mobilizing Leaders Through National Initiatives

## THE DAWN STRATEGY

### Lesson Purpose

The purpose of this lesson is to inform church planters about the process of mobilizing denominational leaders and leaders of groups of churches toward a systematic plan for saturation church planting in their nation.

### Main Points

- Introduction to the DAWN strategy.
- Certain conditions are necessary for a DAWN strategy to be successful.
- The DAWN strategy has 12 components

### Desired Outcomes

When the content of this lesson has been mastered, each participant should . . .

- Understand how to begin a national saturation church planting initiative.
- Know the conditions necessary for and the components of the Discipling A Whole Nation (DAWN) strategy.
- Participate in a national initiative for filling a whole country with churches.

### Suggestions to Trainers

If a translation of *DAWN 2000* is available in your language, have it available for purchase by the trainees.

Keep in mind that God's timing is an element of church planting movement. However, even if your region is not ready for DAWN, this lesson included information that every trainee should be aware of and be working toward.

It is also helpful to have a map of the nation the trainees serve in along with demographic data in order to facilitate discussion on what it would take to see that country disciplined.

## INTRODUCTION

At the beginning of this training program, we talked about the idea of "Z" thinking. We talked about the importance of asking the question, "What does God want for my region, city, this people group or this nation?" We know from Scripture that one day, "the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord" (Isa 11:9), and that it is God's desire for all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth (1Ti 2:3-4, 2Pe 3:9). We also know from Scripture that God chose the Church, to be His representation on earth, His primary instrument for building His Kingdom, until He returns. Therefore, God's desire is to see regions, cities, people groups and nations filled with vibrant, living churches that proclaim His greatness to those around them.

At the beginning of the training, you were asked to define your "Z"—the area where you felt God calling you to serve Him. Now, we want to expand this thinking and consider the questions:

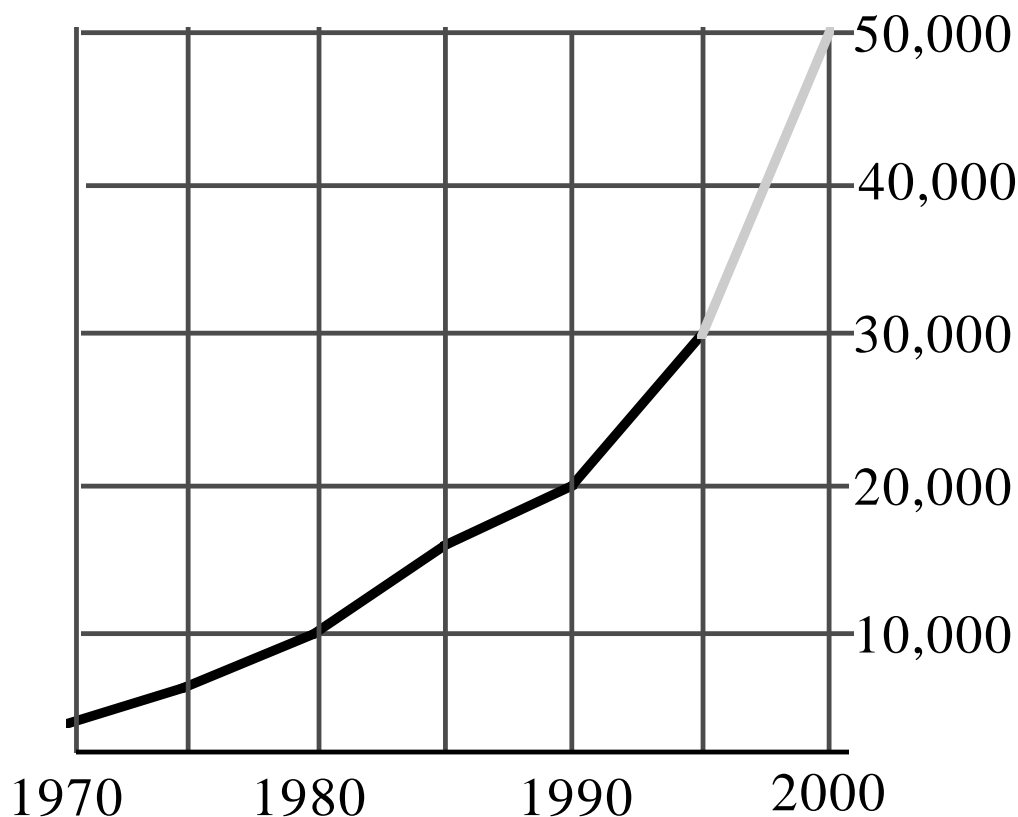
- *What does God want for my nation?*
- *What does it mean for the knowledge of the glory of the Lord to fill my nation?*

- How can every man, woman and child in my nation have the opportunity to be saved and come to a knowledge of the truth?
- How can I be involved in seeing the Gospel penetrate every segment of every society in my nation?

## I. THE DAWN STRATEGY

This lesson is adapted from a book By Jim Montgomery entitled, *DAWN 2000: 7 Million Churches To Go*. It is about a simple strategy or plan to fill any geographic area with churches. The book contains practical steps to implement what Montgomery calls, "Discipling a Whole Nation" or, "DAWN." The DAWN strategy helps groups of churches and denominations to advance their own church planting movements through the synergy resulting from interdenominational participation and cooperation as leaders share their own goals and results, and encourage and support one another to advance the Gospel in their nation. Each group maintains its own identity but all are working together for the kingdom of God, filling the nation with churches!

**Figure 17.1. Church Growth in the Philippines from AD 1970 to AD 2000.**



For example, in the early 1970s denominational leaders in the Philippines set goals together to plant 50,000 churches by AD 2,000. As the graph above indicates growth was steady but not dramatic at first. However, with growth the 'harvest field' becomes part of the 'harvest force' so that more can be accomplished due to the increase in resources and laborers. As of 1998 they were on target, giving every reason to believe that they are still on target as you read this today!

Since its birth in the Philippines, the DAWN strategy has been successfully implemented in a number of other countries, including Guatemala, El Salvador, Ghana, Zimbabwe, and India. In all of these cases the number of churches were dramatically increased. DAWN initiatives are also underway in European countries that are generally considered unresponsive to the Gospel. In spite of this, the DAWN strategy has helped leaders in Norway, England, Denmark, and Belgium increase their church planting efforts.



## II. CONDITIONS NECESSARY FOR A DAWN STRATEGY

What makes the DAWN strategy so useful is that it takes existing movements that already advance the Gospel, and *take concrete steps to move from vision to reality*. It is a tool for giving direction to already existing spiritual activity. Therefore, in order for the DAWN strategy to be effective, certain conditions of God's activity in that nation must be evident. These conditions are as follows:

The DAWN strategy takes existing movements that already advance the Gospel, and helps them *take concrete steps to move from vision to reality*.

### A. Evangelism and Church Planting

Evangelism and church planting needs to be already taking place. This is an indication that the Spirit of God is at work bringing people to Himself and calling His people out into service for Him. Often times these small movements are isolated from one another. By bringing them together as part of a DAWN strategy, synergy takes place, and the potential of these small efforts can be harnessed to reach the nation for Christ. Without these small movements, the task of reaching a nation for Christ is like trying to move a mountain with a shovel.

### B. Unity In The Body Of Christ

There must be sufficient unity in the body of Christ for leaders to get together and encourage one another to reach their goals instead of trying to tear each other's work down (John 17:21).

### C. A Receptive Harvest Field

The DAWN strategy works best in a ripe harvest field, where the population is receptive to the Gospel. The DAWN strategy aids in the rapid multiplication of churches, so that a ripe harvest will be reaped and not left to rot.

Spiritual movements in a nation can be compared to spirited horses in a field. The DAWN strategy is like the saddles and bridles that bring the horses to follow the direction of their riders. The riders are able to harness all the power and energy of their horses and move in the same direction. Christian leaders can harness the spiritual movements of the body of Christ in their nations and take them in the direction of advancing the Gospel through saturation church planting.

## III. TWELVE COMPONENTS OF A DAWN STRATEGY

Christ is building His church through the commitment, prayer and energy of His people. To harness the Church's potential with the saddle and bridle of DAWN, denominational and church group leaders should take use the following 12 components to set and pursue their church planting goals. Each denomination sets its own church planting goals and strategies, which are one piece of a common purpose, shared with other denominations in a spirit of unity, of seeing the nation filled with living churches.

### A. Continuously Cast Vision Concerning The Advance Of The Gospel

Believers constantly need to be reminded of God's purposes for His people and for the world. Vision casting involves sharing with others a vision for seeing villages, towns and cities—entire nations—filled with congregations of believers who are on-fire for Christ. Vision casters are people who are gifted by God to share this vision at all levels of church leadership—from local churches to denominations.

Vision casting, however, should be concentrated at the "grass-roots" level—local churches and groups of local churches. As the vision catches on at these levels it will get passed up to denominational leaders. When you dream great dreams and see large visions, you are driven to work persistently towards seeing them accomplished. One denominational leader had a burning desire to see his whole province filled with churches. The result was hundreds of churches planted and thousands of converts being disciplined. In contrast, another denominational leader said, "We are the largest denomination already. We don't have to grow." The result was very slow growth. And, this denomination is no longer the largest denomination.

## B. Develop And Use A Good Base Of Information

Part of the DAWN strategy involves researching the harvest field and harvest force in different regions, cities, neighborhoods, and among people groups. The Gospel is advanced by those who not only have great vision, but also understand the realities of seeing that vision fulfilled. They see that the way to accomplish their dreams is not through sentimental, emotional fantasizing but through a concrete understanding of their situation.

Those who study their context see who is responsive to the Gospel and how to best reach them. They study their own resources to see how big they are, how fast they are growing, what their effective and ineffective methods are, and so on. They study other growing churches and denominations to find good ideas for their own programs. Research is a vital tool for the advance of the Gospel.

Adequate research for a DAWN Strategy includes:

- the number of denominations in a country,
- their respective number of local churches and members and/or average attendance,
- the average annual growth rate of each denomination,
- the methodologies being used by various groups that are producing the best growth,
- the ratio of churches to population for the whole nation and every sub-group of the nations, and
- such contextual factors as the history, economy, religion, culture, politics, natural disasters and other societal forces that tend to indicate the relative responsiveness of the population and the methodologies and themes that might best see a response to the Gospel.

The analysis of the research results and what it means for the advance of the Gospel in that nation is usually presented at consultations and at a national Congress (Points G, J and K below).

## C. Depend On Prayer

When churches plan for growth, they are sometimes accused of having a greater concern for numbers than a desire to see the Holy Spirit at work. However, *no significant growth* in the church will ever take place unless it is backed by prayer. When the church prays, the Holy Spirit acts. Resulting growth in numbers and new churches is subsequently good and pleases God. For more information, see Prayer Lesson 10, "Developing Prayer In Support Of a Church Planting Movement."

*No significant growth in the church will ever take place unless it is backed by prayer.*

## D. Set Challenging, Realistic, And Measurable Goals

Challenging goals stir up and mobilize the people. Laymen and women will want to get involved in a challenge. It is exciting to work together towards a worthwhile and challenging goal. In the DAWN strategy each evangelical denomination, mission agency and other groups sets their own goals for numbers of churches to be planted by a certain date and implements plans to reach that goal. These goals are often shared at a national congress and the collective sum of these goals is the "national goal", which is collectively committed to by delegates at a national Congress.

*Realistic goals* are set so as not to discourage the people. Goals not based on the present facts in terms of what is possible, can be worse than no goals at all. Make goals large enough to be a challenge, but realistic enough to avoid discouragement.

*Measurable goals* allow people to rejoice in their achievement. Specific numbers and specific dates get members involved.

It is important to seek God and set *challenging goals*- not just easily attainable ones. Goals set under the guidance of the Spirit are "*Sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see*" (Heb 11:1). In other words, goal setting by the Christian is an act of faith, without which "*... it is impossible to please God*" (Heb 11:6).

In Central America, leaders were setting their Discipling a Whole Nation church planting goals. One leader felt that the goals were too easy. His words were, "We could do that in the flesh!" He requested that higher, more challenging goals be set that would require not only human effort but God's power as well. Make sure that goals are not so fantastic that they will disappoint people if not attained, but equally important you must set goals that only with God's help you can attain, and He gets all the glory!

#### **E. Promote Goal Ownership**

In the process of goal setting, it is important to *achieve goal ownership*. In one very large denominational program, the foreign missionaries got together and set a ten-year goal. Then they had a very difficult time getting the church to work towards it.

In a second program, however, everyone had a say in what the goal should be. They argued and wrestled with each other until everyone was satisfied it was the right goal. Since everyone now "owned" the goal, they all worked hard to achieve it. This is a very crucial step in a successful growth program and can be overlooked only at great cost.

#### **F. Train Members**

Training is an indispensable part of any significant growth program. The biblical strategy is to equip the saints for the work of the ministry (Eph 4:11,12). In successful denominations, members are trained for every aspect of church development and outreach. This includes training for planting churches, pastoral care of churches, starting and leading cell groups, how to lead Sunday school classes, youth ministry, evangelism and discipleship training, prayer groups, finances, executive leadership, communications, etc.

Training is given in every type of situation from Bible schools and seminaries, to short-term and Theological Education by Extension (TEE). Church growth and multiplication will not take place without effective training.

#### **G. Hold Regional Consultations**

Regional consultations are a means of bringing Christian leaders together, to give them an opportunity to get to know one another, to pray for one another, and to consider the facts of the research results and its implications for the advance of the Gospel in their region. Consultations are also a good place to cast vision, discuss training needs and opportunities, sharing of resources, and church planting models. Consultations are part of the grass-roots vision casting and mobilization which helps to seed and fuel a church planting movement.

When leaders get together, lay aside their church and denominational differences and discuss advancing the Gospel, God does great things as they "stimulate one another to love and good deeds" (Heb 10:25).

#### **H. Form A National Committee**

At some point in the implementation of the DAWN strategy it will be necessary to form a national committee to keep the church planting movement alive. The national committee oversees the following:

- continued data gathering by means of a permanent national research team,
- the development of publications on the exciting growth and challenging aspects of each denominational program,
- the seminars and consultations with denominational leaders and pastors in various regions.
- the planning of national congresses where evaluation is made of progress to date and new plans and goals are set for the future.

In countries with successful DAWN strategies, the national committee is composed of representatives of various evangelical denominations and, sometimes, even foreign missionaries.

## **I. Raise Money**

Denominations creating strong, new growth programs are forced to evaluate their whole financial structure. They need to evaluate just how they are spending their money. Frequently, funds can be diverted from lower priority items to the challenging evangelistic thrust before them. Good teaching and creative planning are needed in the area of financial stewardship. (For more information on this important topic, refer to Stewardship Lesson 2, "Financial Stewardship" in Manual Four.) Strong growth requires sacrificial giving to God's work.

## **J. Hold A DAWN Congress**

The critical event of a DAWN strategy is the national congress where the primary leaders of all denominations and other parachurch organizations along with leading pastors gather to consider the discipling of their whole nation and discuss the results and analysis of the research project (point B above). Anywhere from 50 to 1500 delegates from every evangelical denomination gather in unity and commitment to a long-range strategy of working towards a common goal. A large congress must be held to present Discipling a Whole Nation (the DAWN strategy), to motivate a large group toward the project, and to bring about a spirit of excitement and unity.

Note that it is important to have spiritual discernment in determining the timing for a Congress. It is important that delegates from all evangelical streams in a nation attend the Congress. Therefore, it is important to wait until the unity of the Church is such that this will be feasible. In Finland it took eight years before such unity came.

## **K. Follow-Up The Congress**

Follow up work to the congress must develop. Leaders must find what steps, such as training/mentoring, mobilizing churches, recruiting church planters, must be taken and implement them. They must then find those who will devote their ministry toward pursuing saturation church planting.

## **L. Reevaluate Progress And Make New Plans**

Periodic reevaluation of progress toward reaching the goals needs to be done by denominations and parachurch organizations and on a national level through succeeding DAWN Congresses. The national committee can publish progress to date in its regular publication. This helps to keep the goals and vision before the people.

Denominations with successful growth programs behind them are very likely to continue setting new goals. One denomination has been setting goals and carrying out regular growth programs for 20 years. When one program concludes, members and leaders meet for a time of celebration. It is also the time when the new goals are set and the new program launched.

By constantly making new plans for new growth, evangelism and church planting become a regular part of the church life, rather than an activity engaged in only once in a while. Evaluating growth regularly, making necessary changes and equipping new workers becomes a healthy, dynamic aspect of the life of the church.

## **CONCLUSION**

A spiritual movement to advance the Gospel is like a spirited and vibrant horse. The DAWN Strategy is like a saddle and bridle that allows the rider to guide the horse in the right direction. The DAWN strategy requires people to set plans by faith for spiritual things to happen in their nation. Somehow, God has included us as His partners in the great task of advancing the Gospel—*filling nations with churches!* Let us set goals for the glory of God and watch Him work as we serve His cause for the nation!

## **QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION, REVIEW AND APPLICATION**

- Where is there a sign of a spiritual movement like a horse that needs a bridle and saddle?

- In what ways is your region ready for DAWN? What are the strongest (in order) of the conditions and resources in your setting?

## **ACTION PLAN**

- Think about others who would share the vision toward DAWN. Write their names down, pray for them and seek them out. Share the vision for saturation church planting with them and let them read this lesson.
- Study the 12 steps of a Discipling a Whole Nation strategy. Which ones will be the easiest to get into practice in your churches? Study them, pray about them, and develop a program incorporating the ideas.

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# THE CHURCH

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CHURCH  
**15**  
LESSON

# Church Discipline

## REPENTANCE AND RESTORATION

### Lesson Purpose

The purpose of this lesson is to set forth the biblical principles that govern discipline in a local church.

### Main Points

- Although the term 'church discipline' is not found in the Bible, the concept is clearly discussed, and the church is expected to follow the scriptural guidelines.
- The goal of church discipline is *always* the repentance and restoration of the sinning believer.

### Desired Outcomes

When the content of this lesson has been mastered, each participant should:

- Understand the biblical principles regarding local church discipline.
- Know how to use a practical tool for implementing church discipline

### Suggestions to Trainers

Introduce this lesson by having trainees share church discipline policies or procedures with which they are familiar. Avoid discussions of specifically-named illustrations of church discipline and condemnation of denominational or church leaders handling of the discipline issue. Leave time at the end to discuss the case studies.

## INTRODUCTION

Although discipline in the church is such an important spiritual concept, it is a subject about which little is known and even less is applied. The following testimony by a Romanian pastor demonstrates this:

*"When I first began considering the subject "DISCIPLINE IN THE CHURCH" it appeared to be a very simple subject to me because the church had much experience in this area. But it was not to be so. I had scarcely taken my Bible and begun a serious study when I noticed several problems in regards to this theme.*

*I sensed the existence of tension between my religious culture, and the message of Scripture; between the religious culture of my church and a true biblical model. I sensed tension in the establishment of a common vision about the discipline process.*

*While studying the Scriptures, I gathered much material which was only a tangent of this theme. To my surprise I didn't find any material which exclusively approached church discipline.*

*I spoke with many pastors and church leaders to know their philosophy in this area but found only one church that had their philosophy written down. Most churches don't feel they are on sure ground when they have to apply principles of discipline and treat the problem with insecurity or superficially."*

If, as our brother states, church discipline is not addressed specifically in the Bible, then certain questions must be asked:

- Is church discipline biblical?
- What is church discipline?
- What are the biblical steps the church must take in disciplining a member?

- What are the goals of church discipline?

## **I. BIBLICAL PRINCIPLES OF CHURCH DISCIPLINE**

Although the term *church discipline* is not used in the Bible, it is mandated in at least three passages in the New Testament; 1Corinthians 5, Matthew 18, and 2 Corinthians 2. These passages teach certain principles concerning church discipline practices that are applicable in current church life.

### **A. Church Discipline is a Biblical Mandate (1Corinthians 5)**

For example, the church in Corinth had a case of a brother who was involved in sexual immorality (v.1). The Apostle Paul wrote to the church, giving instruction on how to deal with this brother:

- Put him out of their fellowship (v.2)
- Hand him over to Satan (v.5)
- Do not associate or eat with him or any other brothers who were sexually immoral, greedy, idolaters, drunkards, or swindlers (v.11)
- Expel the wicked man from among them (v.13)

Paul also tells them the purpose of these disciplinary measures: "...so that the sinful nature may be destroyed and his spirit saved on the day of the Lord" (v.5).

### **B. Church Discipline Must Follow Certain Steps (Matthew 18)**

Jesus said that when a brother sins, we are to work through the following procedures:

- First, go to him privately and show him his fault. If he listens, the relationship is restored (v.15).
- If he does not listen, take two or three witnesses with you and confront him (v.16).
- If he still will not listen, tell it to the church (v.17).
- If he still will not listen to the church, treat him as an outsider (v.17).

*Note: Some translations of the Bible indicate that this is a "sin against you." But whether the sin is against you personally, or is a sin you know about, the same principles would apply.*

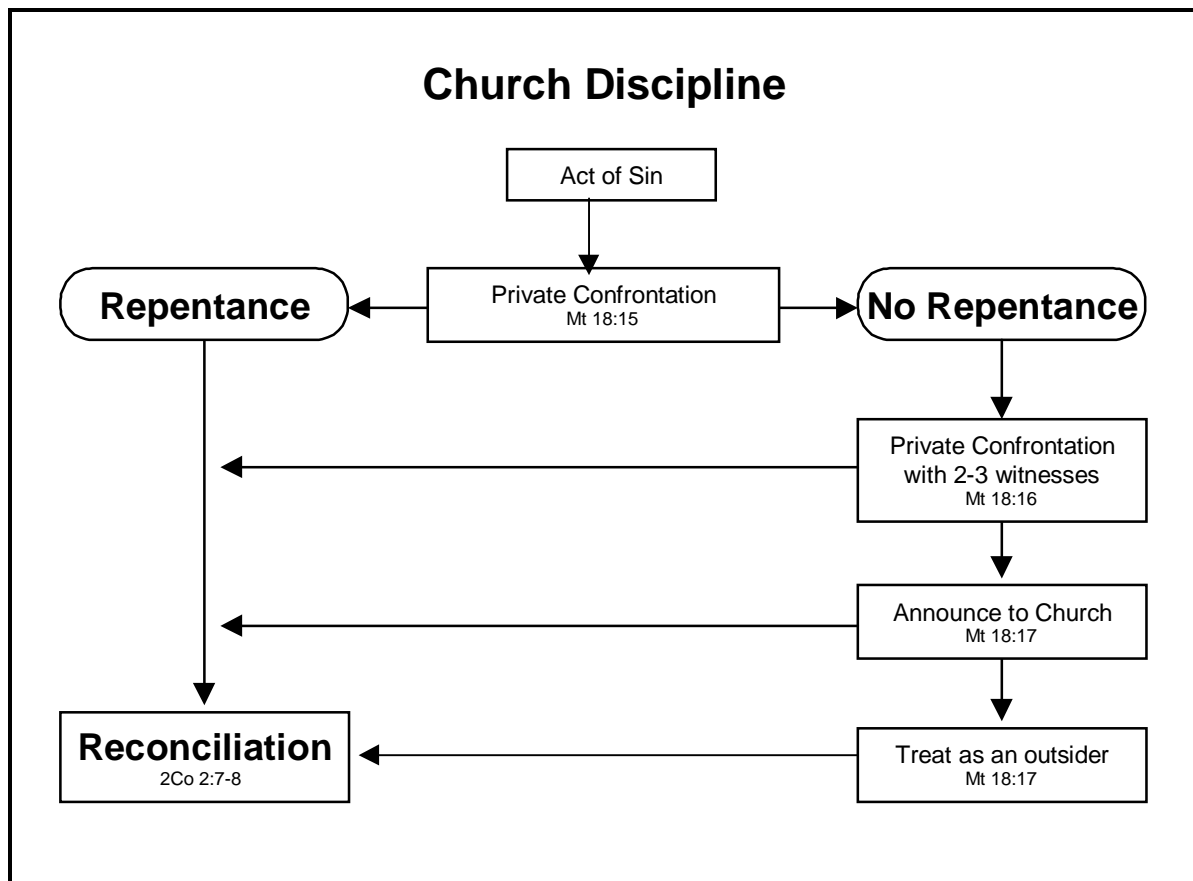
### **C. Restoration of the Repentant Brother Is the Goal of Church Discipline (2 Corinthians 2)**

In his second letter to the church at Corinth, Paul writes about what to do when the sinful person repents after being disciplined:

- Forgive and comfort him (v.7)
- Reaffirm your love for him (v.8)

The reason that Paul gives for this is so that "Satan might not outwit us" (v.11). Forgiveness and restoration are characteristics of God, who reconciled sinful man to Himself through Jesus Christ. When the church refuses to reflect these same character qualities of Christ, Satan gains a victory over the church. We "outwit" Satan by forgiving and restoring repentant sinners.

**Figure 15.1 Church Discipline Flow Chart**



## II. CASE STUDIES

### A. Case Study One

George is a young man who loved the Lord and was actively serving Him as youth leader in his church and as leader of an evangelistic Bible study in his neighborhood. His church, once an active witness reaching out to the community, had recently dropped from 200 to 30 members. Concerned about this, he began asking questions.

The elders became offended and asked him to meet with them. Without having an opportunity to express his concerns, he was ordered not to ask any more questions and not to discuss this with anyone. Furthermore, he was told he could no longer lead the young people nor the small group.

Feeling that the elders were unjustified in their demands, George continued his small group. The elders ordered him to meet with the whole church and he was put out of the church. Letters were sent to church leaders in the area accusing him of insubordination and disobedience to authority.

#### **Questions to Consider**

- Was George's asking questions a sin?
- Was the elders' response to his questioning correct?
- How might they have handled this in a more biblical way?

### B. Case Study Two

Samuel was an elder in his church. He had a habit of making inappropriate advances to women in the church, much to their embarrassment. Although he was not guilty of adultery, the other elders

felt that his action was inappropriate for an elder. When challenged by them, he confessed his sin to the whole church and was removed from leadership. No attempt at restoration was made.

**Questions to Consider**

- Were the other elders right to challenge Samuel's actions? On what basis?
- Were they right to move him from leadership?
- What plans for restoration might they have had?

**C. Case Study Three**

James was a pastor who was greatly appreciated by his church. When it was learned that his unmarried daughter was pregnant, the elders were divided about what actions they should take. Some said that it was not his sin; he was already suffering from embarrassment and concern for his daughter and should therefore be treated with grace. Others said that he was not fulfilling the biblical requirement for an elder to control his family and should therefore be disciplined. But because they had no one to take his place and because he was loved by the people, they decided to do nothing.

**Questions to Consider**

- Were the elders right to ignore the problem?
- How might they have responded to this problem in both grace and truth?

**CONCLUSION**

Church discipline is not only biblical but is a necessary part of church life. The reason for this is not punitive, but the restoration of spiritual health to the individual and the local church. Every local church should prayerfully and carefully develop a church discipline policy.

**ACTION PLAN**

- Read 1 Corinthians 11:29-32 and answer these questions:
  1. Why were there weak and sick among the believers?
  2. What was the final punishment?
  3. Why does the Lord discipline His children?
- Read Galatians 6:1-5 and answer these questions:
  1. What are some of the qualifications Paul lists for restoring a brother?
  2. What is the "law of Christ" that Paul mentions?
  3. How should this law be applied in restoring a brother?
- With your team, develop a church discipline policy for your new church.

THE CHURCH

16

LESSON

# Corporate Worship in the Local Church

## FORM AND FUNCTION IN WORSHIP

### ☞ Lesson Purpose

The purpose of this lesson is to help church planters think through how form and function relate to the local corporate worship service.

### ☞ Main Points

- Worship must be conducted in spirit (heart) and in truth (mind).
- God is the audience of worship.

### ☞ Desired Outcomes

When the content of this lesson has been mastered, each participant should...

- Understand the difference between the functions of worship and forms of worship in the corporate worship service of the local church.
- Understand how to make the worship service of the new church plant culturally relevant.

### ☞ Suggestions to Trainers

This session should be presented in such a way that there is plenty of interaction. Begin the lesson by having trainees share various types of worship services in which they have participated. What forms of worship have they experienced and how did they feel about practicing these forms? How much congregational participation was there? The questions at the end of the lesson can be used for discussion as well.

## INTRODUCTION

Think about some of the varieties of worship services you have experienced. Consider what took place in these services – the kind of music, prayer, preaching, reading of Scripture, special events, etc. In what ways did those services help or hinder you in worshipping God?

One of the most divisive issues in the Church today is the issue of worship forms in the corporate worship services of local churches. Some churches prefer a quiet contemplative style; others prefer a more enthusiastic style. Some use no instruments; others use only an organ or piano. Still others use a variety of instruments, such as electronic keyboard, guitar, trumpet, violin, flute, drums, cymbals, and other types of musical instruments. Some churches have choirs or praise bands. Others have a single worship leader.

Unfortunately, for many people, public worship is just a ritual or a duty to be performed and endured, rather than an inspiring experience. Throughout the world, churches that are growing and multiplying are those in which people want to come to the worship service because it helps them have a meaningful encounter with God and His people. Little church growth happens when people attend worship services out of a sense of duty or because they are doing God a favor.

The corporate worship service is the time when all of the members of the church come together to worship God. As your newly planted church begins to hold corporate worship services, it is important to understand the function of worship and then be able to choose relevant forms of worship which fulfill those functions and

Throughout the world, churches that are growing and multiplying are those in which people want to come to the worship service because it helps them have a meaningful encounter with God and His people.

draw people into an encounter with the living God. (Refer to Church Lesson 3, "Form and Function" in Manual One).

It is important to develop a philosophy of worship that guides the planning and preparation of your worship services. A philosophy of worship is simply a statement of why and how your church or cell group plans to conduct worship. It should be based on biblical principles and include the important biblical functions that relate to worship. It will serve as a guide to help you prepare truly God-honoring, scriptural, and uplifting times of worship. It will hinder you from simply copying past traditions that can be stale or uninspiring.

A philosophy of worship will help you prepare truly God-honoring, scriptural, and uplifting times of worship.

## I. THE FUNCTION OF WORSHIP

Corporate worship celebrates the centrality of God in the life of the church. God is worthy to be worshipped. He is in ultimate control of the universe. He has a pure love for His creation and His creatures. He has also called us to be a part of His family here on earth. All of these things are sufficient cause for great joy and celebration. Worship, then, is our joyful, grateful acknowledgment of God's absolute superiority and moral goodness. In worship we use all of our being—mind, will, emotions, and body—to convey something of that profound joy which is inexpressible in terms of ordinary conversation but can be comprehended by the spiritual part of who we are.

### A. To Give God Praise and Thanksgiving

Throughout the Scriptures, God's people are commanded to give praise and thanksgiving to God. We also see many examples of biblical characters paying homage to their Creator, from Abraham in the book of Genesis to the apostle John on the island of Patmos. Several different terms were used in both the Hebrew and Greek languages to describe praise to God. By looking at some of these terms we can get a more detailed picture of the essence, substance and nature of worship.

#### 1. Hebrew Terms

- *halal*<sup>1</sup> and *tehillah*<sup>2</sup> - *Halal* is the most frequently used word in the Old Testament for praise. It occurs some 88 times. Its primary meaning is "to produce a clear sound." It also means "to boast, to celebrate, to rave about, to glory in...." True praise should have a clear and distinct sound. There should be no confusion as to what is intended. *Tehillah* (derived from *halal*) emphasizes singing. We sing forth a clear song of praise to God. Sometimes worship songs and hymns are obscure and abstract. Worship songs should clearly and unmistakably contain praise to God (2Ch 20:21-22a, Ps 71:8; 107:32).
- *zamar*<sup>3</sup> - the meaning is "to touch or play the strings." It also has the sense of "singing praise to the accompaniment of musical instruments" (Ps 9:2; 33:2; 149:3).
- *yadah*<sup>4</sup> and *todah*<sup>5</sup> - To revere or worship with outstretched hands. To give praise or thanks. To give adoration with extended hands (1Ch 16:8, Ps 97:12; 99:3).
- *shachah*<sup>6</sup> - to stoop, to fall down before, to prostrate oneself physically in homage before a person to whom honor is due (Ge 23:12, Is 60:14a, Ps 29:2b).

#### 2. Greek Terms

- *proskuneo*<sup>7</sup> - to fall down and kiss the feet of one who is worthy of honor (Mt 2:11, 1Co 14:25, Re 19:4).

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<sup>1</sup> הלל

<sup>2</sup> תהלה

<sup>3</sup> זמר

<sup>4</sup> ידה

<sup>5</sup> תודה

<sup>6</sup> שחה

- *aineo*<sup>8</sup> and *epaineo*<sup>9</sup> – to laud or praise God (Lk 19:37, Ac 2:47, Re 19:5).
- *eucharisteo*<sup>10</sup> – thanks given to God to express gratitude (Lk 17:16, 1Th 5:18; Rev 7:12, 11:17).
- *humneo*<sup>11</sup> – to sing a hymn (Mt 26:30).
- *psallo*<sup>12</sup> – to play an instrument and sing (Eph 5:19, Jas 5:13).
- *doxazo*<sup>13</sup> – to glorify (Jn 17:1b, 1Co 6:20b, Mt 9:8).
- *Eulogeo*<sup>14</sup> – to bless and praise (Mt 5:44, Mk 10:16, Lk 24:53).

These Hebrew and Greek words demonstrate that true worship is honest emotion from the heart and is directed to the Lord for His praise and honor. It is also clear that there is and should be a variety in worship—in music, instruments, and other forms.

## B. To Give God Service

True worship is impossible apart from the total surrender of one's life to God and the living out of that surrender in acts of service and ministry. Key terms used to describe this function of worship in the Bible are

- *abad*<sup>15</sup> (Hebrew) – to work for God; to serve God; to be obedient to His commands (Ex 7:16, Dt 10:12, 1Sa 7:3, 2Ch 33:16, Ps 100:2).
- *latreuo*<sup>16</sup> (Greek) – to worship or serve God (Mt 4:10, Ac 27:23, Rev 7:15).
- *latreia*<sup>17</sup> (Greek) – to serve God; to stay before God (Ro 9:4b; 12:1).

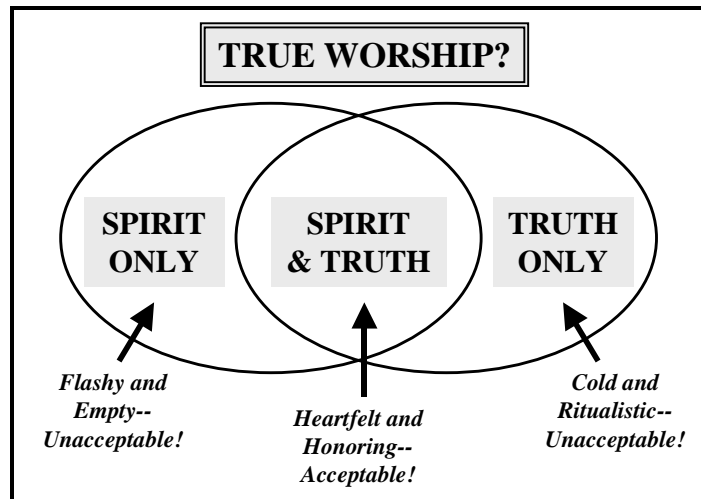
## C. Jesus' Perspective on Worship

In His discussion with the Samaritan woman (John 4), Jesus revealed another truth about worship of God. He stated that God is not so much concerned about *where* we worship Him (place), but *how* we worship Him (attitude)—*in spirit and in truth*. By *how*, Jesus was not referring to the *forms* of worship. He was indicating the importance of our emotional and intellectual involvement in the process, rather than relying on a place or a ritual as the Samaritans and Jews were doing in that day.

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<sup>7</sup> προσκυνεω  
<sup>8</sup> αινεω  
<sup>9</sup> επαινεω  
<sup>10</sup> ευχαριστεω  
<sup>11</sup> υμνεω  
<sup>12</sup> ψαλλω  
<sup>13</sup> δοξαζω  
<sup>14</sup> ευλογεω  
<sup>15</sup> עבד  
<sup>16</sup> λατρευω  
<sup>17</sup> λατρεία

**Figure 15.1 True Worship**



The only acceptable worship must include both components. If we worship in spirit only, we run the risk of worshipping an idol or misrepresentation of the one true God because we know nothing of Him. This does not please God. On the other hand, if we worship in truth only, our worship is cold and lacks a sense of love and intimacy with God. This kind of worship does not please Him either. *Rather, God wants us to understand the truth with our minds and worship Him with feeling from the depths of our heart.*

God wants us to understand the truth with our minds, and worship Him with feeling from the depths of our heart.

#### **D. Components of Corporate Worship Services**

Throughout Church history, corporate worship services of local churches have expressed biblical worship through the following components:

- Songs, hymns and music – singing of the Word, and songs of celebration, praise and thanksgiving (focus our emotions and inner being on God).
- Sermon – preaching of the Word (focuses our service on God, by calling us to obey Him).
- Bible reading – public reading of the Word of God (focuses our minds on God by bathing it in the truth).
- Prayer – communication with God (prayers of praise, adoration, confession, intercession).
- Sacraments - The Lord's supper, Baptism
- Tithes and offerings - giving of material possessions to the Lord
- Special events – special music, poetry reading, drama, sharing of testimonies, etc.

The forms of these components vary widely from church to church, according to denominational tradition and local culture. For example, some churches celebrate the Lord's supper weekly; others celebrate it on the first Sunday of the month. Some churches meet on Sunday mornings for corporate worship; others meet every evening or twice a year. Worship music varies widely. Determining appropriate forms for corporate worship is discussed below.



## II. HOW TO DETERMINE APPROPRIATE FORMS OF WORSHIP

As we discussed at the beginning of this lesson, and have seen throughout the Scriptures, there is a variety of forms of worship. What factors should you consider as you plan your corporate worship services? This is an important issue for you and your emerging church leadership to think through. The forms you choose for worship will vary widely from one geographical area or culture to another. Even in the same city, people from various age, educational, ethnic, cultural and denominational backgrounds will express their corporate worship to God in different ways. The forms of worship should allow people to express both the facts of their faith in God (truth) and the emotions and feelings of their relationship to the Lord (spirit).

Even in the same city, people from various age, educational, ethnic, cultural and denominational backgrounds will express their corporate worship to God in different ways.

The forms should allow people to draw nearer to God. The key to planning a worship service, therefore, is to find out how the people in your target area most naturally express love, joy, confidence, and deep relationship. These are the signs of true worship. Worship must never be stilted, cold, or expressed in a way that is contrary to the nature and feelings of the believer. It should honestly and clearly express our feelings for the Lord, and our thoughts toward Him.

## III. CORPORATE WORSHIP AND CHURCH PLANTING

As we have seen earlier in these materials, one of the purposes of the Church is to exalt the Lord. Therefore, corporate worship is an important function of the Church. Public worship is more than just private worship done in a public place. The Old Testament and particularly the Psalms are full of examples of God's people worshipping Him together. In the New Testament, many of the problems addressed in the epistles were related to the practice of corporate worship (e.g. 1 and 2 Corinthians). Believers are exhorted not to forsake the habit of meeting together (Heb 10:25). Corporate worship is not entertainment. *The members of the congregation are not an audience – they are participants.* Some churches make the mistake of treating corporate worship services as if they were theater performances done by specialists. The congregation is the "audience" and the worship leader and pastor are the "actors on the stage." Corporate worship is to be entered into by the entire congregation.

God is the audience of worship.

Corporate worship glorifies God, provides a forum for displaying unity in the Body of Christ (Jn 17, Ac 2), and strengthens the body of Christ through the exercise of spiritual gifts (1Co 12:7ff, Eph 4:12,13). This is a testimony to the world of God's presence in the midst of His people. Though attending worship services is not a primary means for evangelism, God does use corporate worship as one means of drawing sinful people to Himself. However, this worship must be honest, from the heart, and not just a routine or ritual.

The quality of worship services does seem to have an impact on church growth. Between 1994-1996 the Institute of Church Development in Germany performed a worldwide study of characteristics of growing churches (*Natural Church Development*, 1996). They surveyed over 1000 churches in 32 countries on five continents. One of the study results showed that a key characteristic of growing churches was inspiring and joyful worship services. Participants in these churches looked forward to attending the services because they had a meaningful encounter with God and His people and were encouraged and built up in their faith. They came away from the service desiring to be more obedient to God—to love and serve Him more deeply and to share Him with others.

Study results show that a key characteristic of growing churches was inspiring and joyful worship services.

## CONCLUSION

Corporate worship of God is one of the primary functions of the Church. God is worthy to be worshipped. Jesus stated that true worshippers worship God in spirit and truth. Throughout church history, as believers have gathered together corporately, certain components of worship services have developed in order to worship God "in spirit and in truth." These components include singing and music, prayer, Bible reading, preaching, sacraments, and special events. These components can be expressed in a wide variety of

appropriate forms, depending on denominational traditions and cultural practices. Empirical evidence shows that inspiring worship services are characteristic of growing churches.

## QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION, REVIEW AND APPLICATION

- Why is it important for God's people to gather for corporate worship? What is the purpose of corporate worship?
- What are some reasons that "inspiring" worship services contribute to church growth? What are elements of an "inspiring" worship service?
- What does it mean to worship the Lord in the splendor of His holiness? (1Ch 16:29).
- According to your church or denomination, are bowing down and kneeling function or forms of worship? (Ps 95:6). If form, what is the function?
- According to your church or denomination is the lifting of hands in worship function or form? (1Ti 2:8). If form, what is the function?

## ACTION PLAN

- Do an inductive study of worship in Revelation 4:8-11 and 5:9-14. Be sure to answer the "Who?", "What?", "When?", "Where?", "Why?" and "How?" questions.
- Make a list of observations of ways the people in your target area most naturally express love, joy, and deep relationship.
- Consider your new church plant. Which of these forms are appropriate to express worship of God in your corporate worship service? What are forms from your denominational tradition which may be appropriate also? Which ones might be inappropriate for your target people group? Discuss your findings with your trainer or mentor.

## SOURCES

- Robinson, Martin and David Spriggs. *Church Planting: The Training Manual*. Oxford, England: Lynx Communications, 1995.
- Rowlands, Gerald. *Build My Church! (Volume Two)*. Singapore: I.C.M. Publications, 1995.
- Schwartz, Christian A. *Natural Church Development*. Emmelsbüll, Germany: C&P Verlags-GmbH, 1996. (Note this book is available in Croatian, French, German, English, Portuguese, Russian and Spanish. [www.CundP.de/international](http://www.CundP.de/international)).

THE CHURCH

17

LESSON

# How To Lead Corporate Worship

## PLANNING AND PREPARING THE WORSHIP SERVICE

### Lesson Purpose

The purpose of this lesson is to equip the trainee to facilitate worship in a local church.

### Main Points

- Worship is important enough to be planned ahead.
- A worship service should follow a theme.

### Desired Outcomes

When the content of this lesson has been mastered, each participant should:

- Understand the components of a worship service and the role of the worship leader in the local church.
- Know how to lead worship effectively.
- Be able to lead an effective worship service in a newly planted church.

### Suggestions to Trainers

This lesson should be primarily discussion. Have any experienced worship leaders in the training share how they lead worship. If possible, invite experienced worship leaders from outside of the training to come and share with the trainees how they work with pastors in their churches and how they plan and prepare for worship services.

Have trainees break into small groups and actually work through the exercise in planning a worship service. Have the groups share their plans with the whole group.

## INTRODUCTION

One of the primary purposes of the local church is to exalt the Lord. Corporate worship is commanded and demonstrated by God's people in the Bible. It is a testimony to the world of God's reality in our midst. The previous lesson discussed the function of worship, components of a corporate worship service and how to determine appropriate forms of worship.

This lessons discusses the role of the worship leader, qualities of a worship leader, guidelines for leading a worship service and how to plan and prepare a worship service.

### I. THE ROLE OF THE WORSHIP LEADER

The role of the worship leader is to work with the church leadership in planning the corporate worship services. In addition, the worship leader is responsible for leading the actual worship service. This includes leading or calling upon people to lead the various components of the worship service, e.g. singing/music, prayer, tithes/offerings, sermon, the sacraments, etc.

In some churches the worship leader and the pastor are the same person. In other churches the worship leader is a member of the church leadership team and works closely with the pastor in planning and preparing the corporate worship services. In this case, the pastor usually prepares and leads the sermon and sacrament components of the worship service, and the worship leader often prepares and leads the other components (singing, prayer, offering, special events, etc.). When they are the same

person, the pastor would be responsible for all of the components of the worship service. This works well for small churches, but as the church grows God has likely placed gifted worship leaders within the church and the pastor would do well to share the leadership with these gifted people. This keeps the pastor from becoming overburdened and also provides an opportunity for leadership to develop within the church.

The same principle applies in new church plants. The church planter may choose to lead worship for a time, but as soon as gifted individuals are identified, they should be trained and released into this ministry. In this way, too, the members of the church begin to take ownership in the responsibilities of that newly planted church.

## **II. QUALITIES OF A WORSHIP LEADER**

Worship leaders should meet the minimum spiritual qualifications of any recognized leader in the church (e.g. Sunday school teacher, cell group leader, etc.); in fact, some churches require worship leaders to meet the spiritual qualifications of elder. Worship leaders need to be aware of the dramatic element of what they do. Their purpose is to lead worship in such a way that they do not draw attention to themselves but to God. They should be people who direct the congregation towards God rather than toward themselves.

In addition to the spiritual qualification of a recognized leader in the church, some other qualities of good worship leaders include the following:

### **A. A Worshiper**

A person called to lead others into worship should be skilled and adept in the worship of God. It is impossible to lead others into something unless the leader has already learned the requirements and skills of worship. This person should have a good personal worship life.

### **B. Musical Ability**

Good worship leader must be skilled in the area of music. They especially need to be skilled in leading others using music – leading singing and instrumental playing, use of background music, etc. In the Old Testament, skilled musicians led the people in corporate worship to God (1Ch 15:16-21).

### **C. Spiritual Sensitivity**

A good worship leader has developed a sensitivity to the leading of the Holy Spirit. Worship should be led by the Holy Spirit. The worship leader needs to be able to discern the leading of the Holy Spirit, and then be able to direct the worship accordingly.

### **D. Genuine Humility**

A good leader will always seek to "hide behind Christ." He should be able to control personal thoughts, feeling and emotions so that they do not intrude into the meeting. Nothing ruins the spiritual atmosphere of a worship service more quickly than an egotistical leader who projects Himself into the meeting. The leader must always seek to focus the attention of the worshipers on God.

### **E. Ability to Lead Others in Worship.**

Good worship leaders should avoid getting "lost in worship." One of the most common examples of this is a worship leader who closes his eyes and seems to forget what is happening around him. The worship leader needs to be aware of what is happening in the congregation and be encouraging the entire congregation to participate in the worship service. It is possible to be fully involved in worship and still be aware of and sensitive to the people. The leader should have a sensitivity to the Holy Spirit and at the same time be exercising a gentle influence in the service.

### III. GUIDELINES FOR LEADING WORSHIP

Worship of depth and significance requires giftedness, sensitivity to the Holy Spirit and experience. The shape of your worship service will no doubt be influenced by your own denominational tradition and your own previous experience. However, there are some basic guidelines which can help any worship service be an experience which draws believers nearer to God and pleases Him.

#### A. Theme

The service will be greatly helped by choosing a basic theme which will then be reflected in all of the components of the service – music, sermon, prayer, etc. A worship service that happens haphazardly will lack the same power and accomplish less than one that is planned to focus on a particular theme. Often a "let's just let the Spirit lead" attitude is an excuse for not making the effort to prepare ahead of time—and the service suffers as a result.

#### B. Transitions

The connections between the service components are important. A sensitive sentence or two which aims to guide the congregation's thoughts can help to smooth the transition from participation to active listening, from reflection to action. A worship leader will need to be able to sense what God is doing and possibly make small changes along the way. Using music to help make the transition between various components of a service is helpful to the flow of the service as well.

For example, after singing several upbeat hymns of praise to God the accompanying musicians may play a short interlude of music to help the congregation from a mood of victorious praise to one of quiet reflection in preparation for more quiet singing or transition to prayer or some other component of worship.

The service will be greatly helped by choosing a basic theme which will then be reflected in all of the components of the service – music, sermon, prayer, etc.

#### C. Sequence of Components

Does the flow of components in the worship service make sense? For example, should the sermon come before or after the prayer time? Should the Lord's Supper be celebrated in the beginning, middle or end of the service? Is there a balance between sitting and standing, between listening and participating, etc.? Note that some denominational traditions have patterns of worship which essentially dictate the order of the worship service.

#### D. Songs and Music

Music and singing are the main forms of worship which allow people to worship God with their emotions and feelings. There is a wide variety of "sacred" music – both traditional and contemporary. Some things to consider when selecting music for corporate worship are:

##### 1. *Ease of Singing*

Choose songs which are easy to sing and relatively easy to learn. They should be ones which the church planting team knows well. When introducing new songs to the congregation, use them in several succeeding services, so that the congregation has time to learn them well. Also, for a single worship service, introduce no more than one or two new songs. It is difficult for people to enter into worship of God if they are too distracted with unfamiliar music. Have the words of songs available in hymnbooks or photocopied sheets of paper or display them on an overhead projector. This greatly helps people to participate in the worship service.

##### 2. *Variety*

Try to include a mixture of contemporary and traditional songs and music, if at all possible. When one of the major denominations in Estonia revised their hymnbook in the early 1990's, the committee chosen for this work sought to incorporate the best of the traditional hymns as well as add contemporary hymns which had become part of the corporate worship of new

Baptist church plants. This has helped to bridge differences of worship style between older, traditional churches and newer churches.

3. *Mood*

Attempt to have a range of moods in the hymns. A song of celebration to open and a song of triumph to close can be varied with other, more reflective hymns during the rest of the service. Instrumental music can be used quite effectively to transition from celebration to contemplation back to celebration. This can often help the service from feeling "choppy" or broken up.

4. *Musical Instruments*

Musical instruments were frequently used in Scripture to express praise and worship to the Lord. The musical instruments which we see in the Old Testament (harp, trumpet, lyre, etc.) were instruments common to the people of that day. There is nothing sacred about an organ, piano or guitar. One small church in Bosnia-Herzegovina was given six organs by churches in the West, who felt that this church must have an organ in order to "properly" worship the Lord. Unfortunately, no one plays the organ, and so they sit in a basement, gathering dust. The organ is not a common instrument to that area and so is not used by the believers in their worship. Musicians who are involved in worship should "play skillfully" on their instruments (Ps 33:3). Who in your congregation is skilled in music? What instruments are most common for people of your target area?

The musical instruments which we see in the Old Testament were instruments common to the people of that day

The focus of the music should not be on the skill and talent of the musicians themselves, but rather on the greatness and majesty of God. All of the music in the worship service should serve to draw people nearer to God.

**E. Equipment**

Is the equipment to be used during the worship service properly set up and working? Taking time to come early to the service and see that equipment is properly set up and working is a great help to enhancing the quality of the worship service. Faulty equipment can be a hindrance to allowing people to participate in worship and often distracts people's focus from God.

**F. Rehearsal**

The idea of holding a rehearsal for worship is something that often produces a sense of distaste. However, worship is an offering to God, and we should be willing to give our best to God in corporate worship. Also, well-rehearsed music, drama, testimonies, etc., actually allow people to worship God more effectively. People's attention is not distracted by stumbling over words and poorly played music. Also, rehearsals help to evaluate the flow of the service and ensure that the various components of the service are fitting together meaningfully. Practice allows the worship leader to focus on the leading of the Holy Spirit during the service rather than having to concentrate on getting the music right.

**G. Prayerful Preparation**

Before the service, the worship leader, church leader, and others participating in the worship service should meet and pray together. Commit the service to the Lord, ask that it bless Him, and that the Holy Spirit will lead and guide the service. Pray for the salvation of any unbelievers who may attend, that their hearts will be drawn to repentance and faith in Christ. Pray for believers to be drawn closer to Christ. Pray for the Lord to protect the worship time from any attacks of the evil one.

#### **IV. EXERCISE IN PLANNING A WORSHIP SERVICE**

The following steps can be used to help you gain experience in planning a worship service with your church planting team. In your training class, divide into small groups. Discuss each of the following steps and use the sample planning worksheet to plan a service. Share your service plan with the other groups.

##### **A. Step 1: Choose a Theme**

What will be the theme of the worship service? Oftentimes the main idea of the sermon fits this need. For example, in the preaching lessons in this training you prepared a sermon on the passage of Ephesians 5:15-21. The main idea of this passage is: "God wants us to be filled with the Spirit because it is wise and results in joyful living." The theme then for the worship service could be: *"Be filled with the Spirit."* If this is a special day, such as Pentecost Sunday, Christmas, or Easter, your theme will probably revolve around that topic.

##### **B. Step 2: Select Songs/Music and Special Events**

What songs and hymns will you use in the worship service? Select ones which relate to the theme and which are both contemporary and traditional. Also, be sure the tempo of the music is varied—both reflecting celebration and contemplation. Will you have any special music, such as a voice or instrumental solo? Will there be a drama illustrating an aspect of the sermon? Will you have any testimonies? Be sure the testimonies you select relate to the theme.

##### **C. Step 3: Lay Out the Flow of the Worship Service**

Have a definite starting and ending time. Include every aspect of the worship service – songs, sermon, special events, prayer, Bible reading, etc. Figure 17.1 contains a sample worship planning sheet which you can use or modify to lay out the flow of the service. This planning sheet can then be used by the worship leader and pastor as a reference for the actual leading of the service.

##### **D. Step 4: List Needed Equipment**

Make a list of all equipment you will need for the worship service, such as overhead projector, overheads of songs, hymn books or song sheets, microphones, any special equipment for drama, etc. Determine who will be responsible for gathering and setting up of the equipment before and during the service.

##### **E. Step 5: Determine Rehearsal Dates and Times**

Decide when you will rehearse worship service. Be sure that all participants are notified and able to attend the rehearsals.

##### **F. Step 6: Take Time to Pray for the Worship Service**

Ask the Lord to guide and direct the worship service. Pray for people's hearts to be prepared to worship the Lord. Pray for unbelievers who may attend that their hearts would be open to the Lord. Some churches have prayer teams that pray for the worship service while it is happening. Other churches have prayer teams who come to church early and take time to pray for the service and quietly pray for those who are entering the place of worship.

##### **G. Step 7: Evaluate the Worship Service**

After the service take time to evaluate it. How were the flow and the atmosphere of worship? What needs to be changed? What should be used again? Did God meet your congregation in a special way? Were any people particularly touched during the worship service? Did anyone get saved? Incorporate what you learn from your evaluation into future worship services.

**Figure 17.1 Sample Worship Planning Sheet**  
**SAMPLE WORSHIP SERVICE PLANNING SHEET**  
**Order of Worship Service**

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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

Time	Worship Activity	Responsible Person



## CONCLUSION

Corporate worship of God is one of the major functions and privileges of the Church. Leading worship is an important task not to be taken lightly. Skilled worship leaders are a gift of God for the Church. They need to be identified, empowered and released into ministry. Proper prayer for and planning of the worship service can increase the effectiveness of the congregation's ability to worship their Creator. Picking a theme, determining the songs/music and special events, and determining the flow of the worship service are all important aspects of creating an effective worship environment.

## QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION, REVIEW AND APPLICATION

- Are there modes of expression used frequently in your culture that could be incorporated into your worship service (e.g. poetry)? How might you use the modes of expression in a worship service?
- Why is it important to take time to plan a worship service?
- What should be the role of the pastor in planning a worship service? What should be the role of the worship leader?
- Describe the flow of a worship service that was particularly meaningful to you? What elements of the service were most effective? What can you learn from this service to help you in planning worship services for your church plant?

## ACTION PLAN

- Plan and prepare a worship service. After the service, evaluate its effectiveness. What worked? What do you need to change? Share these results with your trainer or mentor.
- If possible, visit other churches in or near your target area. Observe the worship service and note forms of worship. What can you learn from your observations to apply in your own church plant?

## SOURCES

- Robinson, Martin and David Spriggs. *Church Planting: The Training Manual*. Oxford, England: Lynx Communications, 1995.
- Rowlands, Gerald. *I Will Build My Church! (Volume Two)*. Singapore: I.C.M. Publications, 1995.



THE CHURCH

LESSON 18

# The Local Church and the Bigger Body of Christ

## WORKING TOGETHER IN PARTNERSHIP

### Lesson Purpose

The purpose of this lesson is to help participants learn principles for effective cooperation and partnership with the larger body of Christ, e.g. other churches, denominations, parachurch organizations, etc.

### Main Points

- Levels of cooperation vary according to the task at hand and the characteristics of the groups involved.
- There are at least ten qualities of an effective partnership.

### Desired Outcomes

When the content of this lesson has been mastered, each participant should . . .

- Understand how to develop effective levels of cooperation and partnership for various ministry goals.
- Know the principles of developing effective partnerships.
- Participate in developing partnerships for wider church planting ministries

### Suggestions to Trainers

Use a mixture of lecture and class discussion. Have the participants discuss the issue of concentric circles of relationship. Do we actually use this approach in our personal lives?

## I. THE CASE FOR PARTNERSHIP

There are two compelling reasons for us to partner with other churches and agencies in the region or country which is our circle of responsibility. One is theological and the other is practical.

### A. The Theological Case

The theological reason is the essential unity of the Body of Christ. All those who have been born from above have been adopted into the family of God (Jn 1:12,13). That family is also called a body and it is one, not many (Eph 4:3-6). In his high priestly prayer Christ prayed for our unity so that the world might believe that the Father had sent him (Jn 17:20-21). Indeed, the mystery of the Gospel is that God has made all men one in Christ, breaking down the barriers that separated them (Eph 3:2-6; Gal 3:26-28). The divisions and competition among the different members of the Church have been an impediment to the advance of the Gospel, an offense to non-believers, and an affront to the unity of the members of the Godhead.

If we, with all of our diversity and distinctives, are part of the Body of Christ, we should begin to act like it. The world will see our unity and love and be drawn to believe in Jesus Christ.

### B. The Practical Case

In countries where the evangelical population is below 2%, it is highly unlikely that any one denomination or agency can fulfill the Great Commission in that nation by itself. The filling of the nation with witnessing fellowships of believers will take the participation of all of God's children in a nation.

Moreover, if we will do careful research, we will find that the different agencies and churches have resources needed by the others. Some churches have published helpful discipleship materials. Others have developed church based training programs, and others have specialized in contemporary worship. Some agencies specialize in media, others in youth work, sports outreach, the Jesus film, etc. Sharing those resources enriches the entire body.

If we pray together, research together and share our resources, we may find that the Lord has made available to us all that we need to complete the task. This is not to say that different denominations need to merge or plant churches for each other. They can retain their distinctives and plant churches that follow their traditions. However, it is possible for them to do that while at the same time cooperating with groups with different distinctives.

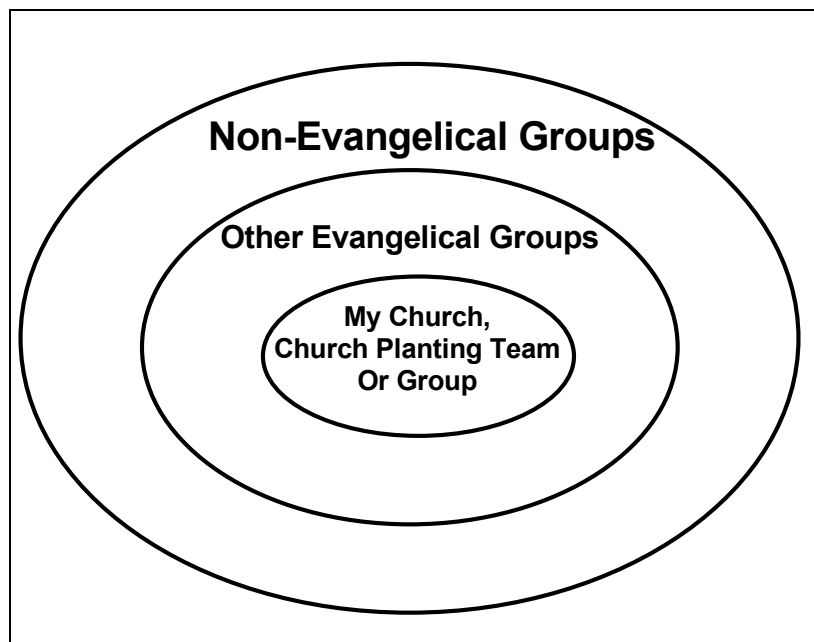
#### *A Practical Model*

Many have asked how it is possible to partner with other churches or agencies that have different distinctives without their church or agency losing its identity and compromising doctrines or traditions that they value.

It is helpful to consider the following paradigm of concentric circles shown in figure 18.1. In the center of the circle we have our local church, or church planting team, or agency. To be a part of that group, members need to agree on fundamental or core issues for there to be harmony in life and ministry. However, it is possible to cooperate with other evangelical bodies in our region in the areas of research, prayer, sharing of resources, and training in order to saturate the region with churches. The different groups cooperate at certain levels without sacrificing their own distinctives while allowing the other groups to maintain theirs.

It is also possible to cooperate with non-evangelical groups in initiatives that benefit a nation. An example here would be cooperating with non-evangelical Christian groups urging local governments to pass laws that uphold public morals and biblical values. Another example might be cooperating to provide assistance to disaster victims.

**Figure 18.1 Concentric Circles of Relationships**



#### **C. Case Study of Partnership**

Church planters from different denominations in Romania establish churches for their own denominations. However, they cooperate interdenominationally in the following areas:

- Prayer

- Research
- Church planter training
- District strategies

Each denomination retains its distinctives but benefits from the partnership in sharing of ideas and resources (for training, outreach events, etc.). All of the denominations experience greater growth and multiplication as a result of working in partnership.

## **II. LEVELS OF COMMITMENT IN PARTNERSHIP**

There are different levels of cooperation possible in a saturation church planting initiative, each successive one requiring a greater level of commitment by the participants. There is no good one or bad one. Each level of cooperation is appropriate for a specific situation. In fact it is often better for potential partners to begin at a consultation stage and, as understanding and confidence build, increase the level toward partnership. Since partnerships are based on relationships, if you begin at the partnership level you may or may not have the relationships needed to sustain the movement during the difficult days that will come.

### **A. Level 1: Ignorance (No Cooperation)**

At the first level is ignorance, which far too often is the normal situation. Christian ministries function side by side in some cities, unaware that others with the same faith and vision are serving the same area. Church planting initiatives may overlap in certain communities with others being totally ignored. Unnecessary conflict can occur.

### **B. Level 2: Awareness**

When different churches or agencies in the same area become aware of each other and recognize the other as a legitimate Christian group, a sense of community begins to develop.

### **C. Level 3: Consultation**

Consultation takes place when the different groups in an area meet occasionally to inform each other about their church planting activities and plans and commit to pray for each other.

### **D. Level 4: Cooperation or Network**

This takes place when a permanent organization of information sharing and prayer is established. The participants then agree to cooperate on specific projects with a limited time frame. For example, this could be a city-wide research effort or day of prayer and fasting focusing on an unchurched housing block.

### **E. Level 5: Collaboration or Partnership**

If a group of churches and agencies decide to cooperate in the launching of a church planter training program or an interdenominational Bible school to which each group will contribute, a partnership is underway. By sharing resources each denomination will see more churches established and greater advance for the Kingdom of God.

## **III. TEN QUALITIES OF EFFECTIVE PARTNERSHIP**

Figure 18.2 contains a table identifying 10 qualities of effective partnerships. Trust among partners is probably the most important quality of effective partnerships. Also, partnerships which do not have a clear vision or goals often do not last. The partnerships we want are those that are committed to seeing whole regions saturated with witnessing fellowships of believers.

In your own experience in working in partnership, which qualities were the most difficult to attain in the partnership? If you experienced a failed partnership, which of the qualities were missing, which contributed to the failure of the partnership?

**Figure 18.2 Ten Qualities of Effective Partnerships**

### **TEN QUALITIES OF EFFECTIVE PARTNERSHIPS**

- 1 Effective partnerships are built on trust, openness and mutual concern.**  
Partnerships are more than coordination, planning, strategies and tactics.
- 2 Lasting partnerships need a facilitator or coordinator.**  
This is someone who by consensus, has been given the role of bringing the partnership to life and keeping the fires burning.
- 3 Effective partnerships develop in order to accomplish a specific vision or task.**  
Successful partnerships focus on what (objectives) rather than how (structure). Form always follows function.
- 4 Effective partnerships start by identifying needs among the people being reached or served.**  
They do not start by writing a common theological statement. From these needs, Kingdom priorities, barriers to spiritual breakthroughs, and the resources available or needed, realistic priorities for action must be distilled and agreed upon.
- 5 Partnerships are a process, not an event.**  
The start-up, exploration and formative stages of a partnership often take a long time. Even an exploratory meeting too early will likely kill the possibility of a partnership. Ultimately, personal trust is required and that takes time to build.
- 6 Effective partnerships are even more challenging to maintain than to start.**  
Making sure the vision stays alive, the focus clear, communication good, and outcomes fulfilling takes a great concentration and long term commitment.
- 7 Effective partnerships are made up of partner ministries with clear identities and vision.**  
All partners must have their own clear mission statement and live by it. Otherwise, they will never understand how they “fit in,” contribute to the overall picture, or benefit from the joint effort.
- 8 Effective partnerships acknowledge, even celebrate, the differences in their partners’ histories, vision and services.** But ultimately, partnerships must concentrate on what they have in common, like vision and values, and ministry objectives, rather than their differences.
- 9 Effective partnerships keep focused on their ultimate goals or vision.**  
They are not distracted by day-to-day operational demands. It is often easy to focus on the “means” rather than the “end.”
- 10 Effective partnerships expect problems and plan ahead for them.**  
Be sure a process is built into the partnership for dealing with changes, exceptions, disappointments, unfilled commitments, and simply the unexpected.

*Note: “Ten Qualities” taken from a message by Phil Butler of Interdev*

### **QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION , REVIEW AND APPLICATION**

- What are some ways you can begin establishing relationships and building trust with believers in other groups in your region?
- What are specific ways in which church planters from different denominations in a city can benefit from cooperation in the multiplication of churches?
- What is God’s view of competition between evangelical Christian groups?
- How should evangelicals relate to non-evangelical communities in their region, particularly the established churches such as Orthodox and Roman Catholic?

## **ACTION PLAN**

- Consider what churches or agencies in your region fit in your inner circle, second circle, third circle.
- Review the research on your region and list the churches or ministries active there.
- Make personal contact with leaders of the groups in the first and second circles and begin to establish a relationship with them. Begin by asking them what their vision is for the region.
- Consider launching a consultation, network, or partnership focused on saturating your region with churches.

## **SOURCES**

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THE CHURCH

LESSON 19

# The Historical Impact of the Church In \_\_\_\_\_

## THE HISTORY OF CHRISTIANITY IN YOUR COUNTRY

### ☞ Lesson Purpose

The purpose of this lesson is to help participants gain a historical perspective of the role of the Church in their country. To help participants learn from the triumphs and mistakes of the Church in their country.

### ☞ Main Points

- [Varies with country]

### ☞ Desired Outcomes

When the content of this lesson has been mastered, participants should

- Understand how to articulate the basic history of the Church in their country and how it has impacted the society at large.
- Know that God has been working in this country for a long time and learn how each generation of believers responded to the mandate of reaching the lost for that generation.
- Participate in church planting ministry with a greater appreciation of the efforts of previous generations of believers.

### ☞ Suggestions to Trainers

This lesson is country specific. It is intended to be written by individuals in each country. The material found here is a suggested outline to help guide the research for this lesson. Limit the length of the paper to a maximum of 10 pages.

This lesson should be taught by having the students read the paper and then discuss highlights from the paper and lessons learned which can be applied today.

Have trainees take time at the end of the lesson to praise and thank God for the Christian heritage He has given them. Take time to pray that the Church in this generation will be salt and light to the people living in the country and that the Church will impact the world.

### **Instructions for writing this lesson**

*This lesson is to help church planters see that they are part of a historical movement of God in their country and to gain insight and encouragement from past church planting efforts. This lesson is a summation of the history of the Church in a given country. and is intended to be written by believers from that country. A suggested outline for the contents of this lesson is provided below. Visual aids, such as maps showing the current status of Christianity in the country or the historic growth of the Church, would be a wonderful resource to include in this lesson.*

## INTRODUCTION

State the purpose of the lesson and the scope of the lesson.

### I. THE BEGINNINGS OF CHRISTIANITY

Describe when Christianity first came to the country—from where, by whom?

- How did it transform the society at large?

- Note whether Christianity took on an institutional form and became a 'state religion.' How did this impact the spread of the Gospel in the country?
- Identify any significant or key Christians or martyrs.
- What were obstacles which the Christians faced? How did they overcome them?

## **II. THE GROWTH OF CHRISTIANITY**

Describe the basic growth of Christianity from the beginnings to the present.

- After the initial entry of the Gospel into the country, what other Christian movements came into the country—when?, by whom?, how?
- What impact did they have on the society at large and on the growth of Christianity?
- Discuss significant periods of history in which the Church suffered persecution, great growth or times when the Church had a great impact on social reform or seemingly no impact at all.
- Note any emphasis the Church had on sending missionaries to other lands, burden for particular people groups, or social ministries. How were these done?

## **III. THE PRESENT STATE OF CHRISTIANITY**

Describe the current state of the Church.

- What is happening in terms of growth, new denominations, etc.?
- How does the present impact of Christianity in the country compare with the impact of non-Christian or traditional religions in the country?
- What kind of impact is the Church having on society?
- What are the major issues it faces in terms of the spread of the Gospel?

## **CONCLUSION**

Identify some key lessons learned by the Church over its history.

- How can these be applied to the Church's mandate for fulfilling the Great Commission in this generation?
- What are some encouragements and warnings for church planters today?

## **BIBLIOGRAPHY / REFERENCES**

List the sources used in writing this paper. In addition, list any other reference material which may be useful for further information or study the history of Christianity in this country.

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# SPIRITUAL CHARACTER

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LESSON 14

# Reconciliation Ministry

## RESOLVING CONFLICT

### ☛ Lesson Purpose

The purpose of this lesson is to equip Christians for their job of entering conflict with grace and confidence so that they can work it through without offending others or destroying relationships.

### ☛ Main Points

- Conflict is normal and does not have to be divisive.
- Conflict resolution is a Gospel issue.
- Love is the main quality that is necessary to resolve conflict.

### ☛ Desired Outcomes

When the content of this lesson has been mastered, each participant should . . .

- Understand how the Gospel impacts our conflict situations.
- Know how to love people in conflict situations.
- Participate in resolving conflict in a biblical and healthy way.

### ☛ Suggestions to Trainers

During this session, we will view conflict in the context of the Gospel so that we see a new way to approach it. This may generate lots of discussion and questions. The participants may want to discuss how and when you should cut people off due to unresolved conflict. This lesson does not speak to that issue; rather it deals with things to do to resolve the conflict.

The concepts in this lesson are best illustrated by real examples. It will be best to share some of your own experiences, if possible.

## INTRODUCTION

We live in an imperfect world as redeemed sinners. The Scriptures tell us that "...no one living is righteous before you (God)" (Ps 143:2). At our best, we are imperfect, going through the process of being transformed little by little into the image of Jesus Christ (2Co 3:18). In this process, we say and do things—most of the time unintentionally—that offend others. Feelings are hurt and conflicts arise. While conflicts are expected in a fallen world, the truth is that if we don't work at resolving them we will end up destroying each other. As Paul says to the Galatians, *"If you keep on biting and devouring each other, watch out or you will be destroyed by each other"* (Gal 5:15).

This session deals with handling conflicts that arise between individuals, usually because of personal preferences, and not because of some obvious sin. Should the conflict be as a result of sin, or should it not be resolved by the individuals involved, it might be necessary for the church to intervene. (See Church lesson 15, Church Discipline.)

As a church planter, it is necessary for you to maintain good relationships. Although this session deals with resolving conflicts, it is obviously better if conflicts can be prevented. The first part of the 'covenant' in Figure 15.1 gives some practical steps for avoiding conflict.

How do we go about bringing others into harmony with one another and with God? As we will see in this session, God has given us the responsibility and the method for dealing with conflict. Be sure to make

personal application of these teachings. Then you will be able to help others in the "ministry of reconciliation" (2Co 5:18).

## **I. INITIAL THOUGHTS ABOUT CONFLICT RESOLUTION**

### **A. Conflicts Are Inevitable Because of Our Imperfection**

Only a perfect person could get by in this life without conflict of some type (Jas 3:2). Each one of us could probably tell stories of conflicts we have had with others. While we agree *theologically* with Galatians 5:24—*"Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the sinful nature with its passions and desires,"*—*experientially* we know that we fall far short of a sinless life. So, we should not be taken by surprise when a conflict arises. At the same time, we shouldn't fatalistically accept conflicts as a necessary part of our lifestyle as Christians. We will study how Christ would have us resolve conflicts and be reconciled to each other.

### **B. The Difficulties of Confrontation**

Some conflicts can be easily resolved by confessing the error, asking forgiveness of the other person(s), and making appropriate changes. Other conflicts may require confrontation. What comes to your mind when you hear the word 'confrontation?' Normally, we think of something 'negative.' The following common assumptions about confrontation are not really true, but they keep people from dealing with others openly:

1. Confrontation is always destructive.
2. When involved in confrontation, the most important thing is to win.
3. Power wins out at the end of the conflict and confrontation.
4. Confrontation and conflict destroy relationships.

None of the above statements is true. But because we often think they are true, they keep us from dealing with relationship problems from time to time.

When we as Christians talk of confrontation in a conflict resolution context, we are talking about approaching another person with whom we are in conflict with a spirit of love and a desire for reconciliation. This doesn't mean that we should skirt around the truth and avoid the root issues. We are to speak truthfully to each other because we are all members of one body (Eph 4:25). We are to "not let any unwholesome talk come out of (our) mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs..." (Eph 4:29).

### **C. The Results of Avoiding Resolving Conflicts**

Refusal to engage in conflict resolution at church, home, work, or with friends can actually be harmful. Maybe you have been taught that it is best to keep silent, but when that happens, anger builds up inside and begins to eat away like cancer. Ephesians 4:26-27 advises us to "not let the sun go down while you are still angry." If we do, we "...give the devil a foothold."

#### ***Example #1***

A person in your newly-planted church has some habits that are not easy to live with. He makes his way through the whole church trying to make friends and build relationships without success. Eventually, he knows he is not wanted and either stops participating in the church or moves on to another.

#### ***Example #2***

A woman in a church had a hygiene problem. She needed someone to talk with her about this. When those in her church finally approached her, it was tough and there was risk involved in doing it. The woman could have been very angry and terribly embarrassed. But it was done in love and she was able to take it. Love meant approaching this woman in order to help her, not pulling away.

*Take a few minutes to explain how you would confront the person in each of the above illustrations.*

## II. CONFLICT RESOLUTION IS A GOSPEL ISSUE

### A. The Gospel Sets Us Free to Deal with Conflict

The Gospel sets us free to approach other people about issues that have affected us. To fully experience that freedom, we must first understand our own weaknesses and fears. When we understand the issues that have affected us, we can face confrontation without threat.

The following are common reasons people avoid conflict situations. As our fears concerning conflict are seen, it becomes clear how the Gospel really is the issue.

- Fear of being wrong
- Fear of losing the fight
- Fear of rejection
- Fear of what others will think
- Fear of being confronted in return

Can you relate to any of these fears? If so, then perhaps the problem is what you think of yourself. The person with the above fears might love to minister... but he or she has a greater concern about his or her reputation or personal feelings. If, however, a person thinks about the Gospel, then he or she understands that Jesus is the one who gives righteousness and reputation. In such a case, the fears above are not really issues. Our security and reputations are in Christ. We are driven by the desire to minister and love, not by fear, punishment, or looking good. People feel a lot safer with other people who are not overly concerned about their own reputations. Understanding your position in Christ can give you confidence to confront others openly.

Understanding your position in Christ can give you confidence to confront others openly.

### B. The Gospel Provides the Pattern for Resolving Conflict

In writing to the church he planted in Ephesus, Paul describes the conflict that had existed between the Jews and the Gentiles as well as the reconciliation that is available by the cross (Eph 2:11-16). The very nature of the Gospel itself shows us how to love one another even in conflict.

When in conflict with another person we naturally think, "I am right and you are wrong." When we do this we cling to our own righteousness and demonstrate our blindness to our own shortcomings and sin. We simply don't want to admit our own inadequacies or our need for forgiveness.

In contrast to the "I am right and you are wrong" attitude, the Gospel message provides an example of a very different approach to conflict. In resolving the ultimate conflict between mankind and his Creator, Jesus gave up His rights, took a very humble attitude (Phil 2:5-8) and suffered (1 Pet 3:18), making resolution possible.

What would it be like if we took this attitude with others? Would not conflict be easier to resolve if we were more willing to take the humble position instead of protecting our own pride? This is the attitude Jesus has for us. His example leads us to life in which we can give up our "right to be right" and consider the needs of others above our own (Phil 2:2-3).

## III. NEW TESTAMENT TEACHING ON CONFLICT RESOLUTION

### A. Matthew 18:15-17

Jesus gives a very clear picture of what He expects of His followers concerning resolving conflicts. Read this passage and note the principles Christ gives for resolving conflicts.

- List the principles found in this passage.
- Note that the parable of the lost sheep precedes this passage and the parable of the unmerciful servant follows these instructions on conflict. What do you think this context has to say about verses 15-17?

One Christian group working in Eastern Europe has written the following relationship covenant based on this passage. It is a model that could be used in your church.

**Figure 15.1 Sample Covenant for Conflict Resolution**

We, the members of \_\_\_\_\_, taking seriously the instruction of Scripture to live in harmony as brothers and sisters and show to the world the love of Christ through our love for each other, do hereby covenant with each other the following:

1. I will be careful to protect the integrity and honor of other team members by not accepting or participating in gossip about other team members.
2. I will encourage and pass on positive comments about other team members.
3. I will practice the biblical teaching about conflict resolution (Mt 18:15-17a) and forgiveness (Mt 6:12; Eph 4:32).
4. I will remind and encourage the bearer of any negative comment to go to the person in question and seek to resolve the conflict among themselves.
5. I will actively seek the reconciliation and restoration of any who might transgress this covenant, and will expect that the same would be done for me if I should fail.

Biblical principles for conflict resolution as presented in Matthew 18:15-17a for sin committed by one team member against another:

1. All conflicts should be dealt with on a one-to-one basis. No one, including the team leader, will listen to a complaint until that person has prayerfully attempted to resolve the conflict with the other person.
2. Only those within the 'circle of offense' need to be included in the resolution process.
3. If the conflict is not resolved at the one-to-one basis, then the team leader should be consulted. (If the leader is part of the circle of offense, then another team member, but not a spouse of those involved, will be chosen by those involved to arbitrate.)
4. If the conflict is still unresolved, it will then be brought before the team leader and two other witnesses (but not the spouses).
5. If resolution is still not attained, the matter will then be brought before the entire team for a decision.

## **B. 2 Corinthians 5:17-21**

We are to approach conflict in a way that is radically different from the world. As we said earlier in this lesson, Jesus took on our sin so that we could have His righteousness (2Co 5:21). Note Paul's words to the Corinthians in that context:

*All this is from God, Who reconciled us to Himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: that God was reconciling the world to Himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them. And He has committed to us the message of reconciliation. We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God was making His appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God" (2Co 5:18-20).*

It is interesting to note that right after Paul describes the reconciliation we have in Christ with God, he makes it known that Christ has given us the *ministry of reconciliation* and that we are *Christ's ambassadors*. By using this terminology, Paul implies that we do for others what Christ has done for us.



#### IV. LOVING OTHERS

When looking at conflict situations, it is important to work toward restoration of the relationship. Confrontation is an opportunity to help people. The intent is never to punish or destroy. An attitude of love towards the people we work with is crucial.

Matthew 5:40-41 is a wonderful place to see what Jesus says to do with people who oppose you. We love enemies and pray for those who persecute us (Mt 5:44). We are told to do things that surprise people, like walking two miles instead of one (Mt 5:41), or giving people more than they ask for (Mt 5:40). This is the love offensive that Jesus tells us to engage in. These are the weapons that He gives us to do battle with.

In Romans 12:14-21, we see the same thoughts being expressed by Paul as we just saw in the words of Christ. The attitude the Christian is to express in facing a hostile environment is one of blessing, identification with those around him, living in harmony with others, not taking revenge, overcoming evil with good.

##### **Example**

A young Christian doctor was doing a year of social service in a government hospital. All her supervisors were non-Christians and gave her a very difficult time. After several months, she was ready to quit and return home. When counseled about how to resolve the conflict, she was told to overcome evil by doing good to those who were persecuting her. Her simple solution was to bake a cake and take it to her supervisor as a gift. That simple gesture, plus plenty of prayer, broke the resistance of her supervisor. The remaining months of her social service were quite different from the previous ones. Not all situations will be resolved so easily. But we must believe that there is a solution to every situation, because Jesus Christ is sovereign over this world.

#### V. PRACTICAL HELP FOR CONFLICT RESOLUTION

##### **A. How to Approach Conflict**

###### *1. Discern your personal motives.*

It is crucial to look at what you are thinking when you are in conflict with another. Is this motivated by pride or by a loving desire to minister? You will never have perfectly pure motives, but it is very important that you know this problem and ask God to expose it in your life before you go and talk to someone else about this problem. Remember the log and the speck (Mt 7:3-5).

###### *2. Do not assume you understand the entire situation.*

Assumptions are deadly in conflict. Never assume you know it all and never listen to just one side. Assume only that you really do not know the whole story and it is important that you find out. Listening and asking questions are crucial here.

##### **Example**

One Sunday morning at a new church plant in Europe the overhead projector was missing. Everyone thought it was stolen. All the music had to be changed and the service was delayed. Finally, one of the members came in with the projector. The leaders naturally assumed that he had borrowed it and were furious with him for not returning it on time. Later, they learned that another ministry that used the same building had borrowed it and handed it to him as he was walking into the building so they would not have to face the embarrassing situation!

###### *3. Begin with yourself.*

If the problem is between you and another person, it is good to assume you have done something to hurt the other person. If you understand the Gospel and what Christ has done for you, then you are not above doing this. It would be helpful to find out how you have hurt them so that you can correct it. Discern the root cause of the conflict. The normal tendency is to look at the obvious, visible parts of the conflict. For example, let us suppose that we have

gossiped behind someone's back, and word has gotten back to the person...and the person is now angry with us. The obvious thing is that we have gossiped, maybe repeating some things that were not true. But the real issue, the root issue, is a lack of loyalty to that person to protect his integrity. That disloyalty is what we need to deal with. Maybe we became entangled in the gossiping because we were jealous of that person and wanted to see him knocked down from his privileged place. Again, the jealousy is what needs to be dealt with, confessed, and repented of.

4. *Begin with encouragement.*

It is best to begin with encouragement when bringing criticism to another person. There must be things that are good about them, and you need to temper what you are saying with some good things as well. Encouragement is good for the heart (Pr 15:30; 25:11).

## **B. Taking Criticism from Others**

1. *Look at it objectively.*

Some criticism is good and some is bad. Some is helpful and some is harmful. Do not take criticism at face value. Hold it in front of you and examine it for truth. There are usually nuggets of truth in all criticism. Take the bits that are helpful and apply them to your life and throw out the rest.

2. *Do not take it to heart until it has been confirmed.*

Check criticism with others before you take it seriously. Ask trusted people if they agree with this assessment of you.

3. *Listen with the view, "I am just glad they don't know it all."*

Understanding the Gospel makes it easier to live with criticism. We know our life is in Christ and we know we are 'sinners.' Seeing sin is no big surprise to us. Sometimes it is painful to see how our sin hurts others, but seeing it and repenting of it brings more glory for Jesus, and that's what we want. The Gospel means that criticism is not lethal, nor is it unexpected. It is a means of growth in the grace Christ provides.

## **CONCLUSION**

Unresolved conflict can be one of the most damaging things to personal and interpersonal life. If you have unresolved conflict with another believer, co-worker or family member, take the steps now to seek reconciliation. May we find the courage to love others as Jesus loves us.

## **QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION, REVIEW AND APPLICATION**

- Why do people hesitate to confront others?
- When has someone's confrontation with you been a real blessing?
- In what ways can it be harmful to avoid confronting a brother or sister in Christ about an offense?
- What are some things you can do to make confrontation easier to take?

## **ACTION PLAN**

The following exercise will help you to practice conflict resolution in your personal relationships:

- Review your relationships and see if there are people whom you have offended—or who have been offended by you.
- Discern the root causes of the conflict—and deal with the root issues.
- Talk with the person(s) and seek reconciliation and resolution to your conflicts.

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LESSON 15

# Moral Integrity of Church Planters

## DEALING WITH MONEY, SEX & POWER

### ☛ Lesson Purpose

The purpose of this lesson is to encourage church planters to enjoy the good things God has given them, while being wary of the snares that Satan is setting for our abuse of money, sex and power.

### ☛ Main Points

- Honest believers should acknowledge their own propensity to fail in moral integrity.
- Satan usually attacks in the areas of money, sex, and power.
- Without the supernatural virtues, available by God's grace, we cannot be good.

### ☛ Desired Outcomes

When the content of this lesson has been mastered, each church planter should . . .

- Understand some of the schemes of Satan that keep him from enjoying the good provisions of our Creator.
- Know basic principles for proactively pursuing moral integrity in areas of popular compromise.

### ☛ Suggestions to Trainers

It could be easy to fall into the pattern of telling the tantalizing details of known failures in the nation or of ranting against the evil of our day. Doing so would miss the point. We already know too much of the scandal; solutions are needed. Chose rather to lift up the positive illustrations of Scripture AND from your life and ministry experience.

## INTRODUCTION

Satan is not very creative. Think of the moral failures in Christian ministry; the vast majority revolve around money, sex or power. God has given good gifts to His children, but our propensity for sin, for selfish gain or pleasure, leads very often to abusive use of His provision. We can so easily be bankrupt of moral integrity. Yet, when focused on God's glory, our resources, human sexuality and influence can all be of good service for the Kingdom.

Lucifer is likely tormented to think that we, a little lower than the angels (Heb 2:6,7) will participate in his judgment. The deceiver of our souls wants us to doubt the importance of moral integrity. He who wanted to rob God of His glory is still stalking to steal the majesty and awe that will rise up to God from the worshipping communities that we will help to start. Leadership is always a choice target. The enemy of our faith will seek to dent our influence or derail us from leadership by offering the sweet temptations of money, sex and power. His ways are not new.

The moral integrity of church planters profoundly affects ministry width and depth. People are being attracted to the Gospel and are being disciplined to maturity and service—what models will they imitate? The character of church planters will invariably make a mark, both in local church plants and in the reputation of wider regional or national efforts. We are weak, but greater is He that is in us than he that is in the world (1Jn 4:4).

Leadership is always a choice target. The enemy of our faith will seek to dent our influence or derail us from leadership by offering the sweet temptations of money, sex and power.

## I. THE POPULAR TRIO; MONEY, SEX AND POWER

### A. Possessions

When we talk about possessions, we are referring not only to money but also to all possessions or resources, whether they be ours personally, or those of the Church. (See also Stewardship Lessons in Manual Four.)

#### 1. *The Warnings*

From the beginning, mankind was instructed to possess and govern the earth. All was given by the Creator to humans, the highest of all created beings (Ge 1:28-30). We are to have possessions and to handle them as stewards for God. Money, possessions and resources, in general, are available and we are expected to use them wisely. The problem is that we seldom think we have enough; we doubt the wisdom of God. The love of money is called the root of all evil (1Ti 6:10). Covetousness, envy, greed and other sins are fueled by a seemingly unquenchable lust of the eyes. Hence, Jesus' teaching in the Bible includes more references to money than any other subject—far more than even salvation. Our Savior understands mankind's struggle and has given us ample warning about the dangers inherent in the pursuit of possessions. God meant this provision to be good (and it CAN be) but we have often opened the door for Satan to use it for harm.

#### 2. *The Habits*

When Jesus was tempted in the wilderness, satisfying the desires of the flesh was the first trial (Mt 4:1-11). Challenged to turn stones into bread, the Lord replied that it was not by goods alone that man lived, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God. Pursuing food, money and possessions are not to be our priority. The antidote against this tendency is pursuing the knowledge and practice of God's ways. Each of these things is important. The disciples went fishing for food and income. Jesus encouraged followers to pay their taxes, and possessions were shared in the early church. But the question is priority; where our hearts are is where our treasure will be. Need we wonder why some of our hearts are as cold as the touch of precious metals?

... where our hearts are is where our treasure will be. Need we wonder why some of our hearts are as cold as the touch of precious metals?

The worker is worthy of his hire (Lk 10:7), and the one who does not provide for his family is worse than an infidel (1Ti 5:8). The rich young ruler may have believed and thought he was practicing those principles (Lk 18:18-30). However, Jesus, responding to his questions about eternal life, told the rich young ruler to sell all that he had and distribute it to the poor. The rich young ruler would not do it—his priorities were wrong.

*Our priority must be founded upon the truth that all we have belongs to the Lord.* We have been bought with a price and are not our own. Tithes and offerings are means of giving back a portion to corporate Christian functions. Yet all of us, especially leaders who are models, are to be God's custodians of all money, possessions, and resources in hand. Switching the use of designated funds in Christian ministry is a common opportunity for leaders; being a wise steward includes consulting those who gave the resources or others who share responsibility for their use. Good stewardship habits are to be applied whether the amount is big or small. Hence, a good measuring stick when looking for emerging leaders is; "You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things" (Mt 25:21).

### B. Sexual Purity

We refer to human sexuality and celebrate the fact that God has made us as male and female. We are different and we are intended for each other. The triune Godhead Himself features the beauty of ordered relationships. Because we were created for fellowship, it is logical that we expect divine patterns for our relationships in Christ, whether they are between husband and wife, daughter and father, women and men. We expect attractions in relationships; this is part of God's creation. And

we are expected to be custodians of all of creation. We will consider human sexuality as the entire spectrum—from simple recognition of differences to the most intimate of physical relationships.

### 1. *The Warnings*

The Garden of Eden witnessed Adam and Eve strolling unclothed with each other and their Creator; their sexuality was a beautifully accepted part of God's plan. By the Creator's design, woman was from man and she was a partner whose beauty was much appreciated by man. But when sin entered the world by disobedience, an ensuing fear and shame resulted in Adam and Eve covering up their human sexuality.

God expects and encourages the many levels of relationships ... but He also ... restricts the most intimate of communion to the highest levels of commitment.

God expects and encourages the many levels of relationships between humans, but He also gives principles for those relationships and restricts the most intimate of communion to the highest levels of commitment. Christian leaders are not exempt from the rampant lust of the flesh. Humanity, in rebellious insistence that we, not God, know best, blatantly tears away at those fig leaves, seeking to uncover and indulge in what is not our own. God is not mocked; His ways are perfect.

### 2. *The Habits*

If Jesus had yielded to Satan's temptation to accept all the treasure of the world, then He could be held accountable for hedonism—the sin of pleasure alone as life's ultimate purpose. Christ rejected doing "what feels good" and reiterated Scripture, "Away from me, Satan! For it is written: 'Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only'" (Mt 4:10).

As church planters, we are leaders with a vision—we know where we are heading. So it is with developing and maintaining moral character. Consider the example of this Old Testament hero—Joseph accepted God's standards. He was faithful, whether treated as favored son or imprisoned slave (Ge 37). He avoided tempting situations (Ge 39). Joseph refused to give in to sin.

A major part of putting human sexuality in its proper, noble place is to deal with those of the opposite sex in Christ-like fashion; with honor. Proper relationships have everything to do with attitudes that result in deliberate choices. Honor is a gift of grace. It reveals, through us, the value God gives the person. It shows the other person that you value him or her. Honor is something we give a person without their having to earn it and it is not dependent on our feelings or their giving honor to us. Ephesians 5 instructs us to deal with spouses the way Christ deals with the Church—with honor. Indeed, such expressions of high value that we should show to all those of the opposite gender are, in fact, virtues that help to guard our human propensity to take advantage. By blessing women or men in this way, we can safeguard against abusing the gift of sexuality that God has given us.

Indeed, most people evaluate others on the basis of their character. Marital fidelity is the most sacred test of character for any man or any woman. The best defense of our marriage is a good offense—cultivating a loving relationship. But, the instructions are not only for those who are married, because the temptations are real for both the married and the single church planter.

## C. **Authority and Position**

As leaders at some level, with authority and/or position, we have influence somewhere and somehow. The exertion of this influence is power. But it is pride that will usually determine for whose good—mine or others—that this power will be used. Power can be a force for evil or strength for good. As church planters, we desire that our influence be powerful and useful for the divine enabling of others to be all that God intended for them.

## 1. *The Warnings*

In 1986, when Duvalier, the dictator of Haiti, fled the Caribbean island, a military and civil trio agreed to serve in the interim and to organize democratic elections. A more graphic illustration of the corruption of power can scarcely be found. In the ensuing months, a simply attired and soft-spoken army general became a booming autocrat. Each public appearance included more medals and braids on the uniform and his face became distorted with the clenching of jaws. The corruption of power was invading; an opportunity to influence for justice and liberty was being sacrificed at the altar of pride and personal gain.

No church planter doing evangelism, discipleship or equipping for ministry hopes for anything less than the opportunity to influence their charges for good, for our Lord. We exert a kind of power, for we are taking a lead. But power is a two-edged sword; it can open paths for the work of Christ or, corrupted, it can cut a swath for selfish gain. It is always dangerous for a leader who oversteps boundaries and who uses power to fuel the pride of life.

... power is a two-edged sword; it can open paths for the work of Christ or, corrupted, it can cut a swath for selfish gain.

## 2. *The Habits*

The devil took several ploys with our Lord, alone at the beginning of His ministry. Tempting Him to throw Himself off the steeple and test whether the Father would send rescuing angels, the devil wanted Jesus to be completely pragmatic, and not to exercise His faith. If Jesus had yielded to the sin of pragmatism, there would have been no cross or salvation. Pragmatism, which only serves the moment, is destructive in the long run. Christ replied with Scripture, scolding Satan for putting God to the test. We church planters are tempted regularly to harness our power, to do whatever seems best in the short run; to practice pragmatism. Yet our concept of leadership is very different from the world's pattern of ruling. Godly handling of power will relate directly to our understanding and practice of Christ-like leadership (cf. Leadership Lesson 6, "Servant Leadership" in manual 4).

A God-sized vision for the future and a focus on desired outcomes should make church planters very dependent upon God. It is only His power that can equip us for the journey. And whereas we, as leaders, may collect allegiance from numerous followers, it is very important for us to direct their, and our, loyalty to Christ. Human beings were not created to support the attention and power now frequently given to individual human leaders. To insure that we do not use power improperly, we must share ministry and establish accountability in our church planting efforts.

## II. GENERAL PRINCIPLES FOR MORAL INTEGRITY

We are to "seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness" (Mt 6:33). Unless we put first things first, second things will not follow. Without the supernatural virtues, the natural virtues fail. Without God's *grace*, we cannot be good. Without *love*, justice turns to cruelty. Without *hope*, courage turns to blind despair. Without *faith*, worldly wisdom is foolishness to God. The two levels, natural and supernatural, hang together (Kreeft, pp. 72,73).

Temptation is inevitable, but we need not be discouraged; victory is available. We have truth to depend on and our victory over temptation is a strong testimony to both Christians and non-Christians. Let us be imitators of Christ, who "being tempted in every manner like unto man ...did not sin" (Heb 4.15).

Accountability to others has proven a helpful deterrent to failure and a source of encouragement for many. Such accountability might be between one or more close friends or co-workers. Sometimes, a small group that focuses on this, along with prayer, fellowship or Bible study, is also helpful. Some prefer a formal accountability structure and others use a less structured approach, but the principle remains; "two are better than one" (Ecc 4:9,10). With accountability, we are reinforced in our battle for moral integrity.

Races are won by those who cross the finish line. Endurance is so very important as many leaders run well but few finish well. The Bible itself provides ample illustrations of this. Let us run the race to win. We consider the life of Job and decide to look beyond our circumstances to the future. "But He knows

the way that I take; when He has tested me, I will come forth as gold" (Job 23:10). Such endurance comes from:

- looking **inward for integrity**; "let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us" (Heb 12:1).
- looking **upward for stability**; "Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith" (Heb 12:2).
- looking **outward for service**; "Make every effort to live in peace with all men and to be holy; ... See to it that no one misses the grace of God" (Heb 12:14,15).
- looking **forward with hope**; "Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us be thankful, and so worship God acceptably with reverence and awe" (Heb 12:28).

### III. BENEFITS OF MORAL INTEGRITY

#### A. A Peaceful Life

When your actions back up your beliefs, you experience internal peace. Sleepless nights and a gnawing feeling deep inside can be the results of compromising one's integrity.

#### B. A Disciplined Life

There has never been an effective leader who lacked self-discipline. Integrity is the keystone on which all other areas of life rest. The church planter who is disciplined enough to master the BIG issue of moral integrity will find that the discipline needed to conquer all other areas of life is more easily obtained.

The church planter who is disciplined enough to master the BIG issue of moral integrity will find that the discipline needed to conquer all other areas of life is more easily obtained.

#### C. A Respected Following

Effective church planters understand that respect and influence grow out of a life of integrity. Integrity is the key to sustaining leadership over the long journey.

#### D. A Positive Legacy

The church planter who leaves a legacy of moral integrity may leave a gift far greater than the sum of their other accomplishments during the birthing of local congregations.

### IV. MORAL INTEGRITY CAN BE COSTLY

Church planters, single or married, alone or in teams, will not necessarily find the road of moral integrity well-paved. Some of the strongest battles may be the very vehicles that Christ uses to transport us to a more deeply embedded character or a more visible witness for Him and His ways. We are guaranteed His presence and His power while we walk in communion. But we are not guaranteed outward success. We do not know that Zacchaeus ever regained his former wealth (Lk 19:8). Joseph served prison time, falsely accused, after he ran rather than lie with Potiphar's wife (Ge 39:12-20). And David continued to be a fugitive after refusing to take power and "touch the Lord's anointed" when he had easy opportunity to kill King Saul in a cave (1Sa 24).

Perhaps you are haunted by your sin, from the times that you have violated moral integrity. Honesty is a precious and productive virtue. Let us confess the sin that so easily entangles us (Heb 12:1) and take God at His word. He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins (1Jn 1:9). But we may have debts to pay, illnesses to treat, or relationships to mend. Let us be responsible for our past, but not allow yesterday to determine our obedience today and tomorrow. From now on, moral integrity can be a mark of our spiritual leadership and our church planting efforts can reap the benefits of upright character.

## CONCLUSION

Church planters, let us not be deluded. We may not be Noah, but the world is laughing at believers. Non-Christians continue to flaunt sinful behavior. The world's morals today are like a ship that has lost its rudder (moral integrity is gone) and what's worse, they would not know the route if they did find the rudder (absolute truth is denied). We have a life-saving mission to perform that will require every bit of our Christ-like character and moral integrity. God's word, the Bible, shows us the route. Local churches are the rudders to steer society with salt and light—to beckon back to moral integrity and to be a forum for godly fellowship. Individual followers of Christ, doing the work of evangelists, call sinners to be reconciled to God, and thus to each other.

Church planter, you are strategic to God's mission on earth. Remember to whom you belong, and act like it. Moral integrity for church planters is a fundamental necessity.

## QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION, REVIEW AND APPLICATION

- How does private failure in moral integrity affect public ministry? How about private knowledge of another servant's sin?
- If people fail in one area are they more likely to fail in another? How might Godly patterns in one area help ensure integrity in other areas?
- Does maintaining moral integrity become easier the longer you are in ministry?
- How can concrete accountability to other believers help develop and maintain moral integrity?
- While society insists on changing the rules about appropriate moral behavior, what can we do to make the continued compromise of Christian values less likely?
- We have primarily addressed the problems of money, sex and power. Consider and discuss possible relatedness between these and other areas of moral integrity: honesty, faithfulness, balance, compassion, self-control, wisdom, joy, trust, endurance.

## ACTION PLAN

- Ask your spouse and/or one or two close friends, "What one area of moral integrity do others less frequently observe in my life?"
- According to what you learn, (OR according to God's prompting after earnest inquiry on your part) pray and plan for a brief strategy that includes particular discipline(s) to strengthen that less-recognized element of your character. Perhaps this is an area of failure, but it need not be; rather it may be one where your private practice has not yet influenced others.
- Execute the strategy during at least two weeks. This need not be complex, but must be concrete.
- Report to your spouse (if married) and at least one or two friends what you have done and what you have learned in the process.
- Do all the above within three months of originally having studied this lesson.

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# PRAYER

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PRAYER  
**10**  
LESSON

# Facilitating Prayer for A Church Planting Movement

## HELPING OTHERS PRAY FOR SATURATION CHURCH PLANTING

### ☞ Lesson Purpose

The purpose of this lesson is to give church planters ideas on how to mobilize prayer in support of a church planting movement.

### ☞ Main Points

- A church planting movement requires that prayer resources be organized toward the "Z."
- Prayer leaders must be identified and developed to coordinate prayer movements.

### ☞ Desired Outcomes

When the content of this lesson has been mastered, each participant should . . .

- Know how to mobilize others for prayer in support of church planting efforts.
- Participate in prayer events that are foundational to a citywide, region-wide or nation-wide church planting movement.

### ☞ Suggestions to Trainers

Use this as a practical guide for discussing how to facilitate prayer that leads to saturation church planting. Have trainees or others share any experiences they have had with concerts of prayer, or mobilizing prayer for a city or region. Have trainees discuss what steps they can each take to help mobilize prayer in their denominations, for their city, region or nation.

Share with the trainees any resources or contact information concerning prayer movements already happening in their city, region or country..

## INTRODUCTION

At the beginning of this training, in Prayer lesson 3, "How To Facilitate Prayer" (Manual One), we discussed how the apostle Paul saw prayer as a vital aspect of evangelism and church planting. We discussed various strategies for mobilizing prayer in support of your own church planting ministries. In order for a region-wide, city-wide or nation-wide church planting movement to happen, prayer must be mobilized to focus on evangelism and church planting on a large scale. A prayer strategy for saturation church planting must be focused at the point where it matters—each village and neighborhood of every town and city of your nation and among every unreached people group.

There is a wide variety of ways in which people can organize concerted prayer for a city or nation. In Korea, it is not uncommon for churches to spend whole nights in prayer, to go to prayer mountains for periods of fasting and prayer, or to rise at 5 a.m. every morning for prayer. In America, Christians will gather for special days of prayer, such as a national day of prayer. People might set aside an hour during that day to pray specifically for the nation. In Europe, teams of people have walked the same routes as the Crusaders—from England to Istanbul—and prayed for reconciliation and conversions to Christ in cities and villages along the way.

Strategic prayer on a large scale requires certain key elements: research, vision casting, training, and finding and networking prayer leaders. In this lesson we will discuss these elements required for mobilizing prayer for city, regional or national church planting movements.

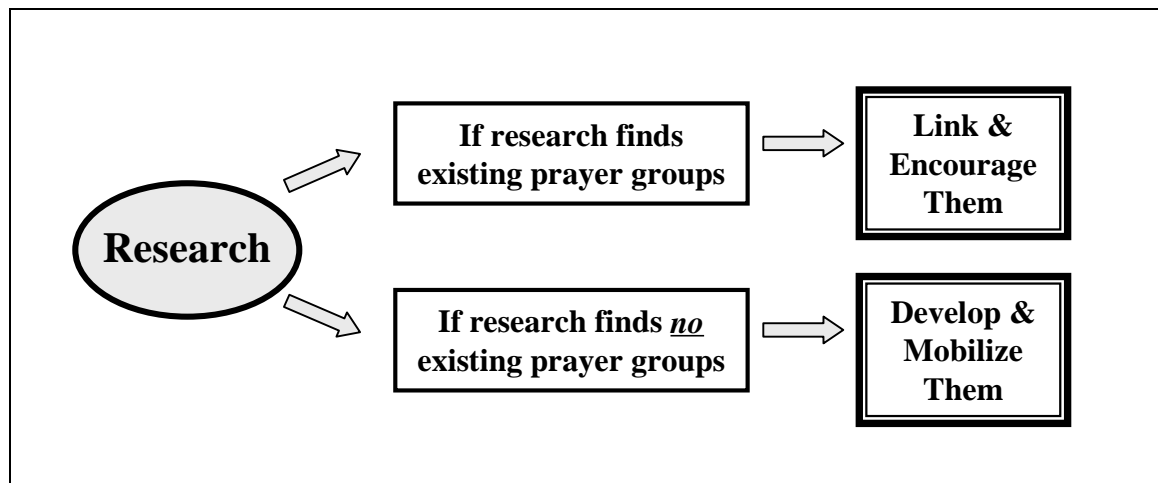
## I. RESEARCH

Because it is God's desire to reconcile people to Himself and declare His glory among the nations, it is likely that the Holy Spirit has been already giving people a burden to pray for their neighborhood, region, city or nation. The first step in mobilizing prayer on a wider scale is to seek out people who have a burden for prayer. In some nations these are highly organized groups of men or women, such as the Lydia fellowship. In other places you may come across scattered individuals who are praying by themselves for the advance of the Gospel.

The strategy you develop and implement for mobilizing prayer will depend upon what your research reveals. If you find a number of prayer groups and networks, your work may focus on linking those prayer groups with evangelism and church planting ministries so that prayer can be focused on specific advances of the Gospel. Often, the prayer groups or networks are isolated from evangelism and church planting efforts and so are a lost resource to those efforts. Your strategy will primarily focus on organizing information sharing between the prayer efforts and the evangelism and church planting efforts. Your strategy could also include encouraging and mentoring these prayer groups or network leaders into mobilizing prayer in other parts of your city, region or nation. Another part of your strategy could include bringing these prayer groups and their churches together periodically for larger concerts of prayer. Because concerts of prayer are focused on the praise and worship of God and on the advance of the Gospel, they are good for helping to promote unity among Christians, rejoice in the diversity of the body, and can be a springboard for future cooperative efforts.

On the other hand, if your research reveals very little activity in the way of organized prayer, your strategy will focus on asking the Lord to lead you to potential prayer leaders. You may also focus on vision casting and mobilizing strategic prayer at a grass roots level among believers in local churches.

**Figure 10.1 Research Results**



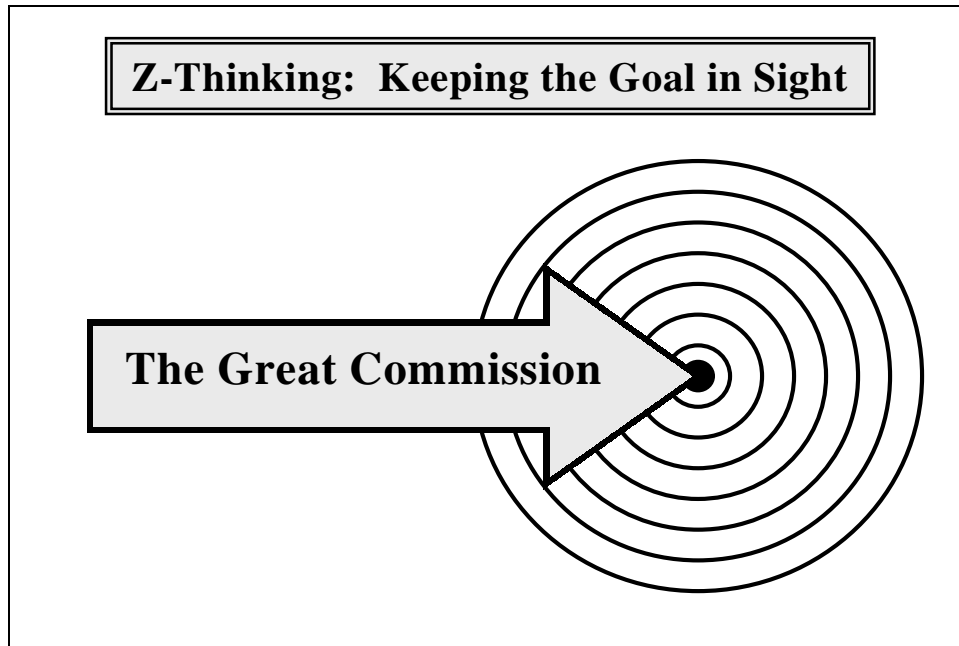
## II. VISION CASTING—WHAT DOES GOD WANT FOR THIS PLACE?

Lack of prayer often stems from lack of vision. People dedicate time and effort to things that they believe are important or for which they have a deep passion. A key element for mobilizing prayer for saturation church planting is to give people a vision for what God wants to see happen in this city, region or nation. People must have rekindled within them a passion for the heart of God—that is, His desire to reconcile sinful man to Himself, to redeem mankind from the bondage of sin and restore man to fellowship with Himself through Jesus Christ. God has chosen the people of God to be ambassadors of that good news of reconciliation to a lost and dying world (2Co 5:18-20). As Christians regain a sense of their calling as ambassadors for Christ, they will naturally want to become involved in God's purposes.

Another part of vision casting is to give people a picture of "Z"—what will their city, region or nation look like when it is disciplined? How many churches will that be? What percentage of the population would be Christian? Compare "Z" to the reality of their situation today. *How many churches currently exist?*

*About what percentage of the population are active Christians? Then pose the challenge, How many churches need to be planted in order to see this city, region or nation disciplined? How many people need to believe in Christ? (Refer to the SCP Vision lesson, "Z" Thinking, and the Church lessons, "The Purpose of the Church").*

**Figure 10.2 "Z"-Thinking**



A third element of vision casting is to help people see the strategic role of prayer in evangelism and church planting. By having them discover the prayers of the apostle Paul and the things for which he asked prayer, they will catch a vision of how important their prayers are to the advance of the Gospel in their area. (Refer to Prayer Lesson 3, "How To Facilitate Prayer.")

### **III. TRAIN AND EQUIP PEOPLE TO PRAY FOR SATURATION CHURCH PLANTING**

Once people catch a vision for what God wants for their neighborhood, city, region or nation, and the role of prayer in the advance of the Gospel, they will need to be given practical ideas and helps on how to participate prayerfully in the advance of the Gospel. You should be able to provide practical training in various methods of encouraging prayer, including:

- Prayer Triplets
- Prayer Walking
- Developing a prayer support team for a church planting effort
- Spiritual Warfare
- Sharing information between prayer groups and evangelism and church planting efforts
- Concerts of Prayer
- National Days of Prayer
- Prayer and Fasting

Most of this type of training will be born out of your personal experience of prayer in your church planting ministry. These topics have all been covered in the training manuals. Remember that prayer is more caught than taught. As people actually spend time in prayer, God will show them how to organize themselves and give them creative ways of mobilizing prayer in their own spheres of influence.

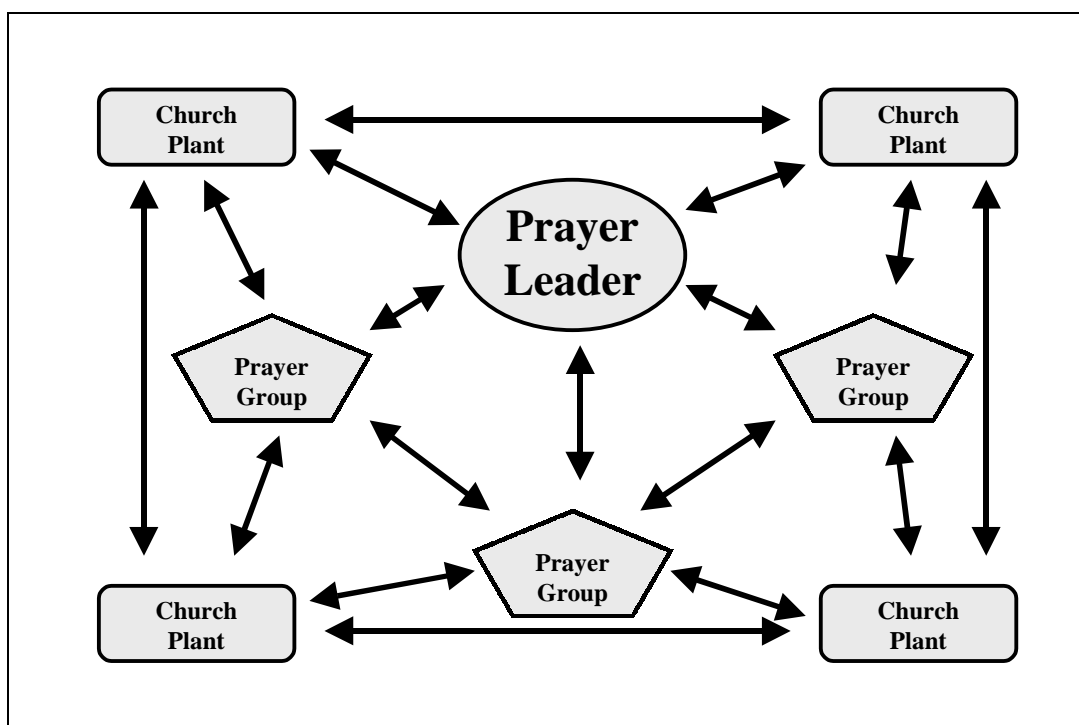
#### IV. FIND AND NETWORK PRAYER LEADERS

In order for any movement to be effective, it needs leaders. As you do research and vision cast, ask God to lead you to men and women who have a particular burden for prayer and leadership skills. These intercessors cast vision, provide training and focus prayer on issues related to the advance of the Gospel in a city, region or nation. They need to be kept informed of evangelism and church planting efforts so that they can mobilize prayer in support of those efforts. Below are some characteristics you should look for in prayer leaders:

- Have submissive and humble attitudes toward church leadership. They should not consider themselves more important than their church leaders.
- Be good facilitators of prayer meetings. They are able to keep the prayer meeting focused and able to restrain any inappropriate or unhelpful praying.
- Have a strong commitment to Christ and be faithful in spiritual disciplines, such as Bible reading, personal prayer, fellowship, etc.
- Have good relationships with people and a good reputation among the believers in their church.
- Emotionally well-balanced. Prayer leaders have learned to control their emotional swings and do not let their emotions rule their praying.
- Not prone to gossip; able to keep confidences.
- Have an understanding of and vision for saturation church planting. They are able to communicate this vision with others.
- Able to coordinate information flow between prayer groups and evangelism and church planting efforts.

Prayer leaders will function at different levels in a prayer movement. Some will be leaders of specific prayer groups—maybe in a local church, or with members from several local churches in a community. Others will be leaders of prayer networks—small groups or individuals throughout a region, city or nation, who are linked by a burden to pray for the advance of the Gospel in that area or among a particular people group. Denominations might be challenged to appoint prayer coordinators who would be responsible for helping churches in that denomination develop and implement prayer strategies.

**Figure 10.3 Prayer Leaders Facilitate Prayer**



National prayer leaders rally prayer for issues and concerns that affect an entire country. They also promote prayer for those serving in government, the military, etc. They rally prayer networks throughout the nation for specific prayer efforts and might coordinate activities, such as a national day of prayer. These national prayer leaders may be networked to national prayer leaders from other countries around the world.

**EXAMPLE:**

In Romania, the beginning signs of a prayer movement can be seen. From Alba Iulia, Romania, a group of three women began praying for each other and their husbands. They progressed to pray for their churches, their region, for the nation and for new churches to be planted. This fellowship grew to over 30 groups with approximately 150 women involved in prayer. It spread to Bucharest where a prayer brochure for Romania was produced and used all over the nation and outside the country. In Sibiu two churches which are not of the same denomination pray together. In Cluj there is a monthly women's prayer gathering open to all churches, and often unconverted women attend and some have become believers through this fellowship.

## CONCLUSION

Encouraging prayer and prayer initiatives is not a new idea. Rather, we are joining God in His work. From the time of the early Christians, prayer was considered a vital part of evangelism and church planting. Regardless of whether prayer is at a local, city, regional or national level, the goal of facilitating prayer and prayer movements is to see Christ-centered, growing churches accessible throughout each nation so that every person can hear and see the Gospel in a way which is relevant to them and their situation.

## QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION, REVIEW AND APPLICATION

- What personal experience have you had in mobilizing prayer for saturation church planting?
- Do you know of any national or regional or city prayer networks?
- What are ways in which you have kept good communication between your prayer team and your church planting ministry?
- In class take time to discuss how you as church planters can share vision for saturation church planting and prayer with other churches and within your denomination.
- Have you ever attended a prayer rally or concert of prayer? What was it like? How would you organize a concert of prayer in your city or town?
- What is God's will regarding prayer in your life? Is prayer, as a priority, a non-negotiable issue for leaders?
- Why is prayer not a more vital part of our lives and ministries?

## ACTION PLAN

Review the different aspects for mobilizing prayer for saturation church planting. Decide on what steps you can take to help mobilize prayer for your city, region or country.

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PRAYER

LESSON

11,12

# Concert of Prayer

## THANKING GOD FOR HIS FAITHFULNESS

### ☞ Lesson Purpose

The purpose of this lesson is to celebrate the goodness and faithfulness of the Lord throughout the training program.

### ☞ Main Points

- Thanking God for His faithfulness.
- Asking His blessing on our future ministry.

### ☞ Desired Outcomes

At the end of this lesson, each participant should . . .

- Be encouraged as they recall some of the Lord's blessings during the months of training.
- Be challenged to trust God for even greater things in their own lives and ministries.
- Be challenged to form or participate in a church planter's fellowship for on-going help and encouragement after the completion of these training materials.

### ☞ Suggestions to Trainers

This two-hour concert of prayer should follow the prayer lesson and should be the final closing of the Church Planter Training. Plan carefully to make it a time of encouragement, blessing and celebration. Choose three or four people to share how the Lord has blessed their church planting efforts. Then divide into small groups to give more people time to share. Finally, come back together for a time of praise and worship.

Have a map of the country and a list of unreached people groups to use during the concert of prayer. Also, Church Lesson 18 on the history of Christianity in the country can be used as a source of praise topics on God's faithfulness to the people of this country and His desire to fill the nation with His glory.

Note: Psalm 67 is an excellent Psalm to use as a theme for this concert of prayer.

## I. PRAISE GOD FOR BEING A FAITHFUL GOD

Sing together a number of songs or choruses that focus on thanksgiving to God for His faithfulness.

Ask trainees to think of any short portions of Scripture that relate to God's faithfulness, and to read them to the group as they come to mind.

## II. RECALL THE LORD'S PAST BLESSINGS

### A. To Each of Us Personally

Share brief testimonies of how the Lord has worked in your personal salvation and growth.

### B. To Our Families

Share testimonies of God's work in your family.

### C. In Your Church Planting Ministries

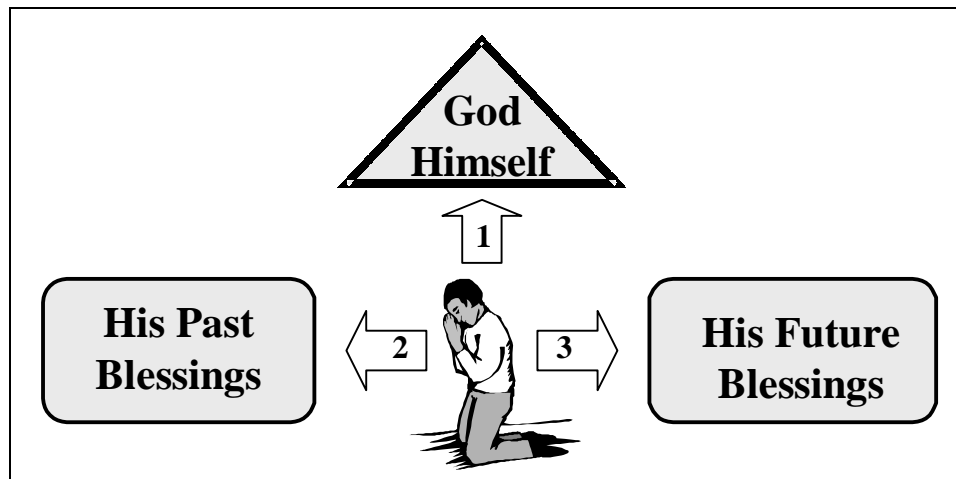
- Have three or four individuals share with the whole group ways in which they saw the Lord bless their church planting ministry or lessons which the Lord taught them during this cycle of training.
- In small groups, allow everyone who wishes to share blessings from the Lord.

### D. To the Church In Your Nation

Church Lesson 18, "The History Of Christianity In \_\_\_\_\_," discusses a basic history of Christianity in your country. Use this as a guide for prayer.

- Thank God for the first missionaries who brought the Gospel to your country.
- Thank God for preparing the hearts of the first believers to receive the Gospel.
- Praise God for Christian martyrs—those who died for their faith in your country.
- Thank Him for the missionaries that have been sent out from your country to other parts of the world.
- Praise God for His preservation of the church through history.

**Figure 12.1 Thanking God for . . .**



### III. PRAY FOR THE ONGOING WORK OF CHURCH PLANTING

In small groups, have trainees pray for each other's ministries. Pray for the advancement of God's Kingdom in the cities and regions where the church planters are working. Pray for freedom and boldness to proclaim the Gospel.

In a large group, pray for the entire nation. Ask God for the continued growth and expansion of His Kingdom to penetrate all parts of the nation. Pray that the Gospel will penetrate the unreached people groups. Use a map of the country and a list of unreached people groups to assist this prayer time.

### IV. CELEBRATE THE LORD'S GOODNESS IN SONG AND WORSHIP

Note: In closing, you might want to make plans for an on-going church planter's fellowship which could meet regionally on a regular basis (monthly or quarterly) for prayer, sharing, continuing education and encouragement of the church planters in their ministry.

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# LEADERSHIP

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LEADERSHIP

11

LESSON

# Releasing Leaders

## Lesson Purpose

The purpose of this lesson is to emphasize the importance of releasing leaders to fully function in ministry, rather than simply delegating tasks to them.

## Main Points

- Releasing goes beyond delegating—it means allowing new leaders to carry on their own ministry.
- We need to keep in contact with the new leaders we have released for ministry.

## Desired Outcomes

When the content of this lesson has been mastered, each participant should . . .

- Know the difference between delegating and releasing.
- Be committed to a ministry of empowering and releasing others.

## INTRODUCTION

This material has already discussed the importance of delegating tasks to other capable people, so that the leader is not doing all the work. Many leaders have learned that they can indeed increase their effectiveness as they spend more time training and equipping others for ministry, rather than trying to do it all themselves. However, there is another important step in the training process that goes beyond simply delegating work. This is the step of *releasing*. When we *release* new leaders for ministry, we allow them to function fully as leaders *without our control*. They make their own decisions and plan their own activities. In other words, releasing leaders means that we allow them to *carry on their own ministry* instead of simply helping us do *ours*. This is a vital distinction.

Releasing leaders means that we allow them to *carry on their own ministry*.

## I. CHURCH PLANTERS MUST RELEASE OTHERS FOR MINISTRY

The leaders of a church plant multiply themselves through the identification and development of others. Many leaders try to build their ministries around themselves, but God calls us to disciple and train others (2Ti 2:2). However, the goal should be to see those new leaders leading ministry of their own.

### A. The Example of John the Baptist

Perhaps the best example of a 'releasing leader' is John the Baptist. He appeared before Jesus, and gained a large following (Mk 1:5). He had the privilege of pointing the first disciples to Jesus (Jn 1:35-36). With this background in mind, consider John's response when the ministry of Jesus began to surpass that of John. Read John 3:22-30 and answer the following questions:

- What problem bothered John's disciples in verse 26?
- Why do you think they were concerned?
- How do you think they expected John to respond? Why?
- What word does John use in verse 29 to describe his attitude about this situation?

- What do you think about John's summary in verse 30? Was he sincere? What kind of emotion do you think he felt when he made that statement?
- How is John's response the same or different from the normal attitude of Christian leaders that you have known when someone else's ministry begins to surpass their own?

It is true that John the Baptist was excited about seeing Jesus prosper. Certainly Jesus can do nothing wrong in ministry. But what about the risk of releasing someone who might not minister as 'perfectly' as we do?

## **B. The Example of Paul**

Paul was perhaps the best example of a leader who trained and released others for ministry. The New Testament contains a long list of people who traveled with or learned from Paul, and then continued the work of the church. In addition to the more well-known leaders such as Timothy, Titus, Silas, Priscilla and Aquilla, we can find lists of others at the close of most of Paul's letters. Paul normally spent very short times at each of the churches he founded—anywhere from a week to a maximum of around two years.

How could Paul spend such a short time training leaders, and then move on and leave them in charge? Wasn't he worried that they might do something wrong? Certainly Paul was concerned about this possibility. And indeed, there were problems. The Corinthian church, for example, was a mess. But there appear to be two factors that helped Paul deal with his concerns:

### *1. The Priority of Reaching the Nations with the Gospel*

The Great Commission commands us to make disciples of all nations. This is an awesome task, but it is not optional. We must do it. Understanding this, Paul considered it more important to reach the world with the Gospel of Christ than to worry about the fact that other leaders will not do things the way he might prefer. They might even make mistakes, or other blunders. Read Philippians 1:15-18 and answer the following questions:

It is more important to reach the world with the Gospel of Christ than to worry about the fact that other leaders will not do things the way we might prefer.

- Describe the two kinds of preaching that others were doing while Paul was in prison, according to verses 15-17. How do you feel about these kinds of ministries? Why?
- What was the most important thing to Paul, according to verse 18?
- What was Paul's reaction to preaching from true motives?
- What was Paul's reaction to preaching from false motives?
- Do you think motives were important to Paul?
- How do you think Paul was able to respond this way?
- What is your reaction when someone else preaches the Gospel in a way you do not agree with, or when you question their motives?

Please understand that we are not advocating preaching from false motives. Neither was Paul. Furthermore, Paul was rejoicing that the Gospel was preached by whatever means, the book of Galatians makes it clear that it must be the Gospel of salvation by grace through faith in Christ—not a false Gospel. For Paul, other issues were secondary to the importance of preaching the Gospel.

### *2. The Church Belongs to the Lord*

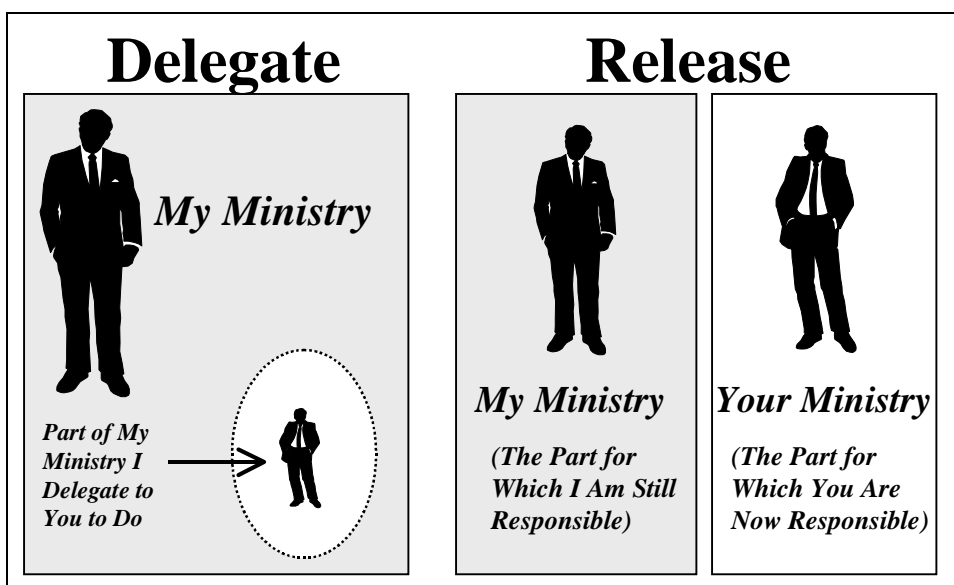
The second factor that seems to have helped Paul release leaders quickly into ministry was his confidence that the Church belongs to the Lord, and that He has promised to build it (Mt 16:18). As church planters or church leaders, we are not ultimately responsible for the growth of the church. Paul makes this point very clearly in 1 Corinthians 3:5-7. God might use a number of people to bring the church to maturity, just as He used Paul and Apollos.

This confidence does not excuse us from doing our best to be faithful leaders. It does, however, eliminate any responsibility to judge the ministry of others. God Himself will judge their motives and actions (1Co 4:5). This fact should allow us to release those we have trained for ministry, and then relax and let the Lord guide and use them as He wills.

## II. PROBLEMS OF RELEASING

Releasing leaders for ministry means taking our hands off them and allowing the Lord to guide the way that they serve Him. During the delegation stage of training, you allowed the new leader to have responsibility of a limited area of your ministry while you evaluated and guided him. However, you retained control of most areas, and were ultimately responsible for the ministry that you delegated to him. Releasing is the next step up from delegating, and assumes that the new leader has already proved his faithfulness and ability. Now it is time to help him find his own ministry, and release him to do it. Figure 11.1 contrasts delegating and releasing.

**Figure 11.1 Releasing vs. Delegating**



When you release the new leader, you may simply turn over to him some of the ministry that you used to do. However, in contrast to delegation, he is now responsible for that ministry before the Lord—not before you. An example of this kind of releasing would be a church planter turning the new church over to his apprentice leader, and moving on to start another church. This is the kind of releasing that is shown in Figure 11.1. In other cases, the new leader might begin an entirely new ministry. For instance, a church planter might remain at the new church as pastor, but train a new church planter who would go out to start another church—ideally with financial support of the ‘mother’ church.

The process of releasing is not as easy as it sounds. Trusting God to work in the lives of the people one leads goes against human nature and poses two serious challenges for any leader.

### A. Fear That the Leader Will do a Good Job

As people are trained and released into ministry, some of them are likely to exhibit greater gifts and talents than the leader. They also may begin to have a deeper understanding of the leader’s vision and want to make changes. This loss of control can be threatening to the leader who fears for his own reputation or position. The spiritual leader must remove this carnal stumbling block for his own spiritual growth and for the growth of the church.

Loss of control can be threatening to the leader who fears for his own reputation or position.

This stumbling block can be overcome only through faith and trust in God. A leader who is secure in His identity in Christ can trust that just as God is at work in His own life, He is at work in the lives of the people he leads. Therefore, if God is calling His people to service, it is really His work and reputation that are at stake and not the leader's. The leader needs to be confident that he is walking in obedience to the Lord in empowering and releasing his people for service and then turn over all of his anxieties and fears about his own reputation and position to the Lord (Php 4:6-7, 1Pe 5:7).

As Christians, our desire should not be for our own reputation and glory, but rather that God would be glorified in our lives, our ministry, and in the world. Rather than be envious of the gifts and talents of others, Christian leaders should rejoice in seeing God raise up others who can advance the cause of Christ further and farther than themselves.

Christian leaders should rejoice in seeing God raise up others who can advance the cause of Christ further and farther than themselves.

As we have seen on numerous occasions, the apostle Barnabas is an excellent example of a secure leader. When he was in Antioch, he realized that Paul's gifts would be of use to the church there. Barnabas could have kept quiet and done nothing. Instead, Barnabas went to great lengths to travel to Tarsus, find Paul and bring him back to Antioch (Ac 11:25-26). Rather than try and protect his "own territory" in Antioch, Barnabas took a risk and brought Paul into service with him. We see that eventually, Paul did surpass Barnabas in ministry renown, to the greater glory of God and the advancement of His Kingdom.

#### **B. Fear That the Leader Will do a Bad Job**

On the other hand, people released into ministry may not be as competent as the leader and may not do things the way in which the leader expects them to be done. A secure leader believes that God is powerfully at work in and for and through the people he leads, and is free to appropriately encourage risks.

A secure leader also understands that *failure is a necessary part of learning and growing*. An illustration from parenting: A child learning to walk will fall several times before he at last can walk by himself. When the child falls, the parent picks him up, gives him an encouraging word, and lets him try again. He does not yell, "You failed! You really embarrassed me! No more walking for you!"

When Jesus trained the disciples, He often used failure as an occasion for teaching. Peter's denial is a spectacular example. Jesus allowed the failure, and promised that it would result in Peter being able to strengthen the brethren (Lk 22:31-32). During the training process, God used you to correct and encourage your apprentice leader. The Lord will continue to work with him—although it might or might not involve your participation. Trust the Lord to complete the work that He has begun (Php 1:6).

### **III. PRINCIPLES FOR RELEASING**

There are a number of principles that apply to most releasing situations. The general idea is that you must have a continued good relationship with the new leader, but that you will refrain from controlling or smothering him.

#### **A. Develop and Maintain Deep Relationships**

Close relationships are a natural way to minister to others. Releasing is natural when people have established a bond of trust. Jesus traveled, worked, ate, laughed and prayed with his disciples. In the process, he built close relationships with them. He released his disciples with confidence that they would carry on properly. After all, they had been "with Him" (Mk 3:14-15).

Releasing is natural when people have established a bond of trust.

Paul as well shares how among the Thessalonians he shared the Gospel as well as his *life* with the Thessalonians (1Th 2:8). Paul also describes Timothy as his 'son' and says that Timothy knew "*all about my teaching, my way of life, my purpose, faith, patience, love, endurance*" (2Ti 3:10). It must



be the goal of the church planter to build the same kinds of close relationships with those he wants to release.

## **B. Make Sure Future Leaders Continue to Own the Vision**

Many leaders mistakenly assume that others around them have vision they have. But taking this for granted can be a big mistake. Even though the vision may be articulated many times, and even be repeated by future leaders it may not be enough. Keep the vision before the new leader. If the vision burns in their hearts just as it does in yours, you will be excited by the results they will achieve.

## **C. Don't Wait Too Long to Release**

People learn by doing. The sooner you can put new leaders in ministry, the sooner they will reach their full potential. The Bible warns us about ordaining leaders too early (1Ti 3:6), but the opposite is also true. In the Old Testament, King Saul brought disaster on himself and his family by trying to prevent David from assuming the role God had given him.

## **D. Expect Mistakes**

When people take risks, they often fail. If there is room for failure, people are more likely to try new things. When those you have trained make mistakes, they must be reassured that you have confidence in them. Be gracious and patient using every mistake as a teaching opportunity. When the disciples were unable to cast out demons, Jesus took the opportunity to teach the importance of faith in deliverance ministry (Mt 17:19-21). A lesson on giving or obedience probably would have fallen on deaf ears at that moment. But, there can be no doubt that the disciples listened intently to this lesson since it was the remedy to the failure they had just experienced.

If there is room for failure, people are more likely to try new things.

## **E. Trust God to Work through Others**

God can work through others just as he has through you. You must communicate this to those you are training. If people do not understand that you believe in them they will never take risks and therefore never grow. Jesus had such confidence in his disciples that He stated that they would do greater works than He did (Jn 14:12). Expect ministry to increase under the leadership of others.

## **F. Avoid Dependence**

"Train and release", so that others do not constantly depend on you as the leader. How could Paul spend such short amounts of time planting these churches? He knew when he needed to get out of the way. He knew that there was something about his presence as a great 'leader' that prevented the development of 'good' leaders. Imagine if he stayed in Lystra for a long time. Who would preach when Paul was around? Probably no one but Paul, because he was so good at it. In such a case, however, others would not have an opportunity to develop their preaching skills. Paul spent little time in each place so that others would realize that they could not depend upon him for everything. They had to do things for themselves (Allen 1962:93).

The presence of a great 'leader' can prevent the development of 'good' leaders.

When a particular church planter in Europe was at this stage he would announce that he could not be at church the following week because of a meeting in another city. Sometimes he would deliberately plan meetings so that he would not be available. During these kinds of times the trainees are stretched and they grow. If you do not do plan to turn over ministry, then the trainees will depend on you too long.

#### IV. MAINTAINING CONTACT WITH THOSE YOU HAVE RELEASED

Though Jesus left his followers physically, he assured them beforehand that he would send his Spirit—they would not be without his influence (Jn 14:16-18). As Jesus did not completely leave those he released, so for us, contact with the leaders we have released should be maintained for inspiration and accountability.

Meaningful meetings are the heart of the ongoing relationship with new leaders. For example, if the new leaders are planting a daughter church, you might meet with them monthly or weekly. During these meetings take time to do the following:

- Discuss skills, knowledge and character issues with which they are personally dealing.
- Review all the important relationships in their lives (family, ministry).
- Discuss what has happened with regard to the ministry since you last met.
- Ask where the ministry is going—what is their vision?
- Ask if there is anything you can do to help them reach their vision.

#### QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION, REVIEW AND APPLICATION

- Why is releasing so important?
- How many people in your church have ministry responsibility?
- How long did the Apostle Paul usually work with believers before he moved on and trusted them to carry on the work of the new church?
- What happens if your mother church refuses to release new leaders to new ministries?

#### ACTION PLAN

When and how are you planning on releasing your apprentice leader? Do you see him or her taking over some of your former responsibilities, or developing their own ministry? Make a plan, and begin to work toward releasing them to reach their full potential.

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LEADERSHIP

LESSON 12

# Movement Leadership

## ☛ Lesson Purpose

The purpose of this workshop is to reflect on the kinds of leadership needed to lead a church planting movement.

## ☛ Main Points

- Movement leaders deeply desire God's vision for the Church and effectively communicate it to others.
- Movement leaders motivate and facilitate others in order to promote church planting movements.

## ☛ Desired Outcomes

When the content of this workshop has been mastered participants should...

- Know the kind of leadership that is necessary to start and sustain a church planting movement in their context.
- Be committed to pray that God would provide the necessary leadership in order to bring about a church planting movement in their country.

## ☛ Appendix

12A Movement Leaders

## ☛ Note to Trainers

This is a workshop. After a brief introduction divide into small groups and have each group begin to consider the questions given.

## INTRODUCTION

Jesus, our Leader, once said, "I will build My Church." Having made His intentions known, Jesus then continued to model servant-leadership by serving, teaching, and proclaiming His Father's will to others. In doing this, Jesus ignited the movement of the Church to the ends of the earth. It is this movement that brings us to the point we are now. The question we must ask ourselves is, "What kind of leadership most effectively promotes the movement of the Church?"

A church planting movement requires many types of leaders, for example visionaries, administrators, trainers, mentors, encouragers, etc. Though they operate in different ways and at different levels, they have this in common: they are all instruments of God who use their God ordained influence to mobilize the Body of Christ toward the completion of the Great Commission.

**Divide into small groups. In each group, consider the following:**

1. Try to envision a church planting movement in your country. What would that movement look like?
2. As you think of the different types of leadership needed for a church planting movement, list the skills and qualities necessary for leaders at different levels.
3. Name leaders in your country who best exemplify these.

4. As you read the following examples from around the world, try to identify the kinds of leaders necessary to see such a movement in your country.

**Example from Uruguay:**

Jason Carlisle, a missionary kid who remained in Uruguay as a missionary, is the founder of the Spiritual Warfare Network. This network attempts to unite the entire Body of Christ in strategic prayer. Participants come from most evangelical denominations. Some initiatives of the Network include publishing a prayer guide notebook with daily prayer for the nation, prayer in support of major events and prayer workshops in churches.

*List some areas of leaders that would be necessary at different levels if this kind of prayer movement were to happen in your country.*

**Example from Zimbabwe:**

A vision to plant 10,000 churches and train 10,000 leaders began in 1984-85 with Jim Montgomery and Ted Olson (missionaries from the outside who came in to do vision casting). In 1986 the people caught the vision; national research was started in 1989 and completed in 1991. In 1992 they held a congress with more than 500 leaders from different churches. Up until this time, there had been no unity among the leaders (report from Xolisani Dlamini at the Ibero American DAWN Congress '98).

From this example, list some of the things you learn about leadership necessary for a national movement:

- What kind of leadership would be necessary for this to happen in your country?
- Do you know of people who might be encouraged to assume some of this leadership?
- What part can you play in this?

**Example from Romania:**

In Romania, an SCP team of expatriate missionaries traveled throughout the country to find those God had similarly burdened for the whole country. Roughly one of every 10 leaders shared such a burden. The expats asked them to train church planters in their area of expertise in SCP thinking. Had they fully bought into the SCP vision? No, not 100 percent. But they often did articulate one aspect of the vision very well, and were asked to particularly train on that point.

As the expat missionaries shared ministry in training and vision casting with these men, the men themselves more fully embraced the vision of SCP. God sovereignly kept the men experiencing SCP concepts as they also continued to move to new levels of leadership within the movement. They went from being church planters, to trainers of church planters, to trainers of trainers, to coordinators of the SCP work in the nation.

At that time, the expatriates felt they should leave the country so as not to impinge what God was doing through these men. Today, these men lead their aspect of the movement that God had intended and begun in Romania.

- Discuss how the expatriate missionaries and national leaders worked together to begin a movement in Romania?
- How can these two communities work together more closely in your country?
- Who are the leaders in your country with some aspect of the SCP vision?
- How can they be encouraged to participate in the training?

**ACTION PLAN**

In your workshop, you identified some leadership needs. Commit yourself to begin to pray that God would raise up the facilitative movement leaders that are necessary to cause and maintain a church planting movement in your country. At the same time, ask the Lord to show you how you should fit into his plan to fulfill the Great Commission.



# Movement Leaders

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## I. MOVEMENTS REQUIRE SPECIAL KINDS OF LEADERS

According to God's sovereign timing, He raises up leaders to initiate and advance movements of church planting. These leaders are qualitatively different from others. They are driven by the question "what does God want?" Leaders like John Knox of Scotland who prayed to the Lord, "Give me Scotland or I die!" is an excellent example. These leaders do not simply begin programs or establish institutions, but as we will see, they inspire movements which mobilize believers toward the goal of increased church planting activity.

In short, leaders who promote church planting movements are instruments of God who use their God ordained influence to mobilize the Body of Christ toward the completion of the Great Commission through the planting of churches. Church planting movements normally include a constellation of leaders influencing several levels of Church life. Some of these leaders, like John Knox, the example given above, motivate denominations and nations for Kingdom expansion. Others (more numerous) directly influence congregations for regional impact. Lastly and most common, 'grass roots' local leaders facilitate fellow believers toward greater evangelization and church planting. These grass roots leaders may be cell group leaders, church planters, deacon-pastors, or evangelists/disciplers.

Church planting movements normally include a constellation of leaders influencing several levels of Church life.

## II. MOVEMENT LEADERS COMMUNICATE VISION

Leadership that promotes movement is visionary. A person of vision can be described as having an attitude of expectation and hope, and as one who sees beyond the present into the future from God's perspective. Church planting movement leaders do not invent their vision, although it may sound that way to others. The vision is really God's vision. Movement leaders simply discover it having asked, "What does God want?"

Church planting movement leaders carry a compelling conviction that God wants to see His church established in such a way that every man women and child has an accessible Gospel witness. Movement leaders recognize the importance of persuasively communicating this vision to other believers. He solicits commitment to the vision in such a way that others feel responsible for the achievement of it.

Church planting movement leaders carry a compelling conviction that God wants to see His church established.

Every accomplishment starts with an idea. When someone builds a home they first have a blueprint. When someone wants to start a business, they first have a clearly defined plan for what the business will provide and how it will operate. When an artist paints a picture he first has a thought or feeling he wishes to express. In all these examples there are two creations, first the picture in the mind and then the tangible object.

Some regions lack movements because the Body of Christ lacks a vision for it. How can people strive toward that which they do not conceptualize? Movement leaders paint the picture of God's desires. They proclaim the 'Z,' revealing the cause to mobilize around.

### III. MOVEMENT LEADERS ARE MOBILIZERS

Church planting movement leaders see the expansion of the Church as it truly is, as a spiritual war. Realizing that they cannot fight this spiritual war alone, they cry out for mobilization. Just as in time of war, when the sense of urgency and need to survive dominates everything people say and do, so the mobilized church works together to achieve what God wants. To 'Mobilize' simply means to assemble people into readiness according to their abilities for participation in a common cause. Movement leaders understand that when the whole body of Christ will consciously mobilize around the cause to witness for Christ, God will accelerate the Church toward reaching the goal of making disciples.

Church planting movement leaders see the expansion of the Church as it truly is, as a spiritual war.

It takes a spiritual person to mobilize churches in this spiritual war. It takes one who knows God to know what he wants. Movement leaders are able to discern the times and sense the Spirit's leading to know what the Church should do. To develop this spiritual depth, movement leaders spend time in God's Word, in prayer and fasting, communing with the builder of the Church, our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, the original Movement Leader.

### IV. MOVEMENT LEADERS ARE FACILITATORS

Traditionally Christian leaders have been thought of as the ones who "do" the ministry. Ephesians 4:11-12 teaches that the job of leadership should be primarily to envision and equip others to be sure that the ministry is done. Movement leaders are facilitators, ones who encourage and enable others to use their gifts. While movement leaders may be very active people, always doing something, it is most accurate to describe them not as 'doers' but as ones who 'cause things to be done'. They are noted for strategically inspiring others to work. When movement leaders are at work others who desire to serve God will want to join in. One of the marks of success of facilitators is the increased ministry effectiveness of others.

The movement leader is like a farmer who plants the seed, tills the soil and waters it, but has no power to make the seed actually grow (1Co 3:6-7). The job of the farmer is to nurture what he has planted, to remove obstacles to its growth and to provide the best possible environment for its development. The situation is similar for a movement leader. Like a farmer he is a 'doer' who 'causes things to be done.'

Figure 12.1 Two Kinds of Leaders



## **CONCLUSION**

As He concluded His earthly ministry, Jesus gave his followers the mandate to lead on as he had done (Jn 20:21). He had sufficiently prepared them so that if they applied what they had learned from him, they would have a similar (even greater) impact (Jn 14:12).

Those who follow the leader today are commanded to lead on as he did. Remember the unique approach of Jesus. He lived as a servant, deeply loved his followers who he trained to carry on the vision—this is leadership at its best. This is The Great Movement Leader who touches lives and transforms the world.





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# CELL GROUPS

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CELL GROUPS

LESSON 12

# Cells That Saturate Through Local Churches

## ☛ Lesson Purpose

The purpose of this lesson is to explain how to plan for and implement a ministry of cell groups in an existing church.

## ☛ Main Points

- Cell groups can be used in any church that wants to grow and fulfill the Great Commission.

## ☛ Desired Outcomes

When the content of this lesson has been mastered, each participant should . . .

- Understand that cell groups can be used to strengthen an existing church in the areas of fellowship, discipleship, evangelism and leadership development.
- Think about the positive and negative impact that cell groups can have on the existing ministries of a church.
- Understand the steps which must be taken in order to plan for and implement the use of cell groups in an existing church.
- Be able to develop a basic plan to begin using cell groups in an existing church.

## INTRODUCTION

The goal of starting a movement of new churches is to fulfill the Great Commission and ultimately to reach "the ends of the earth" (Acts 1:8) with the good news of Christ. The fellowship, discipleship and evangelism in cell groups provides the building blocks that an existing church needs in order to start many new churches through these groups. Churches which have a vision for multiplication can use cell groups not only to start new daughter churches but also to bring renewal and growth to their own church. Cell groups are certainly not the only way in which this can happen, but they are an effective method for bringing new life and focus to the ministry of a church. Through the use of cell groups, existing local churches can saturate their "Jerusalem," i.e. their city or town, with a relevant, viable witness for Christ.

When you look at the benefits of ministry in groups, it becomes obvious that there are many reasons why a traditional church would want to make use of cell groups as well. Cell groups in an existing church can make it possible for the members to develop and strengthen their relationships. As they spend time together, they will begin to learn about one another's joys and burdens, and they will be able to fulfill the biblical commands to love one another (Jn 13:34-35) and to carry each other's burdens (Gal 6:2).

Through the use of cell groups, members of a church can learn to identify their spiritual gifts and then develop and use them. Instead of the majority of ministry being done by only a few (often overworked) leaders in the church, more and more of the members would begin to become involved in ministries of discipleship, nurturing and evangelism. The groups would provide for the development of new leaders in the church from among the members. The church would grow as a result of the evangelism in the groups.

At the same time, the use of cell groups in an existing church often changes some of the dynamics of ministry in the church. The leadership of the church must be committed to this type of ministry and have an active role in it. There are several issues which must be discussed and prayed about before a cell group ministry can begin in a church. Once the decision has been made to incorporate cell groups into a church, the church leaders need to create a plan and then, under the leading of the Holy Spirit, implement that plan in the church.

## I. EVALUATION

In order to use cell groups in an existing church, there are several issues which must be given careful thought. For purposes of discussion in this lesson, we will assume that a church planter has been working with cell groups and would like to introduce them into his home church. He must spend some time with the pastor(s) and leaders of the church to explain the concepts and advantages of cell groups, as well as to discuss with them some of the issues which will affect the decision whether to use cell groups in the church.

The issues which must be discussed with the leadership of any church that is contemplating the use of cell groups are as follows:

### A. Vision

What is the vision that the leaders have for the church? Is it possible that cell groups can be used to support and encourage this vision? Cell groups can be used as a foundation for a larger ministry strategy. Assuming that evangelism and growth take place in the groups, how can the reproducing groups be used in an overall ministry strategy? Does the church want to grow larger, does it want to start new daughter churches, or does it want to send out some of the members on missionary teams to other cities? The church leaders need to decide on a ministry vision and strategy for the cell groups, as it relates to the overall vision of the ministry of the church.

### B. Commitment

One of the most important factors which can determine the success or failure of cell groups in an existing church is the level of commitment among the church leaders. They need to understand the benefits, functions and goals of a cell group ministry. They need to understand that a cell group is not simply a small group where people will get together to study the Bible. Of course, Bible study will be a part of the groups, but it is not the main purpose. The main purpose is to experience the body of Christ in action: worshipping the Lord, edifying believers, and evangelizing the lost. Are the leaders willing to be committed to this emphasis in the ministry of the groups? There will need to be some flexibility on the part of the existing church leadership in order to accommodate some of the changes which the cell groups will introduce into the church.

One of the most important factors in the success or failure of cell groups in an existing church is the level of commitment among the church leaders.

### C. Existing Ministries

The use of cell groups in a church will support and encourage ministries of evangelism, discipleship and leadership development. Careful consideration must be given to the effect that the cell groups may have on the existing ministries in the church. In some churches, the ministry of the cell groups might complement the ministries which already exist. However, the cell groups might also "compete" or interfere with existing ministries in the church. Sometimes the cell group ministries turn out to be more effective than already existing ministries. For example, if the church has been doing evangelism by holding outdoor campaigns, the number of people who usually respond might be very few. If the relational evangelism which happens in the groups works very well, the existing evangelism ministry leader may feel "threatened" by the cell groups. This can lead to problems between those who are doing ministry "the way it has always been done" and those who are doing ministry in cell groups.

Discuss the use of cell groups with each ministry leader in the church, and see how he feels about it. Are there areas of potential conflict? Would some of the existing ministries (e.g. discipleship) need to be changed or eliminated if groups are used? These questions must be asked before cell groups can be used in a church.

### D. Tradition vs. New Ideas

For some of the people in an existing church, the concept of cell groups might be strange and somewhat frightening. They may resist the use of groups, especially if they have never been in a

group ministry. Sometimes people resist cell group ministry because they have been part of a group at some point in the past, and the group did not work out well. Sufficient time and energy must be spent in order to help the church members understand the groups and see the benefits of using them in the church.

Depending on the church, the underlying principle of doing relational evangelism in the groups might be a hard thing for some of the church members to accept. If they have never done much evangelism, if they have done it differently, or if they are uncomfortable with the idea of making friends with unbelievers, they may have a hard time agreeing with the need for cell groups in which relational evangelism is a top priority.

#### **E. Location**

No matter how many groups are started initially, each group will need to have a place where they will meet together weekly. In some cultures, meeting in homes or apartments is acceptable and this will not be a problem. In other cultures, the problem of where to meet might be more difficult to resolve. The leaders must consider where the first groups meet, especially in light of potentially many more groups being started over the course of several years. Assuming that the groups grow and multiply, where will the new groups meet? This should be discussed before cell groups are started so that it does not become a problem later, when the groups are ready to multiply.

#### **F. Leadership**

Initially, the church leadership needs to decide who is qualified and available to become leaders of the first cell groups (see Manual 3, Cell Group lesson, "Training New Cell Group Leaders"). These people must be given training and preparation in order to successfully lead their groups. This training should include the lessons from these manuals on Cell Groups, Leadership, and Bible Study Methods. Other lessons from these manuals can be taught based on the needs and experience of the future leaders.

A supervisory structure should be planned and put into place from the time that the first cell groups are started (this will be discussed in detail in lesson 13, "Supervising Cells"). Someone must be appointed as the mentor of these cell group leaders and must be willing to meet with the leaders at least once a month, as well as provide for ongoing training and encouragement. The mentor may choose to form a cell group of leaders to provide them with continued support, teaching and encouragement.

Remember that you cannot have more groups initially than you have leaders for those groups. Some churches decide to divide the entire congregation into groups, while others start just with the people who are interested in this type of ministry. If church leaders give an open invitation to anyone who wants to be involved, they might find themselves in trouble if more people respond than there are leaders available.

Remember that you cannot have more groups initially than you have leaders for those groups.

All of the above issues must be taken into account when a church is considering the use of cell groups. After the church leaders have discussed the use of groups in their church, time should be devoted to prayer about whether or not to go ahead with this type of ministry. This decision will have a profound impact on the lives of the church members and should not be taken lightly. If the Holy Spirit confirms the use of groups in the church, then the church leadership must plan for how the groups will be started and implemented.

## **II. PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION**

Every plan which is developed for cell group ministry in a church will be unique and will reflect the distinctives and characteristics of that church. Although the details will vary from plan to plan, there are certain steps which must be planned for and then implemented in order to introduce a ministry of cell groups in an existing church.

### **A. Step 1 – Develop a Ministry Vision Which Includes Cell Groups**

The pastor(s) and church leadership must understand the goal of cell group ministry. They should also understand the functions of a cell group, as well as how ministry happens in a cell group. They should be able to explain the benefits of cell groups to someone who is not familiar with them. They must approve of and encourage the cell groups in the church.

An overall ministry strategy should be prayerfully thought out. How will cell groups fit into the vision and goals of the church? Will the groups be used simply to help with growth and discipleship in the church? Does the church want to start one or more new daughter churches? Does the church want to send out teams of missionaries to start cell group ministries in other areas? The overall strategy will guide and direct the ministry of the groups in the way that they will develop and interact one with another.

### **B. Step 2 – Begin to Share the Vision with the Congregation**

The pastor(s) and church leaders need to begin to share the vision and benefits of using cell groups with the congregation. They need to show how the groups fit into the goals of the church, and how the groups will strengthen the church and its ministries. They should also explain the benefits to each of the church members.

### **C. Step 3 – Choose Leaders and Train Them**

Determine those in the church who would be available and qualified to lead a cell group. Spend time with them to explain the goals, benefits, concepts, etc., of cell groups. Ask them to prayerfully consider leading one of the groups.

Decide on a supervisory structure for the cell group leaders. At least one person must be responsible to mentor the leaders, hold them accountable, and provide ongoing help with problems and questions. One way to mentor leaders is to form an initial cell group with the future cell group leaders as the members. This group should meet for several months before any other cell groups are started in the church. This will give the leaders both training and experience in cell group ministry. The person who leads this "leadership" cell group should be the same person who will mentor the new leaders. This leadership cell should continue to meet on a regular basis (perhaps once a month) after the new groups are started. This should be a time for fellowship, teaching, and discussing problems and questions in the groups.

A "leadership" cell group can be used to prepare future cell group leaders.

Train the future cell group leaders in all aspects of cell group ministry. At a minimum, they should receive the training from the Cell Group lessons, the Bible Study lessons, and the Leadership lessons in these manuals.

### **D. Step 4 – Start the New Cell Groups**

After several months of meeting in the "leadership" cell group, the leaders should begin to plan for the start of their cell groups. When will each group meet (i.e. which day and at what time)? Where will each group meet? Assuming that some people in the congregation have expressed an interest in being part of a group, how will it be decided which group they will join?

There is a large amount of initial preparation which must take place before the very first new cell group meeting (in manual 2, see Cell Group lesson 2, "Principles of Cell Group Leadership" and lesson 3, "Starting a Cell Group"). The mentor of the cell group leaders should help and encourage each leader to prepare for this first, important meeting.

It can be helpful to set a beginning date for the new cell groups and share this with the congregation, so that they can be praying for this new ministry, as well as looking forward to the time when it will start. This will help to generate enthusiasm and excitement about the new groups.

### **E. Step 5 – Provide Ongoing Evaluation and Adjustment to Cell Group Ministries**

The church leadership should, from time to time, evaluate the progress of the cell groups. As with any type of ministry, adjustments might need to be made to initial plans and ideas. Be open to the leading of the Holy Spirit, and continually pray for the groups and their leaders, that God will use them to build up the church and to help it fulfill its goals and purposes.

### **QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION, REVIEW AND APPLICATION**

- Considering all of the benefits of cell groups in the areas of fellowship, discipleship, evangelism and leadership development, why shouldn't every church use cell groups?
- Let's assume that a church has decided to start using cell groups. How can you avoid "competition" between existing ministries of discipleship and evangelism with these same ministries in the cell groups?
- Why is it important to have a mentor for the cell group leaders in the church? What is his role and responsibilities?
- Why should a "leadership" cell group be started among the future cell group leaders in the church before any new cell groups are started? What is the benefit of having the church leadership involved in this "leadership" cell?
- What is the overall goal of using cell groups in an existing church structure?

### **ACTION PLAN**

- Think about the church which you consider to be your "home" church. What is the vision of the church? What goals does it have? Would it be possible to use cell groups to help reach these goals?
- In this same church, what problems or difficulties would there be if cell groups were to be used?
- Develop a brief, written plan for using cell groups in this church (or in any church that you are very familiar with). How would you implement this plan?
- Think about the churches you know which could benefit from cell group ministry. How would you approach them about using cell groups to strengthen the church and to help it reach its goals? Would you be willing to help them start a cell group ministry in the church? Give this some careful thought and prayer.





CELL GROUPS

LESSON **13**

# Supervising Cells

## CARE AND COORDINATION FOR CELL GROUP LEADERS

### ☛ Lesson Purpose

The purpose of this lesson is to motivate each trainee to develop a supervisory structure in order to promote and sustain growth in his cell group ministry.

### ☛ Main Points

- The roles of Cell Coordinators and Overseers.
- There must be a structured approach to supervising cell group ministry.

### ☛ Desired Outcomes

When the content of this lesson has been mastered, each participant should . . .

- Understand the advantages of and the need for some type of supervisory structure in cell group ministry.
- Know the roles and responsibilities of each person in a supervisory structure and how they contribute to the growth and success of the cells.
- Develop a basic plan to implement some type of supervisory structure in his own cell group ministry if one does not already exist.

### ☛ Appendix

13A Cell Groups: The Final Step

### ☛ Suggestions to Trainers

In the "Action Plan" section, the trainees are asked to read Appendix 13A "Cell Groups: The Final Step" and create a basic plan for a supervisory structure in their cell group ministries. Since this is the final cell group lesson, be sure that this plan is reviewed either by you or by another mentor/trainer.

## INTRODUCTION

A team of three missionaries (Peter, Sandra and Michael) has been working in a city of about 35,000 people for the past three years. They have each begun several cell groups, and some of these groups have multiplied several times over. If one were to look at the number of groups meeting and the numbers of people who have been saved, it would seem that their ministry has been successful so far.

However, as the groups continue to grow and multiply, Peter, Sandra and Michael are becoming more and more frustrated. Each of them has had problems and questions trying to develop new apprentice leaders, and there is no one for them to turn to for advice. They are all so busy that they rarely even see each other, and it seems that they have all drifted into their own separate ministries. When Peter, Sandra and Michael first started working in the city, Peter had a vision for starting several new churches using the cells. Lately, though, everyone is so busy with his or her own groups that no one talks about that anymore.

What Peter, Sandra and Michael don't know is that several of the newest groups are experiencing problems that some of the more experienced leaders could help with, but no one has told them or asked them for help. Two of the groups are both planning to hold evangelistic outreaches in the same exact area of the city, while large areas of town remain without any kind of witness for Christ. Peter is glad that the cells are continuing to grow and multiply, but it seems to him that somehow they could accomplish more if they could find a way to work in harmony one with another.

What Peter doesn't realize in this scenario is that there is an administrative aspect which is missing from his cell group ministry. Someone needs to provide supervision for the cells in order to organize and coordinate their efforts as they reach out to their city.

Unfortunately, for many people involved in ministry, the word "administration" brings to mind images of boring paperwork and unnecessary interruptions. Sometimes "administration" even means authority, hierarchy and control, and therefore is something that people want to avoid in their ministries. However, administration that is properly developed and applied can help to make the best possible use of God's resources and can enable ministries to be very fruitful.

Administration is **absolutely** necessary in order to bring about a church planting movement through the use of cell groups.

Administration is an essential aspect of cell group ministry, and it is **absolutely necessary** in order to bring about a church planting movement through the use of cell groups. Administration in the form of a supervisory structure is a necessary component of a larger ministry vision, especially as the cell groups begin to grow and multiply.

## I. SUPERVISION OF CELL GROUPS

In a general sense, a "supervisor" is someone who oversees the work of another person. He or she is responsible to make sure that the work is done well and on time. In a ministry of cell groups, there is a need for "supervisors" to help the cell group leaders with the "work" that happens in a cell group. These supervisors do not "control" and force cell group leaders to do things their way; instead, they provide insight, wisdom and practical advice to the leaders, so that the cell groups are effective in their ministries.

### A. Importance of Supervision

No matter how cell groups are used in ministry, consideration must be given to how the cells will be supervised in that particular ministry context. There are several reasons why some type of supervision is needed in cell group ministry:

**Coordination:** Groups which are supervised have a leadership structure which is able to coordinate the efforts of individual groups in light of an overall ministry strategy. As the cells minister individually, there is coordination so that the efforts of each group contribute towards the accomplishment of a larger ministry task. Coordination is the result of being able to see the "big picture" of what is (or could be) happening outside the individual cell groups.

For example, let's say that the overall goal of a particular cell group ministry is to evangelize a whole town or village and start three new churches. If the efforts of the cells are coordinated, the groups are able to spread throughout the town and not "overlap" each another. Research will be done to determine different target areas in town, and each cell group will draw a "circle of accountability" around the area to which it will reach out. In this way the cells are able to be an effective witness throughout the entire town. As the time comes to start the new churches, coordination between the cells provides a balanced and reasonable approach to grouping the cells into churches.

**Guidance:** When some type of supervisory structure is in place, each cell group leader has someone to whom he can turn with questions, problems and difficulties. There is a structured environment in which the cell group leaders can learn from each other, as well as learning from more experienced leaders. Instead of cell group leaders struggling with problems or questions by themselves, they have someone to turn to for help and advice.

One of the most important aspects of supervision is that it provides care and nurture for leaders of cell groups.

Cell group leaders find themselves constantly ministering to the needs of the people in their groups, but no one ministers to them. One of the most important aspects of supervision is that it provides care and nurture for leaders of cell groups. One practical way that this can happen is to create a "leadership" cell group, in which the cell group leaders come together to be ministered to and to learn from one another.

**Accountability:** Each cell group will have its own goals that contribute towards an overall ministry focus. The leaders of the cell groups need someone to whom they are accountable to meet those goals. The goals of each group can be periodically evaluated and adjusted, if necessary. This is especially helpful with new groups and leaders, to help them pray and think about God's will for their group and to help them set realistic goals for the group. Rather than "waiting for things to happen," a cell group leader who is held accountable will strive to help his group accomplish that which God has set before them as a goal.

**Integrity:** One of the advantages to ministry in groups is that new believers are discipled and new leaders are developed within the cells. However, a lack of maturity mixed with excessive zeal can sometimes be a dangerous combination. It is possible for a cell group to get off track and begin to misinterpret and/or misapply the Scriptures. A supervisory structure can provide the "checking" which needs to happen in any cell group so that exaggeration, extremes and even heresy do not become a problem. A group which is left to itself can end up with faulty interpretation and teaching of God's word.

## B. Supervisory Structure

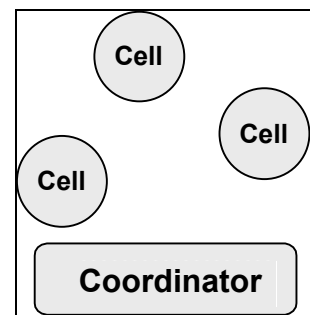
No matter how cell groups are supervised, the basic concept remains the same: there must be a structured approach to coordinate and help the cell group leaders as they strive to develop the people and ministries in their cells. The supervisors hold the cell group leader accountable to tasks and goals in the group, and observe the teaching and spiritual development of both the leader and the members in the group.

A typical supervisory structure for cell groups usually consists of two levels: We will call the first level *Coordinators*, who work directly with cell group leaders. We will call the second level *Overseers*, who work primarily with the Coordinators. Both Coordinators and Overseers have specific roles and responsibilities to help to develop the cell group leaders and the ministries within cell groups:

### 1. Coordinator

Since the role of a Coordinator is primarily to guide and teach cell group leaders, a Coordinator should spend time as a cell group leader before being appointed to this position. Cell group leaders need to have someone who will mentor them if their ministry is to be successful. Following are areas in which a Coordinator needs to be involved in the life and ministry of a cell group leader:

- Problems in the group - The Coordinator meets with the cell group leaders on a regular basis. In some ministries it is as often as once a week, and other times it may be only once a month. This may be an informal meeting, or the Coordinator may choose to create a "leadership" cell group. During these meeting times, the cell group leaders are free to ask questions, discuss problems, and learn from one another in their cell group experiences.
- Personal spiritual growth - The Coordinator should also make it a point to spend time individually with the cell group leaders and their families, to get to know them better and to better understand what is happening in the life of each leader. These should be informal times of sharing and fellowship, such as having a meal together or maybe just tea/coffee in the home of the leader.
- Developing apprentice leaders - One of the most difficult areas of ministry for the cell group leader will be the development of his apprentice leader. Most new cell group leaders have never worked actively to develop another person as a leader, and they will have plenty of questions and problems in this area. The Coordinator can share practical ways in which he or she has developed apprentice leaders in previous cell groups.
- Planning and accountability - The Coordinator is responsible to help the cell group leaders develop goals and plans for ministry and to hold them accountable to achieving those



goals. This includes drawing a "circle of accountability" with each group to help them understand where they will be working (in what geographical area), and to what segment of the population they will reach out. The Coordinator must also help the cell group leaders to develop a plan for multiplication and to carry out that plan. In addition, each cell group leader should have individual plans for the spiritual development of each member of the group, and plans for evangelism and other group activities. Reviewing and adjusting these plans with the cell group leaders is essential to the growth and success of each cell group.

- Practical ministry skills - The Coordinator should also provide ongoing training and teaching for the cell group leaders, to continue to equip them for fruitful ministry. The Coordinator should strive to provide teaching that will meet the needs which currently exist in the lives and ministries of the cell group leaders. The teaching should provide practical ways to help with real life problems and situations that the leaders face.
- Encouragement - It is a good idea for the Coordinator to visit the cell groups from time to time, and he or she should have a clear understanding of what is being studied and taught in the groups. Every ministry context is different, but the Coordinator should keep track of how many members are in each group, how many visitors come to the groups, where the groups are meeting, and any unresolved problems which the leaders are currently facing.
- Prayer - The Coordinator must spend time in prayer with the cell group leaders and should also pray for the cell group leaders in his own personal prayer time. He or she should constantly be looking for ways to help the leaders, so that their ministries are successful and so that they are growing in maturity and Christ-likeness.

Each cell group leader should have individual plans for the spiritual development of each member of the group.

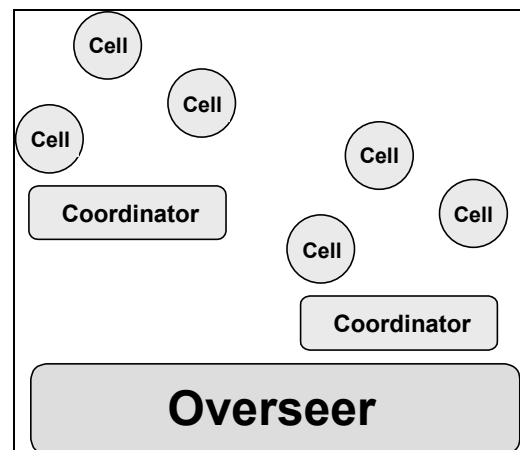
Because of the significant amount of time and energy that a Coordinator must devote to the care and development of each cell group leader, he or she should be responsible for no more than four or five cell groups.

## 2. Overseer

The role of an Overseer differs from a Coordinator mainly by the fact that an Overseer does not interact directly with the cell group leaders – he works primarily with the Coordinators. The Overseer should be well experienced in cell group ministry, having been a cell group leader and Coordinator himself. The Overseer is interested in the life and ministry of each Coordinator, as well as the overall ministry direction of the cell groups. The Overseer is a mentor for the Coordinators in the same way that the Coordinators are mentors for their cell group leaders.

The Overseer should meet with the Coordinators on a regular basis, no less than once per month. During these meeting times, the Coordinators can report on the progress and activities of each of the cell groups for which they are responsible. For purposes of record keeping, the Overseer may choose to develop some type of written form(s) that each of the Coordinators can fill out with information about the cells.

One of the most important functions of the Overseer is to monitor and develop the ongoing coordinated effort among the cell groups. The Overseer must keep the "big picture" of ministry in mind, and he or she should make sure that each Coordinator clearly understands the role of each of the cell groups in that plan. For example, the goal of one particular cell group ministry is to start two new churches in an area of town. Two Coordinators work with independent cell groups, while a third Coordinator has some independent cell groups as well as some cell groups that were started in an existing church. It is the responsibility of the Overseer to help



the Coordinators understand how all of the cell groups can work together to form these two new churches and what steps need to be taken in order to see that happen.

When there are problems in the groups, or in the life of a Coordinator, the Overseer is always available to listen, to pray, and to give counsel. He or she should maintain a time of regular prayer for each Coordinator, as well as for any urgent prayer needs within the groups.

Some cell group ministries choose to physically gather all the cell groups together on a regular basis (perhaps once a month) for worship, fellowship and/or teaching. Sometimes these gatherings are referred to as "celebration" times. If these gatherings take place, an Overseer (or Coordinator, if there is no Overseer) will be responsible for leading the time together, and he may ask one or more Coordinators to help with the worship or teaching.

Some cell group ministries choose to physically gather all the cell groups together on a regular basis (perhaps once a month) for worship, fellowship and/or teaching.

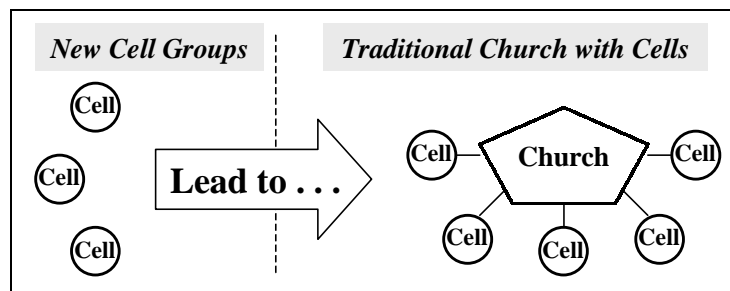
## II. SUPERVISORY STRUCTURES FOR DIFFERENT MODELS OF CELL GROUP MINISTRY

Many times, the physical organization of a cell group ministry will determine the form that the supervisory structure will take. Cell Group lesson 6, "Philosophy Of Cell Group Ministry," presented several different models that can be used in a cell group ministry. Following is a brief review of each of those models, along with the types of supervisory structures that might be used in each situation:

### A. Model 1: Cell Groups That Start a Traditional Church with Cells

In this situation, one or more initial cell groups grow and multiply until they are able to start a new traditional church. This church will meet in a central location with a traditional worship service appropriate for the local context and culture. The church will continue to use a ministry of cell groups for evangelism, fellowship, discipleship and continued growth of the church. It may also choose to develop traditional ministry "programs" such as Sunday School, women's ministry, an outreach to children on the weekends, etc. Figure 13.2 shows this kind of model.

Figure 13.2 Cells Start Church

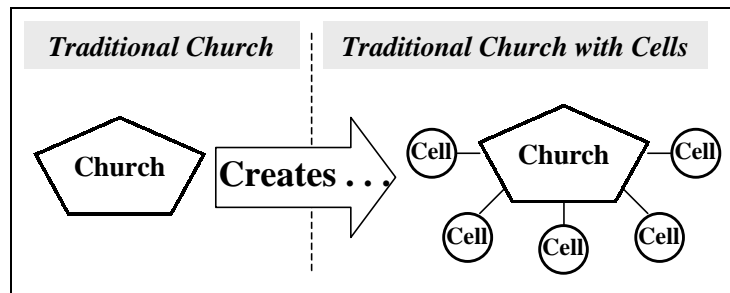


In this case, a supervisory structure will be needed long before the church is started. This model would require at least one Coordinator to oversee the ministries of the individual cells and to help the leaders coordinate the effort of starting the new church. It is interesting to note that after the church is started and the cells continue to grow and multiply, that the Coordinator might be called a "deacon" or "elder" in charge of cell group ministry.

## B. Model 2: An Existing Church Begins to Use Cell Groups

It is possible for an existing church to begin using cell groups for fellowship, evangelism and discipleship (see Cell Groups lesson 12). The existing leadership in the church must decide how many groups are needed/possible based on the number of members in the church and the number of people who could be trained to be cell group leaders. In time the church will begin to grow as the cell groups grow and multiply. This arrangement is shown in Figure 13.3.

**Figure 13.3 Cells Added to Church**



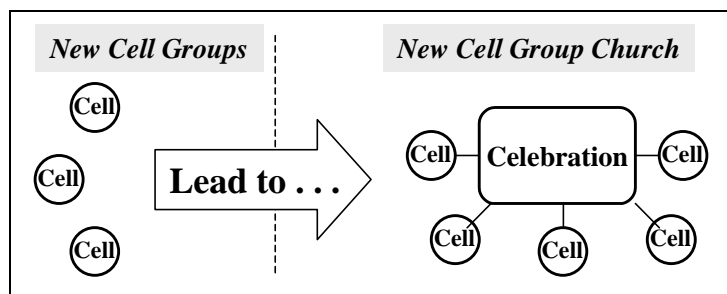
Typically, the supervisory structure in this situation uses existing church leaders to fulfill the roles of Coordinator and Overseer. The deacons or elders might be the Coordinators, and the pastor (or pastoral team) may be the most logical choice to fulfill the role of an Overseer. As the groups grow and multiply, most often cell group leaders will begin to fulfill the role of Coordinators and eventually Overseers.

## C. Model 3: Cell Groups That Start a Cell Group Church

A cell group church differs from a traditional church in the sense that there is neither church building nor regular Sunday morning worship service, and the church does not exist to create and maintain "programs" within the church. The church is comprised of the cells themselves, and all the functions of a church happen in each cell, including baptism and communion. The cells come

together on a regular basis (e.g. once a month) for a "celebration" meeting. This is a time of encouragement, fellowship, worship and/or teaching. The cells all consider themselves to be part of one, large church. Figure 13.4 demonstrates this model.

**Figure 13.4 Cells Start a Cell Church**



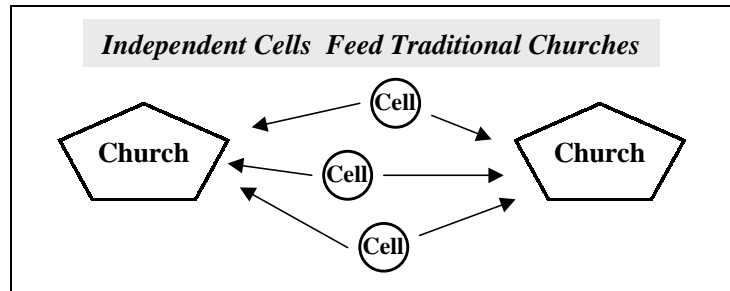
Many times, the supervisory structure for a cell group church is simple and hierarchical. Every five cell groups has a Coordinator, and there is an Overseer for every five Coordinators. If the number of groups grows quite large, there is a need for another level of mentors, sometimes called "Cell Pastors" who work with the Overseers.

#### D. Model 4: Several Cell Groups Grow, Multiply and "Feed" Existing Local Churches

It is not a requirement that cell groups directly start new churches. It may be more strategic to build up and strengthen existing local churches which in time will start new daughter churches. Cell groups are started independently of the existing churches. As new people are brought into the cell groups, they are encouraged to begin attending a local church as well. Often they will continue to be

a part of their cell group as well as attend a church. This process is shown in Figure 13.5.

Figure 13.5 Cells Feed Churches



In this situation, one of the cell group leaders can fulfill the role of a Coordinator, in order to help organize the efforts of the groups to build up the churches in that area. If, in time, one or more of the existing churches desire to use cell groups in their church, a different supervisory structure will need to be considered and used.

### III. APPLICATION FOR YOUR CELL GROUP MINISTRY

The titles which are chosen for each person in a supervisory structure such as "Coordinator" and "Overseer" are not important. In your particular ministry context, you can choose and use whatever titles you feel are appropriate and understandable. The most important thing is that there are people who are performing the functions of Coordinators and Overseers in any given supervisory structure. These are the people who are needed to help the cell groups accomplish the goals that God has set before them.

Your context will determine who actually fulfills these leadership roles. If new cell groups are being started independent of an existing church, often the cell group leader with the most experience fulfills the role of the Coordinator once the groups begin to grow and multiply.

Perhaps you are using cell groups in a traditional church in order to help the church to grow (and eventually start new, daughter churches). In this situation you need to use wisdom and discretion in deciding who should fill the roles of Coordinator and Overseer. It is always preferable that these people have been leaders of groups themselves and are well-experienced in cell group life. However, in a traditional church, problems can quickly arise if existing church leaders are assigned to these roles but they themselves have never been a part of a cell group ministry. Much prayer and discernment should be used if you are in this type of a situation. If you have no choice but to use "cell-inexperienced" leaders in these positions, do as much as you can to help them understand the concepts, advantages and distinctives of cell group ministry. In time, leaders from within the cell groups can assume these positions of leadership within the supervisory structure.

Unfortunately, one of the first things we think of when we see any kind of hierarchical structure is the element of control. It's important to understand that a supervisory structure is not needed in order to *control* the ministries of the cell groups. Instead of controlling the cell groups, each leader in the hierarchy of the organization should be doing all that he or she can to equip, empower and *release* the cell groups to minister in whatever way the Holy Spirit is leading them. A cell group movement under the direction of the Holy Spirit is actually very "uncontrolled" in terms of human intervention. It is the faithful obedience of God's people to be completely given over to His use of their lives, time and talents as they minister in and through the cell groups.

A supervisory structure is not needed in order to *control* the ministries of the cell groups, but to equip, empower, and release the cell groups to minister.

### QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION, REVIEW AND APPLICATION

- Explain the need for some type of supervisory structure when working with cell group ministry. Why not let the cells do whatever they want? What are the advantages of having a supervisory structure in place?

- In your own words, briefly state the administrative functions which should happen in any developing cell group ministry.
- If you are currently involved in a ministry of cell groups and there is no one yet fulfilling the role of a Coordinator, whom could you approach about becoming a Coordinator? Would you consider fulfilling this role at some point in the future?
- How is the role of an Overseer different from that of a Coordinator?
- Is it possible for Coordinators and Overseers to continue to be leaders of cell groups?

## **ACTION PLAN**

- Read Appendix 13A "Cell Groups: The Final Step." Prayerfully consider what God desires for your cell group ministry before you begin to plan for some type of supervisory structure in your ministry.
- Next, develop a simple plan for the type of supervisory structure that is necessary in your particular cell group ministry context. Think of the titles you would use for the roles of Coordinator and Overseer. Even if you have only several cell groups at the moment, who could fulfill the role of a Coordinator for these groups? As the Holy Spirit continues to work and your groups grow and multiply, how will you decide who future Coordinators and Overseers will be? Where will they come from, and what types of training or experiences will they need in order to prepare them for this type of ministry? What type of supervisory structure do you need to sustain and promote the growth that God desires to see happen in your cell groups? What kind of supervisory structure would best complement the model of ministry that you are working with? Draw in your plan a diagram of the model you are using and how the supervisory structure which you have chosen fits into this model.
- Review your plan for a supervisory structure with your mentor or with the trainer of this lesson.



CELL GROUPS  
APPENDIX  
13A

# Cell Groups: The Final Step

## I. A HEART FOR THE NATIONS

As we study the Bible, it is very clear that God desires to make Himself known among all the nations of the earth. In Exodus 19:5 God instructs Moses to tell the people of Israel that *"if you obey me fully and keep my covenant, then out of all nations you will be my treasured possession. Although the whole earth is mine, you will be for me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation."* Up until the coming of Christ, the nation of Israel was God's chosen instrument to be a witness to His sovereignty and glory. Psalm 96:2-3 says, *"Sing to the LORD, praise his name; proclaim his salvation day after day. Declare his glory among the nations, his marvelous deeds among all peoples."*

When Jesus came, He fulfilled the Old Testament Law (Ro 10:4), He established the Church (Mt 16:18) and He commanded His disciples to be His witnesses (Ac 1:8) to the "ends of the earth." The Church became the instrument through which God desires to make His love and grace known to all people.

Our motivation for starting new churches is to fulfill the command which Christ gave us in the Great Commission. We have discovered that cell groups are one way in which to help establish growing, healthy, reproducing churches. We have spent much time discussing the details and workings of cell group ministry.

We have discovered that cell groups are one way in which to help establish growing, healthy, reproducing churches.

It is important to know and understand the specifics of cell group ministry. The functions in a cell group are seen in the example of the early church in Jerusalem (Acts 2:42-47). Cell groups are one way to imitate and provide a means for these same functions to happen in our churches and ministries today.

However, it is important to keep in mind the overall goal, the "big picture" of what God desires from our individual ministry efforts. What role do cell groups play in the fulfilling of the Great Commission? What should be happening in your cell group(s) in order to move closer and closer toward that goal? Is it enough to start several groups and see them begin to multiply, or does God desire more? What is the "final" step for cell groups to take in helping to fulfill the command that Christ gave almost 2000 years ago?

## II. MULTIPLICATION BY FAITH

One of the main distinguishing characteristics of cell groups is that they multiply. Multiplication must happen if groups are to stay "alive" – without it, they will eventually grow stagnant and die. Multiplication is not the motivation for evangelism in cell groups, but it allows active and ongoing evangelism to take place. There is always "room" for more unbelievers and new converts in multiplying cell groups.

Each of us understands and agrees with the need for multiplication in a cell group ministry. However, how often do we "limit" the power and sovereignty of God by our own limits of faith and vision? Are we seeing our cell group ministries with the same eyes that God sees them? If we could see our ministries as God sees them, what limitations and restrictions would be removed? What would be different? How would we understand the importance and potential impact of our cell groups?

When we first start working with cell groups, it is difficult to think about much more than getting those initial groups going, training apprentice leaders and working towards making multiplication happen. We learn much about groups through the mistakes, problems and joys of being a cell group leader. Soon we realize the need to have separate groups work together in harmony and cooperation one with

another in order to accomplish larger ministry goals. In time we begin to think about some type of organizational structure which is needed to help coordinate the efforts of many cell groups.

Isaiah 40:26 says, "*Lift your eyes and look to the heavens: Who created all these? He who brings out the starry host one by one, and calls them each by name. Because of his great power and mighty strength, not one of them is missing.*" In our own ministries of cell groups, we also need to "lift our eyes and look to the heavens." When we look anywhere but towards God, we consider only what can be done in our own strength. But as we look to God, we begin to understand His might and power, and what He can do through us.

If we had eyes which could see that which God sees, would we be excited, frightened or perhaps both? Does our lack of faith sometimes limit our ability to be used by God in the fullest measure of His will for our lives and ministries? Faith enables us to dream the big dreams and attempt great things for God, when we realize that His strength is available to empower our efforts.

Faith does not concern itself with all of our limitations and inadequacies. Instead, faith focuses on the provision and ability of God Himself to accomplish that which He desires. Faith is seeing a seemingly unattainable, impractical goal, and then being willing to step out and be used by God in achieving that which by human terms was an "impossible" task. Faith is not understanding exactly how to accomplish a particular goal or task, but understanding that God is able to complete that task in and through people who are willing to be used regardless of their situation and circumstances.

We have mentioned that leaders of cell groups should strive to *release* those groups to minister in the power of the Holy Spirit and under His direction. When cell groups contain members which in obedience have completely given over their lives, time and talents to the Lord, then the Holy Spirit has people with whom He can work and through whom He will bring forth much fruit.

Leaders of cell groups should strive to *release* those groups to minister in the power of the Holy Spirit and under His direction.

Being completely given over to God means having faith which will allow us to minister in difficult circumstances, to overcome seemingly impossible barriers, and to stop accepting the limitations which the world would put upon us. We need to pray that God would give us such a faith that we could be used to accomplish through our cell groups the great things that He has upon His heart.

### III. CHURCHES FOR THE NATIONS

If one of our goals in ministry is to have multiplying cell groups that develop into churches, how many would be enough? What if we had several groups active in ministry in our town or city? How about 10 groups, or 50 groups, or even 500 groups?

2 Peter 3:9 reflects the heart of God toward the lost: "*The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.*" Our heart's desire should also be to reach "everyone" with the saving news of Jesus. We need enough groups that would minister not only throughout a particular neighborhood or village, but throughout entire towns and regions of a country. Jesus spoke of faith that can move mountains (Mt. 17:20). Do we have enough faith to see an entire country filled with cell groups which are reaching the lost, edifying believers and proclaiming the good news of Jesus Christ until He returns?

When our ministries of cell groups stop being limited by our own lack of faith and short-sightedness, then they become useful in the hands of God. When our groups have a vision not only for the immediate future, but for a time when an entire country will be saturated with churches, then God will begin to use them in ways which we would have never dreamed were possible.

This, then, is the "final" step which we need to take if our cell groups are to help fulfill the Great Commission. This final step is the process of encouraging all cell group leaders and cell group members to see their group being used in the way that God desires to use them. It is the process of giving wider and wider vision, of challenging cell group leaders to "lift their eyes" towards the heavens and to see their nation filled with the glory of God. It is the process of actively working toward that goal in and through our cell groups.

Only when our cell group ministries have eyes that can see and faith that will rise to the challenge will we see the Holy Spirit begin to use those groups in a tremendous and miraculous way. Only as we pray fervently for our nations will the Lord begin to work to multiply groups that will have an impact on entire cities, regions and countries.

This final step in our cell group ministry is simply a "Step of Faith." It is the final step which must be taken if our cell group ministries are going to be used by the Holy Spirit of God to help bring about the completion of the Great Commission. We do not need to fear failure. William Carey, pioneer missionary to India, once said, "Attempt great things for God; expect great things from God."

"Attempt great things  
for God; expect great  
things from God."  
-William Carey

The strength is the Lord's – we need to be servants through whom that power will flow. The vision is the Lord's – we simply need eyes that are willing to see it. The completion of the task is also the Lord's – we need to believe in faith that our efforts are leading to the fulfillment of the task which God Himself has promised to complete.

God is waiting for faithful servants to take this "Step of Faith" with Him. Will you be one of them?



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# PREACHING

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PREACHING

1

LESSON

# Biblical Preaching I

## UNDERSTANDING THE MESSAGE

### ☛ Lesson Purpose

The purpose of this lesson is to explain how to compose a message that will be faithful to the intent of the text and communicate the main point of the passage clearly.

### ☛ Main Points

- A message should identify and communicate the message of the Bible rather than the speaker's own thoughts.
- There are many possible kinds of message structures. The choice is influenced by the text, the audience, and the speaker.

### ☛ Desired Outcomes

When the content of this lesson has been mastered, each participant should:

- Understand how to use the *subject* and *complement* in order to simplify and clarify the main point of the passage.
- Know the main structural points of a message.
- Know some of the various kinds of messages that can be presented.

## INTRODUCTION

Biblical preaching is a divine and human enterprise. In preaching, God speaks to the minds and hearts of people bringing them to faith and maturity in Christ, but He does so through human communicators. The three primary agents in the process are the Word of God, the Holy Spirit, and the preacher. *The preacher's responsibility is to make sure that he is communicating God's message in the power of the Holy Spirit.*

The overall purpose of a biblical message is to persuade people to believe the information presented and act on it. For that to happen, the preacher's objectives are to communicate the truth of the Word in a way that will:

- convince the mind
- awake the imagination
- move the will
- prick the conscience
- touch the emotions

There are three main factors that affect whether or not these objectives will be achieved. They are 1) the message, 2) the audience, and 3) the speaker. The message must accurately reflect what God wants to communicate. The audience must see the relevance of the message to their lives. And the speaker must present the message in such a way that makes it clear and does not detract from it. Each of the lessons in this track will focus on one of these three aspects.

As we consider constructing and delivering a biblical message, we are making several assumptions:

- We want the message to be based on the meaning of God's Word, rather than on our own thoughts, or ideas that we may have heard from others.

- We have used the inductive method to discover the meaning of the passage that we will preach to others.
- We are in a situation where a 'one-way' form of communication such as preaching will be more effective than a 'two-way' method such as leading an inductive Bible study or simply having a conversation about the Lord.
- Some, but not all of the trainees will need to deliver sermons in a normal preaching context. However, principles of good biblical preaching are applicable in many settings: church congregations, youth meetings, women's groups, evangelistic meetings etc. Female as well as male communicators will benefit from them.

Some, but not all, of the trainees will need to deliver sermons in a normal preaching context.

## I. INDUCTIVE BIBLE STUDY—A SOLID BASE

Basing the message on an inductive study of a biblical passage is the best way to ensure that we are presenting God's message and not our own thoughts. Therefore, a prayerful disciplined study of the passage is essential if the preacher is to be certain that he is indeed presenting God's message. Remember that we study the Bible inductively in order to discern the original intent of the author.

In as much as we understand and then preach the original intent of Scripture, then we are preaching the Word of God and not our own ideas. Bible Study Methods Lessons 2-7 in Manual One explain how to do an inductive Bible study. Review the principles of observation, interpretation and application from those lessons.

## II. THE MAIN IDEA OF THE MESSAGE

One common thread is woven throughout all of the discussions regarding effective public speaking. An effective speaker constructs his message around a single significant idea. This has been true of classical rhetoricians, modern communication theorists and accomplished preachers. Because our minds seek unity and order, it is essential that we preach in such a way that these characteristics are obvious to our listeners.

We build our sermons around one central idea, and everything that is said should directly or indirectly support that theme.

We build our sermons around one central idea, and everything that is said should directly or indirectly support that theme. Thus it is important to select a passage of Scripture that does have a central idea. If your chosen passage has several central ideas, you probably have material for several sermons instead of just one.

### A. Clarify the Main Idea (Theme)

It is often helpful to state the central idea of a passage by identifying two essential elements: the *subject*, and the *complement*. This method is similar to stating the biblical principle in the interpretation stage of the inductive method. However, 'biblical principles' that result from inductive study often tend to be somewhat long or complex. By starting with the principle of the passage, and identifying the *subject* and *complement*, we can often make the main idea shorter and easier to handle in a message, while retaining the meaning of the text.

The *subject* defines the topic or object that the passage talks about. This is normally a person, place, thing, or idea. It can be expressed by a simple noun, and as such, does not usually form a complete thought. The *subject* of a particular passage might be love, discipleship, Jesus, the Church, repentance, etc. In some cases, the *subject* might be a phrase that functions like a noun. Examples of these kinds of subjects are: "Loving God," "forgiving others," being filled with the Holy Spirit," or "a desire to please the Lord in everything."

The *complement* is a phrase which 'completes' the subject by explaining what the passage is saying 'about the subject.' A *complement* also may not make sense by itself, but when added to a *subject*, it forms a complete thought or idea that makes sense and is easily communicated.



**Table 1.1 Subject and Complement**

<b>Text:</b>	<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Complement:</b>	<b>Main Idea:</b>
Pr 9:10	The fear of the Lord	. . . is the beginning of wisdom.	The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.
Ro 8:32	God, Who gave us His Son	. . . will give us everything we need.	God, Who gave us His Son, will give us everything we need.
Heb 10:14	Christ's one sacrifice	. . . has made us perfect forever.	Christ's one sacrifice has made us perfect forever.
Ro 1:16	The Gospel	. . . is the power for God for salvation.	The Gospel is the power for God for salvation.
1Co 15:55	Death	. . . has lost its power over the believer.	Death has lost its power over the believer.

## B. Decide the Purpose of the Message

Once you have discovered the main idea that the biblical writer was trying to communicate, you have the core around which you will develop your sermon. The next step is to determine the purpose for the sermon. You want the sermon to cause the hearer to believe the message and act upon it. The specific action that you want the hearer to take is your message purpose. You should not try to create this response through your own efforts—that is the job of the Holy Spirit. However, since you have identified the response that you believe the Lord wants from the passage, you should try to structure the message in such a way that it works toward the Lord's purpose.

**Figure 1.2 Three Factors in Preaching**

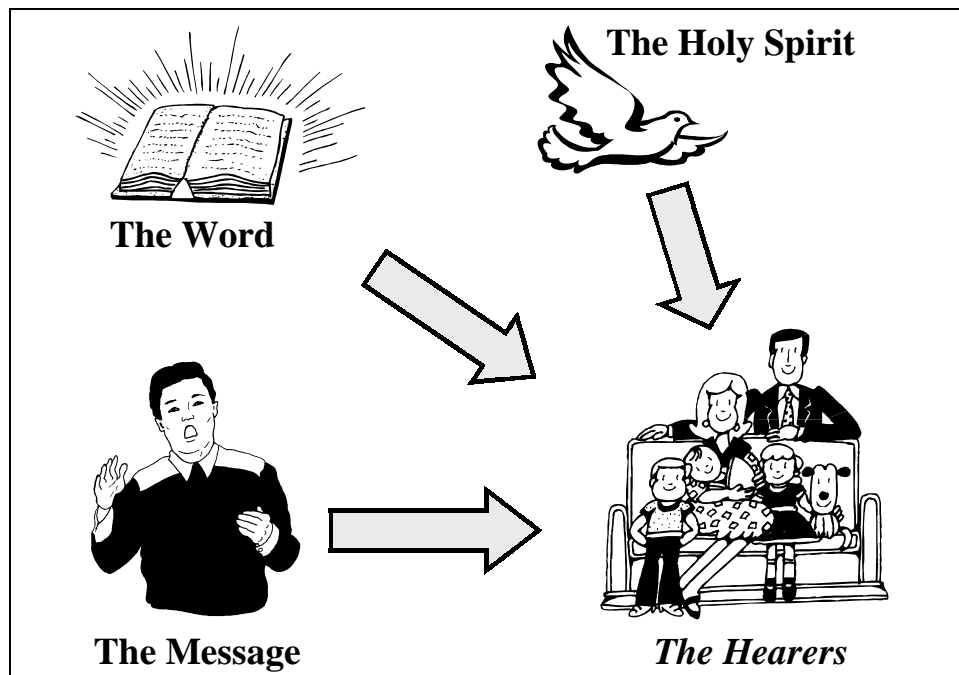


Figure 1.2 illustrates how the Word, the Holy Spirit, and the message should work together to influence the hearer. This is the case only when the preacher is sensitive to both the meaning of the text and to the leading of the Spirit. A speaker that is faithful to prayerfully seek the meaning of the passage should expect that this will happen.

### III. STRUCTURE OF THE MESSAGE

A good message, like any public address, will normally be comprised of the several parts. These parts are like building blocks. They are almost always present, although the order or relative importance of each may change. Again, this is closely related to the skill of the preacher. It takes practice to decide how best to arrange them. It is more of an art than a science.

#### A. The Introduction

A message should have some kind of introduction, whether or not it is labeled as such. If, in the introduction, you don't gain the attention of the audience, and their interest in the message you are presenting, you are really wasting your time preaching. Their bodies may be present with you in the room, but their minds are far away.

The introduction should therefore accomplish three things:

1. *Secure the attention of the audience.*
2. *Present the subject of the sermon.*
3. *Relate the subject of needs felt by the audience.*

The hearers may decide whether to listen to or ignore the speaker in the first few moments of the message. A well thought-out introduction can go a long way toward convincing them that you have something to say, and that it would be worth listening to you. A poor introduction can accomplish the opposite. Good introductions require an understanding of the audience. This will be the subject of the next lesson.

Hearers may decide whether to listen to or ignore the speaker in the first few moments of the message.
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#### B. The Body

The body of the message is the basic content. During this section, the meaning of the Scripture passage is usually explained, as well as its relevance to the current situation of the hearer. This is where you should help the audience discover the same main point that you found during your inductive study. Since there probably will not be enough time to go through the entire process or to bring out all of your observations, you will need to carefully choose the few that are the most important. Focus on facts that quickly and clearly demonstrate the main point, and that fit the purpose as you understand it.

The body is the heart of the message. It should come from the Word. If the Scriptures are overpowered by illustrations, personal commentary, quoted stories, or anything else, it is not a biblical message. Keep the text central.

#### C. The Conclusion

The conclusion is the time when you summarize what you have said in the message and call for commitment or response. This does not mean that you will always wait to apply the sermon until the end. You can bring out application at any point. In fact, some preachers feel that an effective message can be structured as follows:

1. Tell them what you are going to tell them = Introduction
2. Tell them = Body
3. Tell them what you have told them = Conclusion

Repetition can be a wonderful learning device if it is presented in an interesting way. However, the message should always end with an explanation of the desired response, whether or not it was introduced earlier in the message. This should be the last thing that they hear, and the most important thing that they take home with them after the message is over.

A conclusion should contain one or more of the following components:

- A summary of the main points.

- An illustration that brings together the main points and the central idea.
- A quotation that accomplishes the same purpose as an illustration.
- A question.
- A prayer.
- Specific directions or an appeal to action

#### **D. The Illustrations**

An illustration is designed to shed light or make more understandable an idea, teaching or issue raised in the message. It may be used at any point in the message—the introduction, the body, or the conclusion. It is particularly helpful when you want to give emphasis to a teaching or to explain a difficult passage. But remember: illustrations must contribute to the understanding of the message being presented. Do not include illustrations just for the sake of having an illustration.

There are three main types of illustrations for use in preaching: biblical illustrations, non-biblical illustrations, and object lessons.

##### *1. Biblical Illustrations*

The Bible is full of wonderful, clear illustrations. Sometimes we can find a modern illustration that serves as well or better, but often we cannot. Who can improve on the parable of the lost sheep, or the examples of the lilies of the field, or the man who built his house on the sand? When these illustrations speak clearly, we should use them. Examples of biblical illustrations include:

- The lives of persons mentioned in the passage. For example see Philippians 2:19-30.
- Cross-references. A concordance will help you to find other biblical passages that deal with the same subject and may help explain it. The principle here is to use Scripture to interpret Scripture.
- Biblical stories. Many stories from the Old Testament are helpful to explain principles mentioned in the New Testament. For example, the life of Jonah is an excellent illustration of the principle that God requires our complete obedience.
- Maps. A map of an area where the action is taking place is often helpful to understand the biblical passage.
- Information gained from the context. The material just before and after Ephesians 5:15-21 helps us to understand the concept of being filled with the Spirit.

##### *2. Non-Biblical Illustrations*

Do not be afraid to use illustrations that do not come from the Scriptures, as long as they effectively make the same point. Many times, these illustrations will connect more deeply with your audience. This is especially true when the audience is not particularly familiar with the Bible. In such cases, the meaning of many passages or examples would be lost on them, and it is better to choose something they understand. Non-biblical illustrations include:

- Current events. Biblical truths are timeless. However, they are often understood better when a current event illustrates them. Often articles in newspapers and magazines are very useful.
- Observations of everyday life.
- Personal experiences. Personal experiences are often the most powerful illustrations; however, be careful not to always make yourself the hero.
- Illustrations from nature. The picture of a seagull at peace, standing on a rock with waves crashing around it, is a beautiful illustration of the Christian standing on his rock, the Lord Jesus Christ.
- Historical backgrounds. It is important to know about the immoral life of the city of Ephesus to understand fully the concerns of Paul in the Ephesians chapter 5.

### 3. Object Lessons

Object lessons are an effective tool in communication because they are based on the principle that learning a new concept is made easier when a bridge is made between the known and the unknown. An object that is common to the experience of the learners is shown and described. Then a comparison is made between it and the new concept that is being presented. The object is not exactly like the concept being introduced, rather in some way it is like it. The learner will then understand some aspect of the new truth and be ready to appreciate other aspects.

One great advantage of object lessons is that they are very effective in securing the attention of the learner. Christ often used object lessons in his teaching ministry. All of nature for Him reflected truths about God. Some of the object lessons He used are as follows:

- Physical water and living water (Jn 4:7-15, the woman at the well)
- A child and simplicity of faith (Mt 19:13-15)
- The feeding of the five thousand and "the bread of life" (Jn 6)

Some other ideas for object lessons that we might use are:

- A road map (Jn 14:6)
- A glass of milk (1Pe 2:2, Heb 5:12,13)
- A bar of soap (1Jn 1:9)
- A glass of water and loaf of bread (Jn 4, 6)
- A candle or flashlight (Jn 8:12)
- A door or gate (Jn 10:1-10)
- The picture of a sheep or a real one (Isa 53:6; Ps 23)
- A sword (Heb 4:12)
- A piece of money and a wrapped present (Ro 6:23)
- A cassette player unplugged—unconnected to the source of our spiritual power we can do nothing (Jn 15:5)

## IV. TYPES OF MESSAGES

There are many kinds of messages. A good speaker should be able to use several of them as the need arises. They are like tools in the hands of a craftsman. Each is appropriate for a particular situation and task. The preacher, like the craftsman, needs to know when and where each one might be most effectively used. The forms listed below are not exhaustive. The variations are too numerous to list. Also, a message might effectively combine more than one form.

### A. Didactic

This kind of message basically presents facts. It is typically used to explain doctrine. It is very effective when the main purpose of the message is to *inform*. It can help to bring about a change in *understanding*. Many of the New Testament epistles are didactic in style. They tend to emphasize logic and reason.

### B. Devotional

A devotional message focuses more on spiritual response than on facts or knowledge. If the didactic message is aimed more for the 'head,' the devotional message is aimed for the 'heart' of the hearer. This kind of message emphasizes the emotions, and often includes very emotional illustrations. Psalms is a good example of a devotional book.

### **C. Narrative**

Narrative messages are built upon one or more stories. These stories might or might not be biblical. The truth of the Word is woven into the story. The story serves as the framework that helps the hearer organize and understand the truth being taught. Such messages can be very memorable. In fact, care must be exercised so that the story does not overwhelm the truth of the Word, and become the authority. The historical books of the Bible are narrative.

### **D. Interrogative**

While many messages focus on providing answers, an interrogative style can also be very effective. Often, preachers answer questions that no one is asking, and the interest is therefore low. If the speaker can clearly articulate relevant questions that are of concern to the audience, they can become more involved in the message. Rather than being passive 'hearers,' they can begin to anticipate and seek answers to the questions raised by the message. When they discover the answers in the Word through the message, the effect can be very positive.

### **E. Circular or Linear**

The majority of sermons in the West are linear in development, and therefore many of the texts on preaching emphasize outlining or systematically developing a sermon. In many countries, however, a circular type of message is better understood. Linear messages deal with one point, and move on to the next. Circular reasoning, by contrast, repeatedly revisits the same point from a different angle or approach. The two types might be compared to viewing art in a museum. Moving progressively from painting to painting would be a linear approach. But walking around an interesting statue and viewing it from several different perspectives would be a circular approach. Both types have value, depending on the subject under consideration and the interest of the audience.

## **CONCLUSION**

God's Word is "living and active" (Heb 4:12). Biblical preaching is clearly communicating the Word of God in such a way that its power will transform all who hear. The preacher has a great responsibility to make sure that he communicates God's message and not his own ideas. Understanding God's Word through careful and prayerful study is the first step in preparing a sermon. Be sure to take the time necessary to study and understand God's Word when you preach it.

## **QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION, REVIEW AND APPLICATION**

- Think about one of the best preachers you have heard. What characteristics of their preaching style or content made it effective? How did people respond to their preaching?
- Why should sermons be based on inductive Bible study?
- What is the function of biblical preaching? Are there different forms to accomplish this function?

## **ACTION PLAN**

- Choose one of the Gospels, and as you read through it, make a list of the illustrations or object lessons you see used.
- Pick a room in your apartment or house and look around in it for things that might be object lessons of spiritual truth. Be creative. Examine even simple things might be able to powerfully illustrate difficult biblical concepts.



PREACHING

2

LESSON

# Biblical Preaching II

## UNDERSTANDING THE AUDIENCE

### ☞ Lesson Purpose

The purpose of this lesson is to emphasize the importance of understanding the target audience during the preparation of the message.

### ☞ Main Points

- Jesus, Peter, and Paul adapted their messages to their audiences.
- When hearers discover truth in the text for themselves, it is more powerful and memorable than when they are simply told.
- A good message will demonstrate the 'common ground' that the biblical characters and the modern audience share.

### ☞ Desired Outcomes

When the content of this lesson has been mastered, each participant should:

- Understand how the New Testament preachers varied their messages according to the audience.
- Be committed to helping the audience discover the meaning of the passage being preached to them.

## INTRODUCTION

In the Bible study methods section of this material, we emphasized the importance of discovering the meaning of the text, rather than reading our thoughts and ideas into it. However, in the application stage, we stressed that it is important to compare the biblical context with our context in order to understand what we should do. When the inductive method is used for personal study, we can assume that we know our context. When used in a small group Bible study, we also expect each of the participants to be aware of their own context, and to be able to make a reasonable application to their own lives.

When we develop an inductive study into a sermon or message, we should not assume that we understand the audience. Rather, significant time in message preparation should be devoted to thinking about who will be listening to the message, and what their needs might be. In a long-term, stable church situation, this is somewhat easier, as a pastor normally learns about his people over time. In a church planting situation, there should be a constant stream of new contacts who are invited to hear the Word, and about whom we may know little. In a large-group evangelistic meeting, we may know almost nothing about the majority of the audience. It takes effort to research the general needs of the typical person in our target audience, and even more so to learn about the personal needs of each one who attends. The benefit, however, is a much more effective sermon or message.

Significant time in message preparation should be devoted to thinking about who will be listening to the message.

## I. NEW TESTAMENT PREACHING

As we look at the preaching in the New Testament, we see that they did not simply preach the same thing on every occasion. Rather, they adjusted their message according to the needs and spiritual level of the audience.

## A. The Preaching of Jesus

Jesus is perhaps the best example of a master communicator that the world has ever seen. He, being God, had much deeper insight into the needs of His audience than we can possibly hope to have. But the principle of adjusting the message to meet the need still applies. Consider how differently Jesus spoke to the Pharisees than to His disciples. For the Pharisees who refused to hear, He delivered stern warnings of judgment (Mt 23). For the disciples, His messages were much more inviting and encouraging (Jn 14).

Jesus also delivered His messages at an understandable level. To the woman at the well, He spoke of water (Jn 4). But to Nicodemus the Pharisee, He introduced the topic of the new birth from above (Jn 3). In Matthew 13:10-15, Jesus explained to His disciples that He actually preached to the multitudes in parables *so that they would not understand* truth that they were not willing to obey. However, He fully explained everything to His disciples (Mk 4:33-34).

## B. The Preaching of Peter

Peter learned from the Master Preacher—Jesus. He also was careful to adjust the message to the audience. One comparison should help illustrate this fact. Consider the difference in the sermons Peter preached to the Jewish crowd at Pentecost, and to the Gentiles in Cornelius' home. With the Jewish crowd, he immediately began to quote the Old Testament prophet Joel (Acts 2:17-21). They would have been very familiar with that passage, and valued the Old Testament Scriptures. In his brief sermon, he managed to work in two other quotations from the Psalms of David. Clearly, this sermon was understandable to the Jews, and it led to great repentance.

Peter's address to the Gentiles in Cornelius' home was very different. There are no quotations from the Old Testament. Instead, Peter began with an explanation of how God is not partial, but accepts men from every nation (Acts 10:34-35). This would strike a responsive chord with this group who had long been looked down upon by the Jews. Having won their attention, Peter then quickly shifts to the ministry and death of Christ. Again, the results were dramatic.

## C. The Preaching of Paul

Table 2.1 compares the sermons that Paul delivered to various groups during his church planting ministry in the Book of Acts.

**Table 2.1 Paul's Sermons**

<b>Text</b>	<b>Audience</b>	<b>Introduction</b>	<b>Message</b>
Acts 13:16-41	Unbelieving Jews in Pisidian Antioch	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Old History of Israel with Old Testament quotations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Need for repentance</li> <li>• Christ</li> </ul>
Acts 17:22-31	Unbelieving Gentiles in Athens	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Their local altars</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Omnipresence of God</li> <li>• The resurrection of Christ</li> </ul>
Acts 20:18-35	Elders of the Ephesian Church in Miletus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Paul's life among them</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Paul's desire to serve</li> <li>• Their responsibility to the flock</li> </ul>
Acts 22:1-21	Unbelieving Jewish Mob in Jerusalem	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Paul's background as Pharisee and persecutor of the Church</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Paul's conversion (testimony)</li> <li>• Paul's mission to the Gentiles</li> </ul>
Acts 26:2-23	Unbelieving Jewish King Herod Agrippa at Caesarea	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Praise for Agrippa</li> <li>• Paul's past life</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Paul's past life</li> <li>• Paul's conversion</li> <li>• Forgiveness through Christ</li> </ul>



This comparison highlights several facts.

- First, we see a marked difference between Paul's message to the believing elders from Ephesus and everyone else. Paul talked to them about commitment and their responsibility to serve the Lord by caring for the flock. To the other groups, however, Paul focused on the need for repentance and on Christ—that is, on the Gospel.
- Second, Paul often used his personal testimony with both kinds of groups. Sharing his personal spiritual journey was a high priority for Paul no matter to whom he was speaking.
- Third, Paul made every effort to identify with the particular target group and to gain their interest in listening to his message. This extended as far as using the false idols in Athens as a sermon illustration.

## II. AIMING FOR YOUR TARGET AUDIENCE

All too often, preachers deliver their messages with little thought to their audiences. How often have you heard someone preach a 'hellfire and brimstone' message of repentance for salvation to a church group that does not include a single known unbeliever? At the other extreme, preachers often spend large amounts of time preaching messages on Christian morals and living to unbelievers who are not ready for anything more than the Gospel.

All too often, preachers deliver their messages with little thought to their audiences.

If our preaching is to resemble that in the New Testament, we need to pay attention to the characteristics of the audience, and deliver messages that are appropriate to them, and understandable. There are many characteristics that we should consider.

### A. Important Characteristics of the Audience

The audience characteristics that might be important vary greatly from group to group. The list below is only partial. Time and experience will help you know what questions to ask.

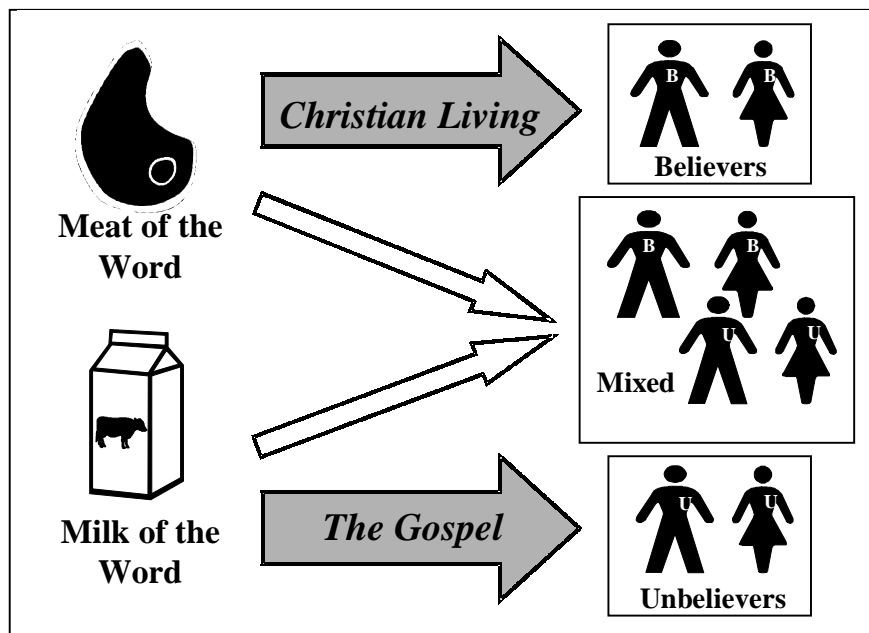
- Age – Older and younger people look at life very differently, and tend to listen to different kinds of messages. It is important to adjust both the content and the delivery of the message accordingly.
- Spiritual Level – People need to have content that matches their level of spiritual maturity, and helps them move on to a higher level. We should not waste complicated truths on unbelievers (Mt 7:6). Nor should we belabor basic truths with those who should be growing (Heb 6:1-3).
- Education – It is important not to speak in either too complex or too simple a manner. Often, the educational level of the audience gives us an idea of the proper level.
- Interests – If you want to get the attention of a group, talk about things that interest them. This is possible only if you know what their interests are.
- Ethnic Background – People of different ethnic backgrounds see things through the eyes of their own worldviews, which might differ from that of the speaker. It is important to know what those differences are.
- Religious Background – Religious tradition runs very deep, and we cannot ignore it. Something that means one thing to us may be taken in an entirely different way by a person looking through the grid of another religion.
- Family Status – Single people, married couples, divorced or widowed people, and grandparents have very different needs that match their family situations. We need to make sure our message meets those needs.
- Employment – Profession or job status also influences our needs and interests.
- Gender – Men and women often look at the same things in very different ways. Who comprises your audience?

## B. What the Audience Needs

It can be dangerous to generalize, but we can gain some understanding as we refer back to the example of the sermons of the Apostle Paul. He preached the Gospel to unbelievers, but commitment to believers. This seems simple, but is often overlooked. Some spiritual truths are harder to understand than others. The unsaved person can understand only the Gospel as the Holy Spirit convicts him. The "meat" of the Scripture is wasted on him. In the same way, far too many believers are fed a constant diet of "milk" and therefore remain weak and unprepared for ministry. Figure 2.2 illustrated the fact that each group needs a proper 'diet' of the Word that is right for them.

From the figure, it is clear that the Gospel is for the unbelievers, and the truths of about commitment and Christian living are for the mature believers. When the audience is mixed, the message should also reflect that diversity.

**Figure 2.2 A Proper Diet**



It might also be noted that when a person trusts Christ, he or she is not immediately and automatically ready for difficult spiritual truth. There is a normal period of growth for the new believer where they continue to need to have the Gospel reinforced and explained, but when they learn and grow, they should begin to include more 'meat' and less 'milk' in their diet. Therefore, when you plan your message, you will also need to consider not only the ratio of believers to unbelievers, but also whether the audience is closer to the 'meat' or 'milk' stage.

## III. HELPING THE AUDIENCE TO DISCOVER

No matter where on the scale of growth your audience might be, your preaching will be more powerful and memorable if it opens the Word to them and causes them to discover truth in it. It is not enough for them to simply learn from *you*, or to hear the things that *you* say. They must interact with the Scriptures themselves. In this way, biblical preaching resembles the emphasis on discovery that we saw when we studied the inductive method of Bible study.

Your audience must interact with the Scriptures themselves.

Imagine that someone sends you a letter, and you go to the post office to receive it. However, instead of giving you the letter to read, the postal clerk opens it, reads it silently, and then tells you approximately what it said. Would you be satisfied? Would you not feel a need to read the letter for yourself? This is

essentially what preachers often do. They study the Word privately, and then stand up and summarize for others what they remember from it. It is infinitely better when the preacher opens the Bible for us, and leads us through our own study of the truths contained in it.

Why should we bother to preach? Why not just give them the Bible and let them read it? Because many things in the Scriptures are difficult to understand. (Even Peter thought so in 2Pe 3:15-16.). Someone needs to help explain the complicated issues, and to show how to apply the truths to their lives. Biblical preaching can help to explain the similarities between the biblical context and the modern context of the audience. It takes skill and sensitivity to know when we need to help them discover, without becoming an obstacle between them and the Bible. To accomplish this requires that we take time to get to know the audience well, and adjust our message to meet their needs.

The preacher is to help build a bridge between the audience and the Word so that they can discover it.

## QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION, REVIEW AND APPLICATION

- What do you think about the way Paul handled the issue of idols in the Acts 17 passage? How would you have presented that message in the same situation?
- What is the best way to 'balance the diet' in a message to a mixed group?
- What things do you think are 'meat' and what things are 'milk'?

## ACTION PLAN

- Read back through the list of characteristics in Section II.A. and then evaluate the group to whom you minister. Write a short statement to summarize each point as it relates to your group. Are there any other important characteristics that you need to add to the list to adequately describe your audience? What do you still need to learn about them in order to preach in a way that effectively meets their needs?
- Next, evaluate one of the messages that you have preached recently, or have prepared to preach soon. Does it fit this group? Why or why not? How could you improve it to make it more relevant, interesting, and applicable?



PREACHING

LESSON 3

# Biblical Preaching III

## UNDERSTANDING YOURSELF

### ☞ Lesson Purpose

The purpose of this lesson is to help the trainee improve his personal preparation and presentation in order to increase the effectiveness of the message.

### ☞ Main Points

- The life, testimony, and style of the preacher can enhance or detract from the message.
- Voice, mannerisms, and dress can be controlled and improved through effort and practice.

### ☞ Desired Outcomes

When the content of this lesson has been mastered, each participant should:

- Understand the need for personal spiritual preparation for preaching.
- Be able to better control his or her voice and mannerisms during preaching.
- Be aware of techniques for more effective reading of the Word.

## INTRODUCTION

We have discussed the fact that an understanding of the structure of the message and an understanding of the audience are key to effective biblical preaching. The third factor is the speaker. Figure 3.1 illustrates how the words of the speaker can either help to clarify and explain the message of the Word to the hearers, or it can detract from it.

The speaker affects our reception of the message on at least two levels. First, whenever a person speaks to us on any subject, we unconsciously filter their words through our opinion of that person. If we consider the person to be reliable, intelligent, trustworthy, etc., what they say will be more acceptable to us. If, on the other hand, we distrust or dislike the speaker, we will tend to ignore or discount the value of the message. The same happens with a sermon.

There is a second way that the speaker affects the message. Even if a person whom we like and trust is speaking, we might miss the content of the message if they are doing something that is distracting, or if their 'body-language' contradicts what they say. Perhaps they are telling us about something that happened, but they seem distracted. We will naturally wonder what they are really thinking about rather than focusing on what they are saying. Perhaps we notice a bug crawling up their sleeve, and completely miss what they are saying. *What we see* can override *what we hear*. Again, the same is true in preaching.

What we see can  
override what we  
hear.

In this lesson, we will discuss several of the important areas that concern the speaker. Perhaps the most important issues are the speaker's spiritual state, emotional state, and physical appearance. We will look at each of these in turn.

## I. SPIRITUAL ISSUES

Preaching is a spiritual activity. We depend on the Holy Spirit to take the words that we say and apply them to the hearts of the listeners. In order for us to have the confidence that this will happen, we need to take a close look at our spiritual lives.

## A. Be Yourself

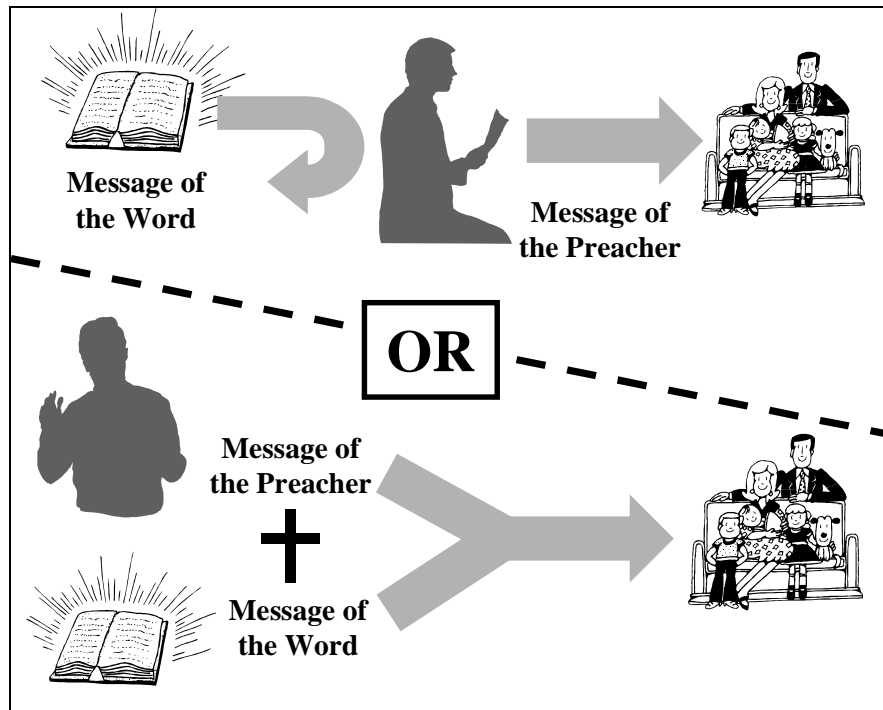
People can often quickly spot a 'fake.' And yet, even well-meaning preachers often have a 'personality change' when they stand before others to speak or preach. Their voice and vocabulary may change drastically. In the worst case, they may take on somewhat of a 'holy air' that is intended to convince others that they should listen, but has the opposite effect if it is not a true reflection of the spiritual life of the speaker.

In reality, God made each of us in unique ways so that we can serve Him as He desires. This was a difficult truth for Moses. In Exodus 4:10-12, he explained how his slow speech would hinder the message to the Israelites in captivity in Egypt. God rebuked Moses. He had formed Moses exactly how He wanted him to be—slow speech included. When we think that we need to be someone else, or act differently than the Lord made us in order to communicate His message, we do Him a serious disservice.

God made each of us in unique ways so that we can serve Him as He desires.

This, of course, does not mean that we should not try to improve our speaking skills or grow in relation to the Lord. We should. What we are saying is that as we continually grow, we should not pretend that we are farther along than we are. It is important that the audience see that we are sinners, saved by grace, as they are. We should be models of spiritual growth, not perfection.

**Figure 3.1 Helping or Hindering the Message?**



## B. Pay Attention to Your Walk with the Lord

Paul counseled Timothy that his own growth and walk would affect his ministry (1Ti 4:16), and it would seem to be a valid principle for everyone who desires to preach the Word of God. One of the most amazing challenges in the New Testament is found in Acts 4:13. In that passage, Peter and John are standing before the highest-ranking and most educated religious authorities of their day. Despite the fact that they are uneducated fishermen, they exuded confidence in their message. Why? Because they had spent time with Jesus. Even the unbelieving members of the Sanhedrin recognized this fact.

The intent of this passage is not to speak against education and training. The Apostle Paul was also mightily used by God, and he had the highest religious training possible. Rather, the point of

the passage is that *even the uneducated* can be used powerfully if they have a vibrant spiritual walk. It does not matter how much background and training you have. God can use you at any level if you focus on staying close to Him. This is the most important factor in true biblical preaching.

## II. EMOTIONAL ISSUES

Preachers, or potential speakers, tend to suffer from one of two emotional extremes. Some think that they will not be able to do a good job, and are controlled by fear. This can be so serious that they might refuse to speak, even when they have important things to say. The other extreme is to be so sure of our abilities that we fall into pride.

Preachers, or potential speakers, tend to suffer from one of two emotional extremes

### A. Fear of Speaking in Public

Some fear is good. It is a normal emotion that God gave us for a purpose. A proper amount of fear can:

- sharpen our senses
- motivate us to do our best
- make us realize our dependence on God

Even experienced preachers often feel "butterflies" in their stomach, or some uncertainty before they speak. Representing the King of Kings is an awesome task, for which none of us is truly worthy. When we remember this fact, it helps us to avoid pride or dependence on our own abilities.

#### 1. *Causes of Fear*

There are many causes of fear. The most common include the following:

- Fear of failure. We are often afraid that we are going to do something dumb, and people will laugh at us.
- Fear of the unknown. We are going to speak to a number of people and we have never done that before.
- Fear of rejection. Will they accept me?
- Fear of hostility. How will they react to what I am going to say?
- Fear of failure. This might happen when we have not properly prepared.

#### 2. *Controlling the Fear*

There are a number of things that we can do to help control or conquer unhealthy amounts of fear.

- Give the message to God, Who is with you and caring for you.
- Do everything for the Lord. We want His approval, rather than that of other people.
- Remember that your message is very important, it is the Word of God. Concentrate on your message and how much the hearers need that message.
- Do your study well; know the message that you are going to present.

#### 3. *Controlling the Tension That Comes From Fear*

There are a few physical exercises that you can do each time you prepare to speak that will help to reduce any fear-related tension that you may feel.

- Before you get up to speak, relax. Put yourself in a relaxing position and concentrate on allowing the muscles of your neck, back, legs and arms to relax.
- Control your breathing. Before speaking, breathe deeply to fill your lungs with fresh air. Do this several times. During the sermon, pause regularly, allow yourself to breathe deeply. Do not speak rapidly.

## B. Pride

The opposite of fear is pride. Pride is a common sinful attitude—especially among those involved in public ministry and speaking. Paul warns Timothy that young Christians can easily fall into this trap if we exalt them to too high a position in the church too quickly (1Ti 3:6). However, almost any believer can give examples of more experienced Christian leaders who have suffered the same defeat.

Those who allow themselves to be controlled by pride forget that true spiritual growth comes only through the ministry of the Holy Spirit in the heart of the hearer. A capable, proud speaker might be interesting, entertaining, or enjoyable to listen to. People might flock to hear him or her speak. However, he does not have the ability to cause true spiritual growth. As far as the kingdom of God is concerned, their sermons or messages are a waste of time at best, and sin at worst.

True spiritual growth comes only through the ministry of the Holy Spirit in the heart of the hearer.

## III. PHYSICAL ISSUES

Although preaching is a spiritual activity, good public speaking skills can make messages easier to listen to. Public speaking is a learned skill. Some people have a natural talent for public speaking, but by learning some helpful techniques, anyone can be an effective public speaker. Preaching is a special form of public speaking. It is publicly proclaiming God's word to others. It is important that the preacher's mannerisms or voice control not distract people's attention from the sermon.

There are a number of public speaking techniques that are helpful for the preacher. By implementing these helps, and through solid preparation and practice, you can preach effectively so that your people will grow in understanding of God's word and in obedience and deepening relationship to God.

### A. Voice Control

A speaker will be much easier to listen to if he knows how to control his voice and adapt it to the acoustics of the room in which he is speaking.

#### 1. *Characteristics of the Voice*

##### a. Volume

- Change the volume of your voice to follow the emotion and meaning of your message.

##### b. Tone

- Choose a tone that is neither strong nor weak.
- It is good to record your voice on a tape recorder and listen to it. You are able to change your voice to make it have a more agreeable tone.
- Do not speak in a monotone. Vary the tones of your voice

##### c. Articulation

- When you speak in public, you should open your mouth wide enough to sufficiently articulate the words.

##### d. Pace or speed

- You should speak neither very rapidly nor very slowly.
- Nervousness often leads us to speak rapidly. Practice giving the message in the quiet of your room and work on the speed of delivery.
- Your pace or speed must be adapted to the audience. They must be able to follow you and understand you without difficulty.
- Use pauses creatively, as you would do in normal conversation.



## 2. *Adapt Your Voice to the Acoustics of the Room*

In order to make sure that everyone in the room is able to hear you, you need to speak to the last person in the room. This is particularly important if you do not have a public address system. If the acoustics in the room are poor, you can adjust to it by the following means:

- Speak more slowly.
- Construct short phrases, and pausing between them.
- Pronounce your words carefully.
- Vary the tone.
- Accompany your words with more body movements.
- Use a low tone of voice.

## B. **Appearance**

The physical appearance of the speaker is also important. When you speak, you should consider the following areas.

### 1. *Dress*

First impressions are important. You do not want to overdress or underdress. You do not want to call attention to yourself, but to God. Therefore, dress in a way that's appropriate for the group to whom you are ministering.

### 2. *Posture*

The audience sees us before it hears us. The manner in which we walk to the pulpit is already communicating something to the audience. When you walk to the pulpit, you want people to know that you have a message to them from God. It is an important message. Therefore, carry your head erect, and your body with dignity.

When you are in front of a group, keep your hands out of your pockets, and do not cling onto the podium with them. Allow your hands to be free for natural gestures as you communicate. Avoid the following positions:

- Military - The body is erect and rigid with the hands placed behind the back. This transmits hardness and tension.
- Languid - Avoid putting all of your weight on one foot with your shoulders slouched over. This communicates laziness and lack of interest.
- Priestly - With this position, we're trying to look extremely holy. Rigidly erect with our hands held in praying position.
- The lion - Here the preacher paces from one side to the other in the pulpit as a lion does in its cage.

Allow your posture to adapt itself to the emotion of the message. You are speaking to the audience with your voice and with your body. Allow your body to change naturally with your voice. Your body and voice then will work together in communication, rather than against each other.

### 3. *Gestures*

When you talk to friends, you use gestures with your head, with your shoulders, with your arms, with your legs, with your face. All of your body is used. When giving a sermon, you want to be as natural as you are when you are talking with your friends.

- A gesture should be genuine and natural. It should accompany the message as it would accompany a conversation with a friend.
- It is not necessary to smile all the time. In fact, that would be false, because some of your message may be about the need to repent. Your facial expression should accompany the normal emotion of your message.

- When giving an illustration about the life of an individual, or something that the individual has said, it is appropriate to imitate the tone of the voice, the gestures, and the facial features of the individual that you are imitating. In other words, it is appropriate to act out scenes from the Bible or everyday life.
- Maintain eye contact with the audience. You want them to know that you are interested in them personally. You can do that best by maintaining eye contact with them. You also want to know if they are responding to your message. You only know that by reading their eyes.

### **C. Interpretive Reading**

Before you read a biblical passage to an audience, you need to understand the teaching about that message. You should understand first what the author is trying to communicate, so that you can be God's tool in communicating it effectively.

- Read the passage carefully, at least three times.
- Note the punctuation.
- Study the vocabulary. If there are any words that you do not know, look them up in the dictionary.
- Note the theme of the passage as well as its teaching. Also note how that theme is developed.
- Note the purpose that the author had in including this passage in a biblical narrative. In order to do that, it is important to look at the context.
- If there are people mentioned in the passage, note their characteristics.
- If the passage is a biblical story, accompany in your reading the development of the story from its introduction, development, climax and conclusion. Try to capture the emotion of the story in your own voice as it is developed.

You are reading God's word, so read it with conviction and enthusiasm.

## **QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION, REVIEW AND APPLICATION**

- Think of an effective preacher whom you know. What are elements of his speaking style which make him effective? Describe the use of his voice and body language.
- What are two helpful ideas you gained from this lesson to enhance your own preaching effectiveness?

## **ACTION PLAN**

Have a friend use a tape recorder (or video camera, if you have access to one) to record you as you present a message. Then as you review the tape, evaluate your use of voice according to the parameters given in this lesson. If you use video, study your appearance and body language as well. If you simply have a tape recorder, ask that your friend who is taping watch these things and evaluate you.

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# THE FAMILY

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THE FAMILY

LESSON 3

# Ministry to the Family

## A WORKSHOP



### Lesson Purpose

The purpose of this lesson is to provide an opportunity for an open and honest discussion of issues that may have an impact for the church planter and the balance between ministry and family.



### Main Points

- There must be a balance between the time spent in ministry to the family and ministry to the church.
- In the life and ministry of a church planter, problems will arise which relate directly to the spouse and children. These problems must be recognized, openly discussed, and a commitment must be made on the part of the church planter to prayerfully resolve them.



### Desired Outcomes

As a result of this workshop, each participant should:

- Understand that as a church planter, balance and unity in a marital relationship as well as in the home are foundational concepts to a healthy ministry.
- Practice a commitment to understanding one's family members and how their lives are impacted and have an impact on the ministry of the church planter. Strive to obtain balance and unity in family and marriage.



### Suggestions To Trainers

The examples presented here are used merely to stimulate discussion about the need to seek balance between a church planter's ministry, and marriage and family. Please feel free to utilize your own examples and discussion questions but make sure that your discussions touch on issues such as servant leadership, conflict resolution, proper decision-making in the home, appropriate ways to express love to one's spouse, accepting one's own and one's spouse's weaknesses and strengths, etc. Carefully prepare for this session by reading all of the scenarios and then develop your lesson time according to issues that are of concern to your trainees. The scenarios and questions provided may or may not be adequate to meet the needs of your particular context. In this case, feel free to develop your own examples and questions.

## INTRODUCTION

Often the question is asked, "Which comes first, family or the ministry?" The answer is neither. GOD comes first. Because we love Him, we serve Him. He has given us certain tasks to perform, all of which are part of our ministry to Him. To try and separate family and ministry is like trying to separate our spiritual life from our ministry. It is impossible, because they are interwoven. Our family is a part of our ministry.

The key to effective ministry in a church plant and in a family is balance. Some church planters and pastors take their commitment to ministry in the church to an extreme, and they effectively ignore their family. This is in direct contrast to the commands in the Bible for a father to instruct and discipline his children (De 6:7, Pr 22:6). How can a father do these things if he never sees his children or spends time with them? Consider Eli the priest, whose two sons were so wicked that God put them to death (1 Sa 2:34). God has given us the responsibility to raise our children because He knows that on their own, they will not make right choices.

Some church planters take the other extreme—they are overly preoccupied with their family, to the extent that they are not fulfilling the calling that God has given them as pastors and/or church planters. It can be very

easy for the family to become something that takes away our devotion from God. Jesus warned in Matthew 10:37 that anyone who loves his family more than Christ is not worthy of Him.

The qualifications for both overseers and deacons in 1 Timothy 3 require a more balanced view—a leader in the church is to be a man of one wife, who manages his children and household well. Just as individuals who fail morally disqualify themselves from ministry, so individuals who fail in their family lives also disqualify themselves from ministry. Every church planter who is married must strive to maintain a proper balance between the time that he spends with his wife and children, and the time that he spends with the church. Both are ministries, and both are his calling.

## **GUIDELINES TO THIS WORKSHOP**

The following scenarios discuss situations and problems that are common among church planters. As you work through them, look for similarities in your own life and ministry.

- Break into small groups at the beginning of the lesson time. Each group should deal with just one of the scenarios.
- Come up with biblical principles that could have been applied to the situation.
- At the end of the small group time, have everyone gather as a larger group and have each group present its findings.

*Note to Translator: Please change names in the following case studies to those common in your language.*

### **I. SCENARIO ONE—IGOR AND LUBA**

Rocked by the swaying of the train, Igor settled down for a welcome night's sleep. While it had been a busy five days during the training seminar, he was very encouraged by what he had learned and by the fellowship of others who had the same desire as his own: to start new churches. There had been such unity during the seminar. Everyone understood his struggles and concerns as they were all in the initial stage of establishing churches. Their times of prayer had been worshipful and empowering.

As Igor drifted off to sleep, contemplating the continuation of his church planting ministry, he felt a beautiful peace and a renewed sense of the powerful presence of God in his life. He couldn't wait to share his new ideas with his church planting team and start implementing them in his ministry.

Luba, at about the same time that Igor was drifting off to sleep, was in the middle of another of many family catastrophes since Igor's departure. As she rocked her and Igor's youngest baby (an 8 month old girl) she felt frantic. The flu had hit all three of her children in the last two days and now the baby Katya had a high fever and had been vomiting. Luba was exhausted. The continual needs of her children and the non-stop cleanup of messes related to the flu had brought her to the limit of her physical strength.

But flu was only the last of several problems since Igor left. Besides the extra work that his absence brought about, their refrigerator had broken down and a leak in the roof had damaged some of the living room wall paper during a recent rainstorm.

Having lived in this new town for just a few months, she had no one to turn to for help or even to talk to. She was looking forward to Igor's return. His help would be welcome, but even more than that she wanted to talk with someone about the burdens of her heart and soul related to the living in this remote area away from her family and friends and an easier lifestyle.

When Igor and Luba greeted one another at the front door they were very glad to see one another. He couldn't wait to talk about the previous week's events but there were more immediate problems that needed Igor's attention.

#### **QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER**

1. What are some immediate things that Igor could do to make the situation better?
2. How should Igor respond to the situation he finds at home?
3. Please state what you think Igor will want to talk about when he and Luba sit down for their talk.

4. What kind of burdens could Luba be carrying that she wanted to share with someone?
5. Igor's ministry requires him to be away from home frequently- sometimes for as much as a full week. How can he prevent another stressful occurrence like this?
6. How can he encourage her and help her to see herself as his partner in ministry?
7. How can a church planter with a family determine how much time he needs to reserve/set aside for caring for his family's needs?

## **II. SCENARIO TWO—ANDREA AND TIBOR**

Andrea was rejoicing about the young father whom her husband, Tibor, had just led to the Lord. She was so happy for Tibor because he was being used greatly by the Lord. In the last six months the new church had grown from a couple of families to 15. They were encouraged in this ministry but Andrea still had these haunting concerns and feelings. She had told Tibor about her need to talk but it seemed as if he was always so busy with his ministry that they never had time to talk. He came home almost every evening very late and dead tired. He said that it would be better if they talked when he was alert, but then he was up and out of the house early in the morning to go to some meeting or to talk to some new convert or to teach a class at one of the several cell groups which were meeting in their neighborhood. Besides her initial concerns, she was beginning to feel jealous. This church planting ministry was becoming a totally consuming love for Tibor that was taking her place in his life. She was feeling things that she didn't want to feel. She wanted to be supportive of Tibor and his ministry. That was her commitment to the Lord and to her husband. But she felt so isolated. This was a city that had no church before they came and until recently there were no believers. Now there were some women converts who were being discipled but they would never be able to understand her life as the pastor's wife. She wanted to feel like she was a contributing part of Tibor's ministry, but up to this point she hadn't been involved and she hadn't been asked to be involved. What could she do to get Tibor to slow down long enough to talk about these burdens on her heart?

### **QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER**

1. From the facts of the story does it seem that Tibor was communicating with Andrea about her needs as a wife and mother?
2. Do you think Tibor was involving Andrea in his church planting ministry? Was there partnership and unity in their lives?
3. In what ways is Tibor failing as a husband?
4. What practical advice can you suggest that would help Tibor to become better at communicating with his wife?
5. What do you have to say concerning "balance" in this marriage?
6. How is Tibor living out Ephesians 5:25-26?
7. How can Tibor involve Andrea effectively in his ministry?

## **III. SCENARIO THREE—NICU AND HIS FAMILY**

Nicu had had a long week. He had made some major mistakes as a husband and a father. He had been humbled by his own sinful ways and now, after confession and repentance, life was taking on a positive look once again. But if anyone had asked him how he was doing these days, he would have had to admit that he was still angry. Here is the story:

One day his oldest son, Razvan, age 18 was watching a movie on their VCR in their home. He had borrowed it from one of his friends. Nicu walked into the room and sat down and joined Razvan. Soon after Lina, Nicu's wife, came into the room and joined them. After just a few minutes it became apparent to Lina that this movie was not appropriate for Christians to watch. She made her view known to Nicu and then left the room. Nicu followed her and explained that Razvan was old enough now to make decisions on his own about what he should watch and what he shouldn't watch. Lina argued that it was

their responsibility as parents while any of their children lived in their home to determine what should be watched, read or talked about in their home. Nicu was angry with Lina for confronting him about this, especially in front of Razvan. It was embarrassing as the head of the house to be confronted by his wife. So in somewhat of a vengeful way he didn't agree with her point of view and allowed Razvan to finish the movie.

That night when they were ready to go to bed, Lina raised the issue again but Nicu refused to budge from his position. He was even angrier with Lina now and he refused to pray with her before going to sleep. The next morning after a very miserable night of sleep, Nicu got up to have his devotions. He couldn't concentrate on his Bible reading, he couldn't pray because he was so angry. At the breakfast table, he made the announcement to the entire family that no videos would be allowed to be shown in his home again and there were to be no exceptions. The other children had no idea what was going on but they could tell by their father's voice and the tears in their mother's eyes that there was something wrong between them. Nicu had felt terrible about the whole situation. He was a pastor. He was involved in starting a new church and telling people about the love of Christ and the joy of the Christian life. He had no love and joy in his life due to this problem. But there was more to it than that. He knew that his wife was right about his responsibility to set the spiritual tone in the home. He was just too proud to admit his failure. He also knew that he was disobeying Scripture because he was not loving his wife as Christ loves the Church. This anger he had been feeling was in fact anger at his own body because they were one flesh. He had to correct the situation. So at the next meal, when the entire family was together again, he apologized for several things he had done that were wrong. He did so in brokenness and tears and asked for forgiveness from his family. They prayed together and good healthy discussion followed about the place of videos in their home.

#### QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

1. Razvan is 18 years old, a young man! Why does he feel free to show improper movies on his parent's TV?
2. As evidenced in Nicu's response to Lina, what essential Christian attribute is missing in his life?
3. Was family meal time an appropriate "meeting" time to discuss this, or any significant family problem?
4. Why should there have been a difference of opinion in the thinking of a Christian couple on clear cut matters relating to spiritual or moral aspects of life?
5. What can you say about the communication and understanding between Nicu and Lina up to this point?
6. Should Nicu have been embarrassed by Lina's confronting him?
7. How can such occurrences be prevented in the future?

#### IV. SCENARIO FOUR—ANICKA AND MIREK

"See you soon!" Anicka called as she shut the door behind the last visitor. It was past midnight, and she had just enough energy to gather up the teacups and put them in the sink before slumping onto her bed. Her husband Mirek was already preparing for bed.

The phone rang early the next morning. Anicka ran to get it so that it wouldn't interrupt Mirek's study time. It was a friend from a neighboring city who was passing through town. "Could I stay at your house tonight?" he asked. It would mean extra work for her, but how could she say no?

Their life had certainly changed in the six months since they'd started planting the church. Anicka couldn't remember another time that had been so busy. When they weren't out in the neighborhood, it seemed as though the neighborhood was in their apartment. People were arriving for Bible studies, counseling, or meetings nearly every hour of the day. Anicka didn't resent that: other people were realizing what she already knew—that Mirek had a shepherd's heart. She tried to tell herself that she needed to be a supportive wife. But just because Mirek needed to be free to talk to people and help with their needs, did that mean that Anicka had to pick up all the rest of the duties?



Anicka thought back to the previous June, when they were sent out as church planters. Their pastor had encouraged them to work together and complement each other. The pastor knew that Anicka's gift of evangelism would be important in church planting. It proved to be true—the first new believers in their church were people Anicka had met and witnessed to. But now, she admitted to herself, she had little time to go out and do what she loved most: talk to others about Christ. Something had to change, and quickly.

**QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:**

1. Does Mirek and Anicka's lifestyle suggest that there is balance in their lives? Explain your answer.
2. What are Anicka's unvoiced expectations? What about Mirek's?
3. How could Mirek help his wife use her gifts?
4. Is it possible for spouses to be equal "partners in ministry?" (see Ac 18:24-26).

**V. SCENARIO FIVE—RENATA AND HER FAMILY**

Renata could tell by the look on her father's face that she had done something wrong. Did she forget a chore, or was this just his ongoing disapproval of her decision to follow Christ? She always tried to be careful to help around the house before going out to work with the church planting team. After all, her father made it clear that he felt a 26-year-old could better spend her time looking for a husband than leading a women's discipleship group.

Just that evening, the discipleship group had gone so well. Her co-worker Matthias had encouraged her to continue teaching women how to build the church and know Christ better. "I don't know what we would do without your help," he had said. "There's no way my wife could have led the group with two babies at home. We're so thankful that you're available."

Renata's mother entered the room and called her back to reality. "Renata," she started, "we need you to be home tomorrow night."

"Mom," Renata replied, "you know that's the night I meet with my team."

"Oh yes," her mother returned, sarcastically, "the important people in your life. How could I forget?"

Renata tried to control her temper and quickly stepped out of the room. She knew she was supposed to honor her parents, but the words she was tempted to say were far from respectful. Her feelings were a jumbled combination of anger and guilt. Why did she always react badly to her parents' comments? Why did they deliberately plan activities to keep her from what God had called her to?

More than anything, she wished she could afford to live on her own, but her work as a church planter meant she could only work part-time as a bookkeeper. Besides, it was still considered strange for a young, single woman to live outside of the shelter of her parents' household.

Sometimes Renata felt like she lived in two worlds: on the church planting team, she was praised and valued as a key player, and at home, she was criticized and treated like a slave. She knew which world she preferred, but she knew that, at least for now, she had to live in both of them.

**QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:**

1. Does the problem stem only from Renata's parents, or is she doing something to contribute to it? If so, what?
2. How can she honor her parents when they object to how she spends her time?
3. What would you suggest to Renata if she came to you seeking advice on her living situation?
4. What unique things must be considered when a single woman is helping to plant a church? How can other church planters be sensitive to those things?