

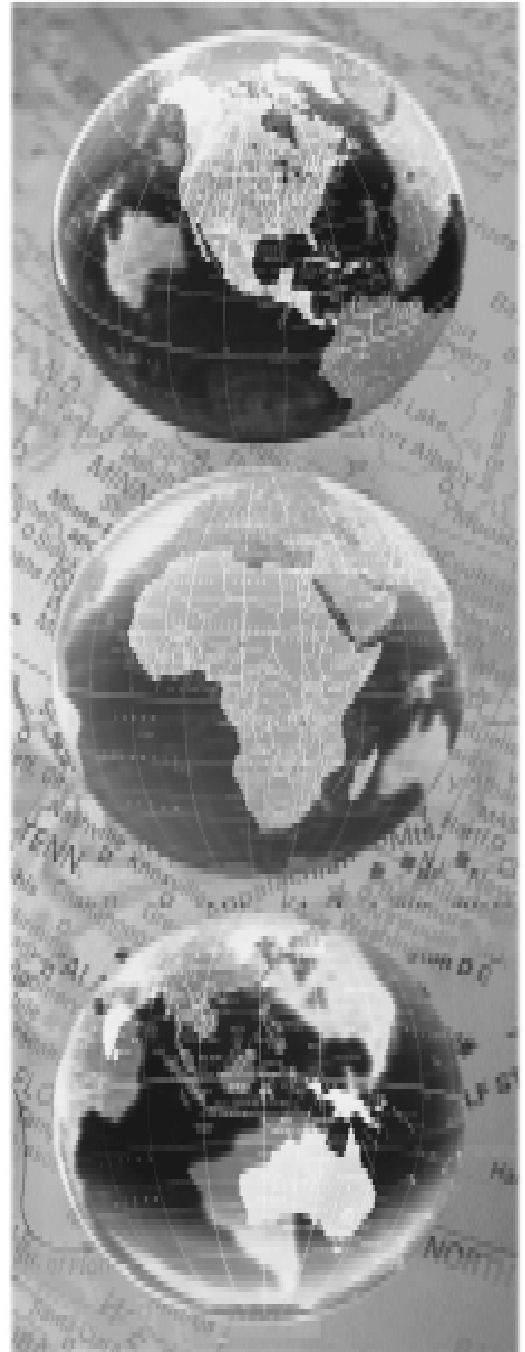
BUILD YOUR CHURCH TO LAST

THE NEW DYNAMIC CHURCH PLANTING HANDBOOK

PAUL BECKER, JIM CARPENTER
& MARK WILLIAMS

the new dynamic church planting handbook

**Paul Becker
Jim Carpenter
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Dynamic Church Planting International

Equipping Leaders to Plant Dynamic Churches Worldwide

Who We Are:

- We are followers of Jesus Christ, whom we love above everyone and everything.
- We are committed to helping fulfill the Great Commission through impacting church planting among all people groups.
- We are a faith mission, dedicated to equipping church planting leaders around the world.
- We are a team of practitioners. All of us in our senior staff have been church planters multiple times, and we have mentored and trained thousands of church planting leaders in North America and around the world.

What We Do:

- We train church planting leaders. We offer training for:
 - Basic Church Planting
 - Growing a New Church (for new churches 1 –5 years old)
 - Reproducing—mother/daughter church planting
 - Intercessors of new churches
- We certify trainers. We want to reproduce our training around the world, and to do that we offer a course of training to equip and then certify qualified leaders to train others using DCPI principles and material.
- We consult with associations, denominations and other mission groups to help them increase their effectiveness in church planting.
- We write and publish Handbooks and other training materials to help in the task of training church planting leaders.

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The New Dynamic Church Planting Handbook

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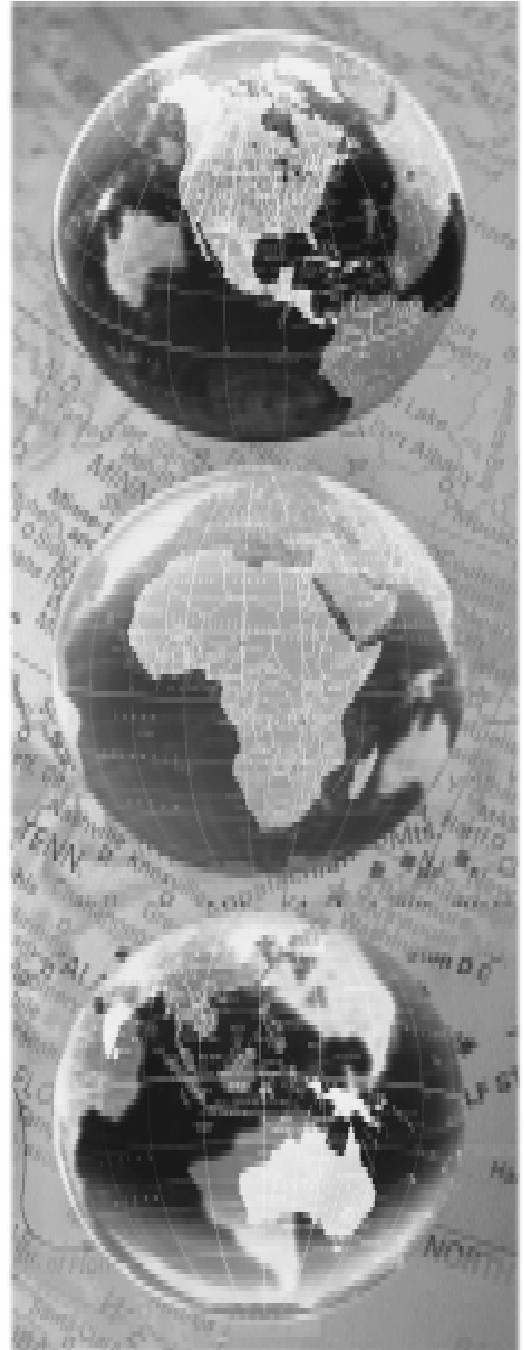
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Section One

Preparing for the Journey



Chapter 1

Why Plant Churches?

Why is it so critically important to plant dynamic new churches?

We'll try to answer that question in three ways. First, by trying to see church planting from the perspective of eternity. Second, by telling a story. And third, by offering five compelling reasons.

AN ETERNAL PERSPECTIVE

So, why is church planting so important? Though we are finite, time-bound creatures, the Lord has given us His word to stretch our minds and hearts past our own experience and history. The Bible compels us to try to see the world from an eternal and transcendent perspective—from God's own viewpoint. And from that perspective, the ultimate purpose for everything is to bring glory to Him.

Our answer then must be church planting is critically important because it honors God and spreads His fame among the nations. Church planting reflects the light of His beautiful, perfect character through every dark corner of the planet. It brings praise to the One who came to seek and to save those who are lost.

... so that the Gentiles may glorify God for his mercy (Rom. 15:9; "Gentiles" can be translated "the nations").

Through him and for his name's sake, we received grace and apostleship to call people from among all the Gentiles to the obedience that comes from faith (Rom. 1:5, emphasis added).

Declare his glory among the nations, his marvelous deeds among all peoples (Ps. 96:3).

John Piper put it this way: "The aim of missions [we might add, and of church planting] is to bring about the obedience of faith among all the unreached peoples of the world. But that is not the ultimate goal. The ultimate goal – even of faith and obedience – is 'for the sake of his name.'"¹

A TRUE STORY

Another way of answering the question is by telling a true story from Paul Becker's third church plant in California.

Paul was leading a day of community surveying with forty college students. After worshipping the Lord, they prayed for receptivity as they prepared to go door-to-door in the target community. The group then dispersed into the community in teams of two.

Paul and his partner went from house to house, listening to people and tabulating their answers to survey questions. By mid-afternoon they were ready to head back to the bus and return home. But they decided to knock on one more door.

A smiling woman in her late thirties greeted them and said, “I am so happy you’ve come. I’ve been looking for a church.”

Brenda, a single mother going through a divorce, had two children—Justin, age 15, and Bettina, age 12. Within a short time all three put their trust in Jesus.

The small family became regular in church activities. Justin was a fine young man, and helped organize and build the youth group.

After a year, Paul’s ministry in the church plant came to an end. He moved on to plant another church.

A year passed, and then Paul received a call at his office.

It was Brenda, and she was weeping. Through her sobs she was able to say, “Justin was driving with three other boys, and they had a terrible accident. Justin is dead.”

Paul’s first reaction was shock. A vibrant young man was gone so quickly, so unexpectedly.

But then he thought, “What if we hadn’t taken the time to do one last survey that day? And what if that new church hadn’t been planted at all? Would Justin have heard the gospel in the two brief years of life he had left to him if it weren’t for that new church?”

Justin is at home in heaven now. He is saved for all eternity, in the glorious presence of Jesus. And that’s all because a new church reached out to his community with the good news of Jesus Christ.

FIVE COMPELLING REASONS

Let’s ask the question one more time: why is it so critically important to plant dynamic new churches? Here are five reasons:

1. To Follow the Biblical Strategy.

God designed church planting to extend His kingdom. It is His prescribed method.

While the leaders of the church at Syrian Antioch were worshipping the Lord and fasting, “...the Holy Spirit said, ‘Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.’ So after they had fasted and prayed, they placed their hands on them and sent them off” (Acts 13:2, 3).

To what “work” did the Holy Spirit call them? A quick review of the first missionary journey of Paul and Barnabas makes it clear: their work was preaching and church planting.

They preached the good news in that city and won a large number of disciples. Then they returned to Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch, strengthening the disciples and encouraging them to remain true to the faith. “We must go through many hardships to enter the

Kingdom of God,” they said. Paul and Barnabas appointed elders for them in each church and, with prayer and fasting, committed them to the Lord in whom they had put their trust (Acts 14:21- 23, emphasis added).

This first “church planting journey” took about a year. Paul and Barnabas spent much of that time sailing and walking. Nonetheless, in that short span of time the Lord used them to plant as many as seven new churches.

The book of Acts traces the progress of God’s strategy to spread His name abroad and to tell the world about the death, burial, and resurrection of His Son.

Churches were planted all across the known world: from the Middle East through Asia Minor, and then to Europe!

“Beginning with the great dispersion of the Jerusalem believers recorded in Acts 8, the disciples successfully multiplied congregations and planted additional churches.”²

Virgil Gerber adds, “New congregations were planted in every pagan center of the then known world in less than four decades.”³ Elmer Towns concludes, “It is evident that planting local churches in every city throughout the world is God’s plan.”⁴

Obedience alone constrains us to plant churches. Jesus’ Commission contains within it an implicit, but compelling call to make disciples among all nations by starting new congregations!

Then Jesus came to them and said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 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. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age (Mt. 28:18 – 20).

Without church planting it is not possible to “baptize and teach” the new disciples. Clearly the early church understood Jesus’ command as a call, not just to evangelism, but also to church planting.

2. To Evangelize Effectively.

Church planting is the most effective evangelistic strategy under heaven. New churches are more effective in reaching people for Jesus Christ than long established churches.

For example, one study done for *Christianity Today* magazine indicated that new churches under three years old in America win ten people to Christ for every hundred members. The older the church, the more this number drops off: a church three to fifteen years old will win five per year per hundred members, and after age fifteen, about three people are won per year per hundred.⁵

There are several reasons why new churches tend to be more effective evangelistically. Pastors and lay people who are called to plant a church are highly motivated to reach people in the community for Jesus. This is usually their overriding purpose and passion for planting the church.

Those who plant a new church are usually ready to do whatever it takes to share Christ and the new church with their friends.

In addition, the new church is developed so that it meets the needs of the unchurched as well as the churched. An environment of love and acceptance is nurtured so that new people can come to Christ and continue growing in their faith.

One planting pastor moved his wife and six children to Alpine, California to start a new church. Why? To reach that community for Christ. That same motivation stirred the heart of the pastor of the mother church in Lakeside, California. A small nucleus of believers from that church sacrificed to go with the planting pastor to Alpine. Fifty people made decisions for Christ in that new church the first year.

It is God's design for His church and His people to reach out. Healthy organisms reproduce. And healthy churches are designed to give birth to other churches. Healthy growing Christians share their faith.

And new churches are extraordinarily effective in making disciples.

Dr. Peter Wagner, church growth pioneer and veteran mission leader, has said, "The single most effective evangelistic methodology under heaven is planting new churches."⁶

3. To Gather In The Harvest.

People are coming to Christ all over the world. "Evangelical believers are growing at a rate of three and one half times that of world population."⁷

In 1974 approximately one half of the world's population was beyond the reach of the Church, living in unreached peoples. Today, just one third of the world's population live in unreached peoples beyond the reach of the Church. Evangelical believers are growing at a rate of three and one half times that of world population.⁸

Those statistics became real for me (Jim) through a conversation I had with an African evangelist in August of 2000. Five of our DCPI team had the privilege of participating in "Amsterdam 2000," the conference for itinerant evangelists sponsored by the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association. Over 10,000 evangelists from over 70 nations were present.

One afternoon my wife Dionne and I had an illuminating conversation with a brother from Africa. He gave us a thrilling report about the number of people who were responding to his evangelistic ministry. Through the use of the Jesus Film, he was sharing the gospel with hundreds of people at a time, mainly in village groups all across his country.

Often more than 50% of those in attendance made professions of faith.

But our new friend asked us an implicit question: Now what? What to do with all those converts?

To expect the existing churches to follow-up and disciple all these new believers is simply unrealistic. Sadly, some established churches are not prepared to deal with new Christians. Sometimes an unfortunate territoriality exists between congregations. This kind of competitive spirit hurts everyone, especially new believers.

And there are some regions where no church exists anyway.

The point is, new churches are essential to care for those who are responding to the gospel worldwide. We rejoice that much of the growth is coming, as it should, through church planting movements around the world.

But in those areas where an artificial separation has been made between evangelism and church planting, we say: We must plant churches to gather in the harvest!

4. To Reach People Groups.

Church planting is essential to bring the gospel message to people groups all over the world.

The Commission Jesus gave His church was to make disciples of all nations. Clearly the Greek word translated “nations,” *ethne*, has little to do with national borders and everything to do with ethnicity. We use the term “people group” to mean “the largest group within which the Gospel can spread as a church planting movement without encountering barriers of understanding or acceptance.”⁹

New churches are the best way to reach urban dwellers in industrialized nations and villagers in developing nations. New churches are able to reach new generations in countries where the church exists, but whose witness is ineffectual among the younger generation.

It is wonderful to find a church that is able to successfully integrate different generations, but each new generation of people needs a new expression of church. Peter Wagner writes that “each new generation must be evangelized on its own terms. The basic principle is: God has no grandchildren . . . One of the immediate implications of rapid culture change is that many members of new generations will not be won to Christ in their parents’ churches.”¹⁰

We must plant new churches to reach people groups even in countries where the gospel witness is well-established—like America. Churches, like all living organisms, have a life and death cycle. As many as “80 – 85% of the churches in America are on the downside” of a plateau/decline that usually begins around their 15th – 18th year.¹¹

That statistic alone means that the West needs tens of thousands of dynamic new churches! Jack Dennison, commenting on the aging of Western churches, says, “. . . in the immediate future we will need 140,000 new fellowships just to replace those moving into retirement homes and cemeteries.”¹²

Church planting is essential to bring the good news to people groups, and this is particularly true for unreached people groups. An unreached people group is one “within which there is no indigenous community of believing Christians able to evangelize this people group.”¹³

Church planting translates God’s love into the heart language of people groups all over the world. People are only “reached” when they have a church in their language and culture.

Our great God has decreed that His majesty and love be proclaimed among:

- The Musi Banyuasin of Indonesia,
- The Tangshewi of Afghanistan,
- The Daur of China,
- The Nankansi of Ghana,
- The Russian Jews in Israel,
- The Fulani of Sudan,

- The Indo-Pakistani of Yemen and Saudi Arabia,
- The Lulba of Uganda,
- The Pawari Bhil of India.

Indeed, there are still 2 billion unreached people who are cut off from the gospel, isolated in their ethnicity, without a church in their language and culture. Christ wants them reached.

Of the world's 24,000 "Unimax" People Groups, 10,000 (having 2.1 billion persons) are still considered Unreached—though Christian work is being done among most. A unimax people is the maximum sized group sufficiently unified to be reached by a single, indigenous church planting movement.¹⁴

And new churches are essential, indispensable, to God's strategy to reach unreached people who have no near-neighbor to tell them the story of Jesus' love.

We know that the Lord's call to plant churches among all the people groups will be heeded. He's given us a glimpse of the future of our labors:

After this I looked and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and in front of the Lamb. They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands. And they cried out in a loud voice: "Salvation belongs to our God, who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb" (Rev. 7:9, 10).

5. To Fulfill the Great Commission.

For the first time in history we can anticipate the completion of the missionary task, which is to establish an indigenous church planting movement within the language and social structure of every people on earth.¹⁵

Between the 1960 and 1985, the Church worldwide experienced an Average Annual Growth Rate (AAGR) of 1%. In 1985, however, a sharp acceleration began which resulted in an AAGR of 3% through 1990. Through 1995, the rate climbed to 5%. If the AAGR continues to accelerate, think of the possibilities: at an AAGR of 7.5%, the world would be 50% Christian in only 25 years!¹⁶

Jim Montgomery, founder of DAWN (Discipling a Whole Nation) reports,

. . . acceleration [of the number of people coming to the Lord] is what's happening in many places all over the world. Just from the DAWN missionaries, associates and national project leaders covering the globe, we can readily identify at least 33 nations where there is already a great acceleration of growth, or that has huge potential for acceleration. These 33 nations, by the way, represent 49.6 percent of the world's population!¹⁷

This astounding truth emerges from those who know the task of world evangelization

and church planting best:

Evangelical Christians are the fastest growing major religious group in the world today and it is the only one growing rapidly by conversion.¹⁸

God's promise to bless all the "families of the earth," (Gen. 12:3) first given to Abraham 4,000 years ago, is becoming a reality . . . Biblical faith is growing and spreading to the ends of the earth as never before in history.¹⁹

Dr. Steve Steele, DAWN's CEO, is extremely optimistic about the progress of church planting in the years ahead. In a phone interview, he said, "Within reasonable church growth expectations, we see within the church's capability today a church within easy access of every person on the face of the earth within this decade."²⁰

How thrilling to stand at a point in history that so many believers over the years have prayed, labored, and died for without seeing!

Our commission has never been more clear, more urgent, or more hopeful: planting more and more dynamic new churches among all the peoples of the earth, to the end that every people group will hear the good news, and magnify the Name above every name, in their own language!

Why plant churches?

For good, compelling, biblical reasons, at least five of them.

And for the sake of all the "Justins" everywhere, who need to know the love and forgiveness of Christ.

And, preeminently, for God's sake, to His glory.

Notes

¹ John Piper, *The Pleasures of God* (Sisters, OR: Mulnomah Publishers, Inc., 2000), p. 110.

² Elmer Towns, *Getting a Church Started* (Lynchburg, VA: Church Growth Institute, 1985), p. 13.

³ Vigil Gerber, *God's Way to Keep a Church Going and Growing* (Glendale: Regal Books, 1973), p. 17.

⁴ Towns, p. 13.

⁵ Cited in Aubrey Malphurs, *Planting Growing Churches for the 21st Century* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1992), p. 43.

⁶ C. Peter Wagner, *Church Planting for a Greater Harvest* (Ventura: Regal Books, 1990), p. 11.

⁷ "The State of World Evangelization: How Are We Doing? Are We Making Progress?" <http://www.missionfrontiers.org/> (5 September 2001). Most of the statistics from this web page are adapted from data by David B. Barrett and Todd M. Johnson of Global Evangelization Movement web site: <<http://www.gem-werc.org/index.htm>>. Other portions come from Patrick Johnstone, *The Church is Bigger than You Think* (Ross-Shire, England: Christian Focus Publications/WEC, 1998).

⁸ "The State of World Evangelization: How Are We Doing? Are We Making Progress?" <http://www.missionfrontiers.org/> (5 September 2001).

⁹ "Joshua Project II: Highlighting Least-Reached Peoples Through Information Sharing and Networking." <http://www.gospelcom.net/icta/joshuaproject/definitions.html> (6 September, 2001).

¹⁰ Wagner, p. 28.

¹¹ Aubrey Malphurs, p. 32, quoting Win Arn.

¹² Jack Dennison, *City Reaching: On the Road to Community Transformation* (Pasadena: William Carey Library, 1999), p. 142.

¹³ Ralph D. Winter and Bruce a. Koch, "Finishing the Task: The Unreached Peoples Challenge." Originally published in *Perspectives on the World Christian Movement: A Reader*, eds. Ralph Winter and Steven Hawthorne (Pasadena: William Carey Library, 1999). <http://www.missionfrontiers.org> (5 Sept. 2001).

¹⁴ Ralph D. Winter and Bruce A. Koch, <http://www.missionfrontiers.org> (5 Sept. 2001).

¹⁵ "The State of World Evangelization: How Are We Doing? Are We Making Progress?" <http://www.missionfrontiers.org/> (5 September 2001).

¹⁶ Reported in Jack Dennison, p. 10. The statistics came from a report sponsored by the AD2000 and Beyond Movement, for a global consultation on evangelism held in Seoul, South Korea.

¹⁷ Jim Montgomery, "Acceleration," Dawn Report: Covering The "Discipling a Whole Nation" Movement, Issue No. 40, February 2000, p. 3.

¹⁸ "The State of World Evangelization: How Are We Doing? Are We Making Progress?" <http://www.missionfrontiers.org/> (5 September 2001). The quote is from Johnstone, *The Church Is Bigger than You Think*.

¹⁹ "The State of World Evangelization: How Are We Doing? Are We Making Progress?" <http://www.missionfrontiers.org/> (5 September 2001).

²⁰ Phone conversation with Paul Becker, February 2001.

Chapter 2

The Lord of Church Planting

Christ is Lord of church planting, and He has a vision for your new church.

—Principle #1, Principles of Dynamic Church Planting (See Chapter 5)

He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy.

—Col. 1:15 – 18, emphasis added

Jesus Christ is the most wonderful Person who has ever lived. And He has always lived.

In His human life He perfectly revealed the invisible God. The entire universe was created through His wisdom and power. Creation itself remains ordered and intact because of that same power and wisdom.

Church planting was His invention. In the counsel of the Trinity, long before time began, church planting was in the mind of Jesus. Throughout His years of earthly ministry, He was laying the foundation for a church planting movement. When He hung on the cross, near death, church planting was on His heart.

His death and resurrection broke the demonic hold that gripped this fallen world. When He was raised from the dead, the mandate He gave His followers led to the first mother church, and then to an explosion of church planting all across the world, an explosion that reverberates to this day.

Over the centuries the lives of millions of people have been changed forever, transformed from rebellion to obedience, from hate to love, from death to life, because Jesus is Lord of Church Planting.

The Lord Jesus now sits at the right hand of the Father, and He holds in His hands the keys of death and hell.

Christ is Conqueror. He vanquished every foe. At the end of time He rides a white horse into battle, and leads the armies of heaven in victory.

But His lordship extends beyond the cosmic themes of redemption and reconciliation. He also us invites to a precious and amazing personal intimacy with Him. He is our wisest advisor, our most faithful friend, our kindest and most compassionate counselor.

He is the One who continues to redeem our choices, to heal our brokenness, to use us to lead others to Him, even when we are still wounded. This is the One who is Lord of church planting.

Jesus is Lord of church planting, and if He has a special plan for each new church, then our confidence and hope will be in Him. He will be the one ultimately in charge of the church.

Not acknowledging His Lordship means our confidence and hope will be focused somewhere else.

Confidence in Leadership. Church planters tend to be strong, confident people. They should be—God uses such leaders to plant His churches. But the danger is that a leader will imagine his own personality, gifts, and abilities are the source of growth, blessing, and power. Scripture is clear: “God is opposed to the proud, but gives grace to the humble” (James 4:6).

Confidence in Methods. Equally dangerous is putting your confidence in methods, particularly those that been proven successful in other church plants. The church planter who thinks, “I’ll do exactly as that other famous church planter did, and my church will grow as his did,” will probably be disappointed. Jesus is Lord of the church, and the methods He chooses to use in one situation may not be the ones He chooses to use somewhere else.

Confidence in Technology. This a danger particularly in the West, when church planters put their confidence and hope in the technology of church planting. They imagine that, if they pour enough money into the project, if their demographic studies are accurate, if they apply the latest marketing strategies with great skill, if they have state-of-the-art sounds systems and computers, they will almost automatically produce a dynamic new church. With enough money, you can draw a crowd. But only God can birth a church. Only Jesus is Lord of church planting.

How important it is, then, that church planters begin by bowing to Jesus as Lord of church planting! But how?

Become convinced that the Lord is the Lord of your church plant.

Of course you believe this intellectually. But is it true in *your* church plant?

Let’s be honest: Who is really in charge of the church you are planting? Who guides the decisions you make about planting this church? If Jesus is truly Lord, then He is the Lord of “your” church. He is in charge. He is the brains. He has the power.

There is room for only one Lord. The Lord cannot be the church planter, or demographics, or methods, or your supervisor, or the denomination. Only Jesus can be Lord of your church plant.

Failure at this point can produce a gathering that is not a true church or a church that is stillborn.

The Lord of your new church must be the Lord Jesus Christ. You and your leaders must make your decisions based upon what you believe He wants you to do. Certainly, the church planter is an under-shepherd of Christ’s church. Demographics may provide important information. The church planter must find the methods that the Lord is using to reach the community. Wisdom from God can come through your supervisor and it is important to be accountable to him. Jesus wants to reach people for his Kingdom.

But in practical decision-making, Jesus and his Word must be the Lord. He must be the head of your church so that He can lead you according to His will.

Humble yourself before the Lord.

Pride is an occupational hazard for church planters. Start with a gifted, visionary leader, let him achieve some success, give him praise from grateful people who follow him, and pride will be a strong temptation. Make it worse by showing him other church planters who don't have as clear a vision, who have not seen as many converts, whose attendance is not as large.

But Scripture issues a strong warning. Look at just a few relevant verses:

- . . . *I hate pride and arrogance . . .* (Prov. 8:13b).
- *When pride comes, then comes disgrace, but with humility comes wisdom* (Prov. 11:2).
- *Pride goes before destruction, a haughty spirit before a fall* (Prov. 16:18).
- *A man's pride brings him low, but a man of lowly spirit gains honor* (Prov. 29:23).

Only the Lord of church planting deserves glory, and He will not yield to anyone:

The eyes of the arrogant man will be humbled and the pride of men brought low; the LORD alone will be exalted in that day (Isa. 2:11, emphasis added).

God even shows leaders how to face this temptation to pride. (It's worth noting that the Lord gave this instruction through the Apostle Peter, a man who had his own struggles with pride.) First comes a strong statement of God's attitude toward pride:

God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble (1 Peter 5:5c).

And then, in the very next verses, He gives the solution, complete with a promise:

Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time. Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you (1 Peter 5:5c - 7).

Humility before the true Lord of church planting must come, and it will come one way or another. God Himself may humble the church planter, by bringing a season of fruitlessness and failure or by releasing him to the consequences of his own pride. Or the leader may follow the advice of the Apostle Peter, and confess his pride, and bow the knee to the Lord.

Prayer helps express our submission to God. Fasting shows our dependence upon Him. Kneeling is an act of humility. Bowing our heads shows God that we recognize His Lordship. Frequent personal prayer retreats to worship, to seek His guidance, and to listen for His voice are essential for a humble walk.

And the promise of 1 Peter 5:6, 7 is that, as we humble ourselves, the Lord of church planting will bring His great wisdom and power to bear upon our cares and anxieties. And in due time, in His time, He will lift us up!

Submit yourself to God's plan for planting this church.

New churches are like children.

Any parent with more than one child knows how different they can be. Some are so tender hearted, they can be corrected by a disapproving glance. But a sibling may be so strong-willed that strong discipline is required. Same father, same mother. But completely different children.

Ask any church planter who has planted more than one church: new churches are not alike. Even with the same church planter, there are vast differences between new churches. They start differently and grow differently. They have different personalities, strengths, and weaknesses. They grow at different rates and to different sizes.

Maybe the biggest difference is that we have an incredibly creative God who likes to do things differently in different churches.

God has a plan for the birth and growth of your new church. It will be different than the birth and growth of any other church. A first-time church planter might say, "I'd like to plant a church like the one started by that famous pastor up the road. People have told me that I'm a lot like him." Sadly, many church planters have been devastated when God didn't "perform" according to this faulty assumption. The Lord is the Lord of church planting and He has a special plan for the planting and growth of each church.

Try not to compare your ministry or your church with others, as impossible as that may sound. Comparison seems to be a prevailing practice among ministry professionals. Pastors feel compelled to compare the size of their churches.

Two pastors were introduced, one of whom pastors a church of 400. His very first question to the other pastor was, "How large is your congregation?" The second man smiled with satisfaction and replied, "We're running about 900. How many are you running?" The first man seemed discouraged when he heard the other church was more than twice as large. But what if the first pastor had led a church of 2500—who would have been disheartened then?

This ugly "contrast and compare" behavior is very destructive to relationships between pastors and to the individual pastor's sense of well-being. Is this the kind of activity the Lord wants us to engage in?

Remember, attendance alone does not measure impact. For example, consider a new church with an attendance of 200 in a community of 10,000. That church is reaching 2% of the population. A church of 2000 in a city of one million is reaching only 0.2% of the population.

Don Stewart served as an associate pastor at Hope Chapel in Los Angeles. During one ten-year period, Hope Chapel daughtered fifty new churches. Most of the planters came from Hope Chapel's own training program. Don says, "We did a great disservice to our planters. We assumed that their churches would become like Hope Chapel. Years later we discovered that almost all of the guys suffered from low esteem concerning their churches because they just didn't become as large or influential as the mother church. Toward the end we learned not to lay those heavy expectations on our planters."

Can you trust God to plant and grow the church the way He wants to? Will you be happy if the church grows to 1000? To 500? To 200? To 100?

Pray and fast, asking God to guide you into His plan.

Our Lord is the Master Strategist.

Consider a great illustration of this truth from the life of King David in 1 Chronicles 14. David had just become king over all Israel, and the Philistines were gathered in full force against him. Rather than automatically relying upon past battle tactics,

... David inquired of God: "Shall I go and attack the Philistines? Will you hand them over to me?"

The LORD answered him, "Go, I will hand them over to you."

So David and his men went up to Baal Perazim, and there he defeated them. He said, "As waters break out, God has broken out against my enemies by my hand" (vv. 10, 11).

The Philistines attacked again, and again the king did not assume that God would do a second time what He did the first time.

Once more the Philistines raided the valley; so David inquired of God again, and God answered him, "Do not go straight up, but circle around them and attack them in front of the balsam trees. As soon as you hear the sound of marching in the tops of the balsam trees, move out to battle, because that will mean God has gone out in front of you to strike the Philistine army." So David did as God commanded him, and they struck down the Philistine army, all the way from Gibeon to Gezer (vv. 13 – 16).

Don't assume the Lord will use the same strategies and tactics each time in order to plant a dynamic church. He is wonderfully creative. He is using a wide variety of methods to plant churches all over the world: from multiplying cell groups to crusades, from television and radio to direct mail, from telemarketing to friendship evangelism.

But seek His plan, with His strategies and tactics. God will choose to bless some methods and not others. He is the Lord of church planting.

So follow King David's example and inquire of the Lord. Pray and fast, asking God to guide you into his plan for birthing and developing the new church. Consider blocking out two or three days to have a prayer retreat. Take your teammates to one of your favorite retreats to pray and fast concerning God's plan for your church plant. At every critical point in the development of the church plant you will want to inquire of the Master Strategist. Let the Lord speak to your heart.

You might want to pray something like this: "Dear Lord, I pray that you will birth and develop this church plant in Your way and in Your time. Reveal Your plan to me as I need to know. Equip and motivate me to do Your will. Amen."

Do your best and leave the results to God.

If you are doing your best to discern and carry out what you believe to be God's plan for your work, then leave the results to God. Have the confidence of Job when he said this to the

Lord: “I know that you can do all things; no plan of yours can be thwarted” (Job 42:2).

It is so comforting that God has a plan for your life and ministry. The Lord spoke to the Jewish exiles in Jeremiah’s day and said,

“For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the Lord, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you a hope and a future” (Jer. 29:11).

The Apostle Paul speaks to us Christians, and says,

For we are God’s workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God created in advance for us to do (Eph. 2:10).

. . . for it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose (Phil. 2:13.)

Church planters often take too much of the burden for their churches’ numerical growth. Of course a church planter should do whatever he can to facilitate the growth of the church. But growing the church is God’s business. The Apostle Paul, a great church planter, had the right perspective:

I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God made it grow (1 Cor. 3:6).

Kent and Barbara Hughes repeat a beautiful illustration about a Scottish collie:

Elisabeth Elliot once stayed in the farmhouse of a Welsh shepherd and his family high in the mountains of North Wales. She stood watching one misty summer morning as the shepherd on horseback herded the sheep with the aid of his champion Scottish collie. The collie, she realized, was in its glory! It was doing what it had been bred and trained to do. Its eyes were always on the sheep, but its ears were delicately tuned to obey its master.

Through obedience the dog experienced its glory. The same is true in the spiritual realm, as Mrs. Elliot insightfully summarized: “To experience the glory of God’s will for us means absolute trust. It means the will to do his will, and it means joy.”¹

It is *often*, perhaps even *usually*, God’s will for us to be fruitful in reaching many people for Christ. It is *always* God’s will for us to be faithful.

You will be able to spend a joyful career in ministry if you are faithful to God’s will for your life. You will probably go through some periods of great fruitfulness and some periods of fruitlessness. If you can consistently strive to do your best, and leave the results to God, you will have a fulfilling lifetime of ministry.

Maintain a positive attitude, even in the hard times.

The Apostle Paul suffered greatly, but through it all he learned to maintain a positive attitude. Though he was in jail and in chains when he wrote to the Philippians, the theme of the letter is *rejoice*!

One of our friends, an accomplished leader, had planted four churches. He had enjoyed real fruitfulness in ministry. But in his fifth church plant, after a dry year of great struggle, he and his leaders decided to close the church.

What a painful blow that was to this gifted leader and his wife. He even began to question his calling to church planting. But because of their close relationships to Christ, they were able to rejoice through their tears. Within a remarkably short time a mother church contacted our friend and soon he was called to plant their first daughter church.

On the day it was born, that church plant was the largest church in its community. During its first few months, people were coming to Christ each week. Praise God that my friend and his wife were able to maintain a positive attitude through a potentially crushing blow.

My (Paul's) pastor-mentor, Dr. D. L. Penhollow, was fond of saying, "It isn't the easy times that make people—it is the hard times." Maintain a positive attitude, even in the hard times.

You can trust that Jesus will continue to be the Lord of your life and of your church planting ministry.

Notes

¹ Kent and Barbara Hughes, *Liberating Ministry from the Success Syndrome* (Wheaton: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., 1988), p. 40.

Chapter 3

The Call to Plant a Church

It is crucial to know that you have been called by God to plant a church before you begin the work.

Church planting is too difficult and too dangerous to undertake without a settled sense of God's calling. Unless you know God has called you, the hard times ahead can shake your confidence. Without God's call to strengthen and stabilize you, the inevitable assaults of the evil one can be devastating to you and your work.

Church planting is hard enough when you are called of God. It is virtually impossible when you are not.

Knowing you are called is not just a good idea. It is absolutely crucial.

A Biblical Precedent for the Church Planting Call

In Acts 13, while the leaders of the church at Antioch were worshipping and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them."

What was that work?

Acts 13 and 14 make it clear: that work was preaching the gospel and church planting. And when Paul and Barnabas returned from this First Missionary Journey they gave a report to the Antioch church of "all that God had done through them" (14:27). As many as *seven* new churches were planted during that trip!

The Holy Spirit called Paul and Barnabas to church planting.

The Lord is still calling some of His servants to church planting. Within the more general call to ministry is a church planting call. A call to pastoral ministry is not automatically a call to church planting. A pastor might say, "I could go to an existing church, but it might be too rigid for the kind of ministry I want to do. I guess I'll be a church planter."

But the first question that must always be answered is, "Has the Lord called you to be a church planter?"

Don't try to plant a church unless the Lord has called you to plant a church. Your efforts will be fruitless.

Planting a healthy growing church requires more than just following a manual. Church planting is very difficult work. Planting a healthy, growing church requires the motivation of the Master. It takes a miracle of God to establish a new church. If He is motivating you to plant a church, then plant a church. If He is motivating you to pastor an existing church, then pastor an existing church. You will find your joy in doing what He has gifted and motivated you to do.

There are at least two different types of church planters: the Founding Pastor and the Catalytic Church Planter.

The Founding Pastor may plant one or two churches throughout his ministry, but his greatest joy is continuing to lead and pastor the church, not planting. My (Paul's) pastor-mentor, Dr. D.L. Penhollow, was a Founding Pastor. He planted two churches early in his ministry. He pastored his second church plant for forty-three years. Founding Pastors may be somewhat less comfortable in the beginning phase of church planting. They enjoy their ministry more and more as the church develops.

Catalytic Church Planters are just the opposite. Webster's Dictionary defines a catalyst as "a person or thing acting as a stimulus in bringing about or hastening a result." The joy for a Catalytic Church Planter is in the planting, not in the pastoring. God uses him as the stimulus to bring about a new church. Catalytic church planters are highly motivated during the birthing of a new church. They tend to get bored or become less effective as the new church becomes more established. The Apostle Paul was a catalytic church planter. The Lord used him to plant many churches. The longest he stayed with any one of those churches was three years.

The Call to a Community

The Spirit of God also calls the planting pastor to a community or a geographical region. In Acts 16, during his Second Missionary Journey, Paul was intending to plant a church in the province of Asia. The Holy Spirit stopped him and so he shifted course to Bithynia. Again, the Spirit of Jesus would not allow him plant in that region.

But then the Lord revealed His will in a remarkable way:

During the night, Paul had a vision of a man from Macedonia standing and begging him, 'Come over to Macedonia and help us.' After Paul had seen the vision, we got ready at once to leave for Macedonia, concluding that God had called us to preach the gospel to them (Acts 16:9, 10).

The Lord wants to be the Lord of our church planting efforts. He clearly led Paul to preach and plant on a new continent, in Macedonia, a region of northern Greece. It was not his will for Paul to continue to plant in Asia Minor at that time. The Holy Spirit is still the Master Strategist. He wants to communicate to us where we are to plant.

Too often church planters are excited about the potential of a community, but don't seriously evaluate whether the Spirit of God is calling them there. Yes, it's a good sign that the community needs a dynamic new church and that the church planter and his family are the kind of people who could be effective in reaching the people for Christ.

But if the Spirit of God has not called that church planter to that community, the project may end in frustration and failure. "Unless the Lord builds the house, the builders labor in vain" (Ps. 127:1).

Be zealous to plant that new church, but make sure you are called by God to plant a church in a particular community.

The Benefits of Knowing You are Called

One of the great benefits of knowing you are called is *focus*. Knowing God's will for you is wonderfully clarifying.

If a church planting project were simply another "job," even if you were well-suited for it, you might work hard at it or you might not.

It's something different entirely if the King of the universe has summoned you to do His bidding. Knowing you're called means you will be more diligent to work hard to follow through with people and tasks. If you know God has called you to church planting, you'll manage your time better, steward your resources more carefully, and be more passionate for the souls of the lost.

Being called means you're not serving for your own comfort or benefit. You serve for the glory of the One who is Lord of Church Planting!

Another benefit to knowing you're called to be a church planter is *the blessing of the Lord*. If you are called to be a church planter and to a community, you will be the Lord's man and it will be the Lord's project. He will make it happen. Of course the planter must do all he can to organize a healthy growing church. He must work hard and work smart. But the church planter can do all the right things, and without God's blessing, the church will still not be established. Conversely, if the Lord is blessing the effort, the planter can make many mistakes and the church will still grow and develop.

How grateful the Apostle Paul must have been that the Spirit called him to the city of Philippi in Macedonia. He writes to the church that he planted in there:

I thank my God every time I remember you. In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now, 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 (Phil. 1:3-6).

The results were good in that church plant because a submissive servant of God obeyed the call of God to plant a church in that community.

When the Lord is blessing, He will grow and develop your church plant in wonderful, unpredictable ways. If the Lord is not blessing the birth of the church it is hard to make any headway at all.

Another benefit of knowing you are called is *perseverance through trials*.

Whether the church is really growing or developing slowly, you will face times of trial. A young family that you love moves out of town. A divisive person in the group influences some people out of your church. The offerings are low. Your paycheck is only half as large as it is supposed to be. The church isn't growing. These are among the trials that challenge the church planter.

In these times, the church planter and his wife may ask, "Why, Lord? Is this really where you want us?"

Perseverance is difficult unless you can know with conviction in your hearts, "Yes, God called us to plant this church!" Each time you are tested you must be able to point to the time and circumstances of your call to plant that church. Otherwise, it is likely that you will give up.

" . . . Let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us" (Hebrews 12:1b). If you

know that this church plant is part of the race God has marked out for you, you can stay on course.

Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider him who endured such opposition from sinful men, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart (Hebrews 12:2,3).

Jesus knew that his Father had called him to do a job. As a result, he was able to endure all his trials, including the cross, until the job was done. As He is hanging on the cross, Jesus said, “It is finished!”

If you know, down deep inside, that the Father has called you to plant a church in a community, you can plow through all kinds of problems and still keep going.

May the Lord direct your hearts into God's love and Christ's perseverance (2 Thes. 3:5).

Being Receptive to God's Call

The Lord can call you to church planting whether you are “receptive” or not.

Moses was called to service from a burning bush. The Angel of the Lord approached Gideon when he was threshing wheat. Neither man seemed to be looking for a call from God. So God is not limited to how receptive we are!

Nonetheless, if you are considering church planting, it only makes sense to be as receptive to God's call as possible.

1. Pray for wisdom and define the question.

We can rely on James 1:5,6b, “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. But when he asks, he must believe and not doubt . . .”

So ask for wisdom in defining your question. What are you asking of God? “Lord, do you want me to plant a church? Where do you want me to plant a church?” What a comfort it is to know that God has promised to give us his wisdom if only we will ask with a single-minded desire to know.

2. Talk over the question with godly advisors.

Proverbs 11:14 says “For lack of guidance a nation falls, but many advisors make victory sure.” If you want your decision to be right, you will talk it over with three or four godly advisors who know you well. These must be people who will speak the truth in love to you. Make sure that this group includes at least two experienced church planters who will speak truthfully with you about the realities of church planting.

Ask your advisors: “What do you see as my strengths and weaknesses as a church planting pastor?” If you have a potential church planting project, share the proposal with them and get their counsel.

Be sure to compare the feedback your advisors give you with the kinds of skills, personality, and character qualities church planters usually need to plant a healthy new church.¹ You’ll want to ask, based on the advice of those who know you well, “Do I (or ‘we’ if you’re married) have what it takes to plant a dynamic new church?”

At this point you might want to consider a formal assessment.

3. Pray and fast, allowing God to guide your decision.

Acts 13 provides a model: the leaders of the Antioch church were worshiping and fasting when God’s call came to Barnabas and Saul.

In the same way, it may be extremely helpful to fast and pray with a small group of leaders to discern God’s will for your life.

You may also find it useful to take a prayer retreat to focus on God’s call.² Getting away by yourself to a quiet place that is free from distractions can help you discern God’s call. Fasting often helps to focus your thoughts upon God’s will.

You may want to make a list of “pros” and “cons” concerning the decision. Read Scripture during these decision times. The Lord may speak to you in a very convicting way through his written Word. Lift up your church planting question to the Lord. Pray. Fast. Wait upon the Lord. “But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit . . . will teach you all things . . .” (John 14:26a). The Lord may reveal His call to you at this point. Or maybe it will mean waiting on Him for an extended season.

But please don’t create or invent your own call. There are times when you may feel so strongly about a ministry that you imagine you’ve been called. You will only be causing yourself and others a great problem if you invent your own call.

4. Seek confirmation of your call from the local church.

The Holy Spirit called Paul and Barnabas to church planting by speaking to the leadership of the Antioch church. Paul and Barnabas were leaders whose gifts and ministries were well known. They were commissioned, sent out, by a local church and its leaders—people who loved them, affirmed their gifts, and were convinced of their calling.

The Lord’s pattern is to call church planters to ministry in the context of a local assembly of believers. That’s why serving in a healthy, growing new church is such a good preparation for your own church planting ministry. As you learn by observing and serving and receiving feedback from new church leaders, God can place His call upon your life and confirm it through the perceptions and feedback of those who know you well.

5. Look for inner peace as one test for your call.

Jesus assured us that the Holy Spirit would teach us all things. Then he said, “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” (John 14:27).

If the Lord is calling you to church planting, you’ll need some objective indicators of that call. The feedback of godly advisors, the positive result of a formal assessment, and your local church’s affirmation are examples of such indicators.

But when these indicators are in place, when you are convinced the Lord has called you to plant a church in a particular community, it’s likely you will experience an inner peace.

You will know that this is what God wants you to do. Peace is often an affirmation that you have found God’s will. “And the peace of God, that transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus” (Phil. 4:7).

Notes

¹ DCPI publishes “The Pre-Assessment Profile,” an interactive guide for potential church planters and their spouses. It helps you evaluate your readiness for church planting based on 25 characteristics of church planting leaders.

² See “How to Take an Effective Personal Prayer Retreat,” another of DCPI’s interactive mini-handbooks.

Chapter 4

Discovering God's Special Design for Your Church: Values, Vision, and Style

Have you noticed? Not all churches are alike. Some have wonderful children's or youth ministries. Some are very evangelistic. Others focus on extended worship. Some pride themselves on doctrinal distinctives. Some have high levels of community involvement. Others stress separation from worldliness or from other churches.

What is God's unique design for your church plant? How can you determine what it is? The following steps are designed to take you through a process to determine God's special design for your church. It will lead you in a process from:

VALUES TO VISION TO STYLE.

This process is designed primarily for the visionary leader of the new church. But, under his leadership, other teammates can also work through the process with him.

First of all, just what are these three?

- VALUES are statements of your assumptions and priorities about how to conduct ministry. They focus on the issues in ministry that are most important to you and your church.
- VISION is a succinct faith statement of what you believe God desires your church to become, based on your values.
- STYLE is your preference on particulars of church ministry through which you plan to accomplish the vision for your church and which reflect your values.

STEP ONE: PRAY

Unless the LORD builds the house, its builders labor in vain. Unless the LORD watches over the city, the watchmen stand guard in vain (Ps. 127:1).

You must bathe this entire process in prayer. You want *God's* "building," not your own. Working through the following material in a prayer retreat setting is probably the best way to accomplish this goal. And having others pray for you during the process is imperative. Alert your network of prayer partners.

STEP TWO: DETERMINE YOUR VALUES

The Lord will tend to reveal His vision for your church based on the values you already hold. Thus, you must determine what values you hold most dearly.

The following is a list of values observed from many churches. To determine your own top values, go through the list and check the values that are important to you. It is OK to check most of them, or only a few of them. If you hold values that aren't listed, please add them.

Potential values:

1. _____ Evangelism: relational, preaching, acts-of-compassion,
2. _____ Expository teaching
3. _____ Truth telling
4. _____ Quality/excellence
5. _____ Multi-ethnic ministry
6. _____ Creativity
7. _____ The arts
8. _____ Worship
9. _____ One to one Discipleship
10. _____ Small group ministry
11. _____ Separation from the world
12. _____ Social involvement
13. _____ Quality children's ministry
14. _____ Members involved in ministry
15. _____ Daughter church planting
16. _____ Foreign missions
17. _____ Cooperation with other Christian organizations
18. _____ Culturally relevant music
19. _____ Doctrinal distinctives (e.g. sign gift ministry, non-instrumental worship, baptism)
20. _____ Team ministry (multiple staff)
21. _____ Church growth
22. _____ Long term ministry
23. _____ Fun
24. _____ Loving relationships
25. _____ Cultural relevance
26. _____ Community involvement
27. _____ Denominational cooperation
28. _____ Holy Spirit empowerment
29. _____ Member care
30. _____ Prayer centered ministry
31. _____ Contemporary style
32. _____ Full devotion to Christ
33. _____ _____
34. _____ _____

35. _____
36. _____

Next, list below the values you have checked. Then rate each one on a scale of one to ten. 1 = somewhat important to me. 10 = absolutely vital to me.

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

It is probably best to have from 5 to 12 core values. This does not mean that you do not value other issues. But you are narrowing the list in order to be able to better communicate to others the distinctives of your church. In narrowing your values list, you are also able to focus on a few areas that are of the most importance to you.

Once you have determined an initial list of values, you may want to take some time for further reflection and prayer about them. During this time you can ask others to review them with you and seek their advice.

Finally, you will probably want to sharpen the wording of your values to be sure they communicate exactly what you are trying to say in a compelling way. For example, instead of saying you value “small groups,” you might say “we believe that life change happens best in small groups” as Willow Creek Community Church states.

STEP THREE: DETERMINE YOUR VISION STATEMENT

Your values should fuel your vision. Vision comes from values. If you value evangelism, you will have a vision of reaching a community for Christ. If you value daughter church planting, you will develop a vision of a family of churches. If you value prayer, you will develop a vision for a prayer driven ministry. If you value small group ministry, you will develop a vision for a church that multiplies group ministry.

What is a vision statement? It is a succinct statement of your preferred future for your church plant. It is a statement of what you want your church to do and to become. It is a faith statement about God's church, and it is pleasing to the Lord:

Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see. This is what the ancients were commended for (Heb. 11:1, 2).

And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him (Heb. 11:6).

What are you trusting God to do in your church plant? Write it down as a statement—a vision statement, a faith statement.

For the time being, don't worry about making your statement clever or memorable. Just get down the basics of what you most want to see happen in the future of your church. Use your top 5 to 12 values as the basis of your statement. Once again, ask the Lord to lead you as you write.

My preliminary vision statement:

Now, it is time to work on the wording of your vision statement. Your vision statement will be most helpful if it is memorable. In order to be memorable, it will need to be fairly brief, and if possible, involve alliteration, repetition, rhyming words, or other pneumatic devices.

In order to stimulate your thinking, here are vision statements from two other churches:

This is how Bill and Lynne Hybels describe the development of the vision statement for Willow Creek Community Church:

So we developed a clear vision statement: *We want to become a biblically functioning community.* Then we summarized our mission in one sentence: *We want to turn irreligious people into fully devoted followers of Christ.*¹

Here's another statement of a growing new church:

The vision of New Song Community Church is to become...a thriving commu-

nity of people who relate to God by faith and one another in love so that God can bless us and through us, bless the world.

My finished vision statement:

STEP FOUR: DETERMINE YOUR STYLE OF MINISTRY

The final task in this section is to determine your style of ministry. Your VALUES should lead to your VISION, which leads to the particulars of your expected STYLE of ministry. If you are deciding issues of style of ministry before determining your values, you may be putting your personal preferences above the vision God has for your church.

The question to ask as you complete the following section is: what style of ministry will best result in the accomplishing of our values and vision for this church?

With that question in mind, write down your preferred style of ministry in the following areas:

1. Worship Service Format

- Order of service: _____
- Liturgy: _____
- Noise level: _____
- Expected audience response: _____
- Punctuality: _____
- Loose or tight structure: _____
- Interpersonal relationships: _____
- Length of services: _____
- Dramas or video clips: _____
- Style and amount of congregational music: _____

- Special music style and amount: _____
- Scripture reading: _____
- Announcements: _____

2. Music Ministry

- Style: _____
- Amount of worship singing: _____
- Choirs: _____
- Instruments used: _____
- Special music: _____

3. Preaching Style

- Expository or topical: _____
- Cognitive vs. experience orientation: _____
- Low-key vs. emotional: _____
- Length of sermon: _____

4. Charismatic Orientation

- View on spiritual gifts: _____
- Public exercise of “sign gifts”: _____
- Use of gifts in small groups: _____
- Method(s) for discovering spiritual gifts: _____

5. Group Structures

- Cell groups: _____

- Other groups: _____
- Youth groups: _____
- Children's ministries: _____

6. Evangelistic Strategy

- Outreach methods: _____
- Evangelism expectations for the pastor: _____
- Public invitations: _____
- Special programs: _____
- Assimilation approach: _____
- Cross-cultural outreach: _____
- Overseas missions/church planting expectations: _____
- Daughter church planting expectations: _____

7. Attitude toward ethical issues

- Feeding the poor: _____
- Divorce: _____
- Abortion: _____
- Homosexuality: _____
- Smoking: _____
- Drinking: _____
- Substance abuse: _____

8. Other Considerations

- Expected style of dress: _____
- Architectural distinctives: _____
- Amount of cooperation with other churches: _____
- Expected Leadership Style of Leaders: _____

STEP FIVE: SHARE YOUR VALUES, VISION AND STRATEGY WITH OTHERS

It is immensely helpful as a leader or a leadership team to determine the information that you have worked through above. It will give you clarity and purpose as you work to plant a church.

It will become even more helpful if you share it with others as they consider and become involved in your church. Thus, we recommend that you put the material you have prepared into an attractive format that you can share with others.

Share your values, vision, and style with prospective Core Team members, potential supporters, membership classes, and so on. Review them periodically to make sure you are on track. Patiently work toward the fulfillment of your vision until it is fulfilled.

But these things I plan won't happen right away. Slowly, steadily surely, the time approaches when the vision will be fulfilled. If it seems slow, do not despair, for these things will surely come to pass. Just be patient! They will not be overdue a single day! (Habakkuk 2:3, TLB)

Notes

¹ Bill & Lynne Hybels, *Rediscovering Church* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1995), p. 169.

Chapter 5

Principles of Dynamic Church Planting

Christ's church looks different from culture to culture around the world. But since God's word is true and authoritative for all people everywhere, certain biblical marks of a true church emerge in every people group.

In the same way, church planting skills and techniques and strategies will vary from culture to culture around the world. But there are certain transcultural principles that apply to church planters and church planting everywhere.

That's what this chapter is about – twelve principles that must undergird the many and various strategies for planting Christ's church around the world.

1. Christ is Lord of church planting, and He has a vision for your new church.

Let us consider this principle in two parts.

First, Christ is the Lord of church planting.

And God placed all things under his (Christ's) feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way (Eph. 1:22, 23).

This passage teaches us that our Heavenly Father placed Jesus Christ in the position of headship over the church. The word "Lord" refers to the boss, or leader or head of an organization. Christ is the Lord of the church. He is the leader of the congregation. Church planting is the reproductive activity of the church. It is through the planting of churches that churches multiply and Christ's Kingdom expands. Jesus is the Lord over this and every other aspect of the church.

The relationship between Christ and the church is so close that the church is described as the Body of Christ, the fullness of Him [Christ] who fills everything in every way. In order to have the right and biblical understanding of the church, the church planting pastor must, through his attitude and actions, submit to the Lordship of Christ over the church and in church planting. The church planter must look to the Lord for guidance, direction, decision-making and vision.

Second, He (Christ) has a vision for your new church.

In Acts 16, the Apostle Paul is trying to plant a church. He wanted to go to Asia., but the Lord kept him from traveling in that direction. Then he decided to go to Bithynia, but the Spirit of Jesus would not allow the missionary team to go there. Christ envisioned Paul's planting a Macedonian church.

During the night Paul had a vision of a man of Macedonia standing and begging him, "Come over to Macedonia and help us." After Paul had seen the vision, we got ready at once to leave for Macedonia, concluding that God had called us to preach the gospel to them. (Acts 16:9-10).

Christ has a vision for the church that he wants you to plant. Your job is not to invent a vision. Your work is not to appropriate a successful vision from another church planter and church. Your job is to prayerfully discern the vision that Christ has for your church.

Christ is incredibly creative. He is the creator of new churches. He doesn't make churches that are all the same. He has a vision for the unique church He wants you to plant. He knows where he wants you to plant, just as he knew where the Apostle Paul was to plant.

So what philosophy of ministry does He want to use in His new church? What is His vision statement for the new church? What are His unique values for the new body of believers? What kind of people does He want His church to reach? What is Christ's vision for your new church? Jesus Christ, Lord of the Church, will guide you to the answers as you and your leaders wait upon him in prayer. (See chapter 3.)

2. Prayer is the indispensable source of God's power and wisdom in each phase of church planting.

Since Christ is Lord of church planting, and since He has a vision for your new church, prayer becomes incredibly important.

First, prayer is important because it leads us to intimacy with Christ.

God has called us first to be lovers of Christ before we become lovers of the lost, or lovers of the church.

In prayer we connect with this One who is Creator and Sustainer as well as Redeemer and Friend. We pour out our hearts in prayer, and receive from the Lord His sweetest comforts and assurances.

When the Apostle Paul, the greatest church planter of any generation, sat in a Roman prison for the sake of the gospel, he reflected on what was most important to him. God had used him to bring the good news to Asia and Europe. He had trained and mentored scores of leaders and planted churches all across the known world.

But what was most precious to him was intimacy with Jesus.

... Whatever was to my profit I now consider loss for the sake of Christ. What is more, I consider everything a loss compared to the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them rubbish, that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ—the righteousness that comes from God and is by faith. I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection, and the fellow-

ship of sharing in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death and so, somehow, to attain to the resurrection from the dead (Phil. 3:7-11).

Second, prayer is important because it puts us in touch with Christ's vision and plan for His church.

A story about the Old Testament leader Joshua illustrates the point.

Now when Joshua was near Jericho, he looked up and saw a man standing in front of him with a drawn sword in his hand. Joshua went up to him and asked, "Are you for us or for our enemies?"

"Neither," he replied, "but as commander of the army of the LORD I have now come." Then Joshua fell facedown to the ground in reverence, and asked him, "What message does my Lord have for his servant?" (Joshua 5:13 – 15).

Obviously this story is not about church planting, but it is about warfare. And church planting *is* warfare. As Joshua prepared to lead Israel in siege against the city of Jericho, he had an encounter with an angel, perhaps the preincarnate Christ Himself. When Joshua asked if the man was "for us or for our enemies," the reply was, in effect, "Neither. I command the army of the Lord, and you'd better worry about whose side *you're* on."

Joshua quickly grasped the point, and fell on his face in reverence. "What message do you have for me?" he asked.

Like Joshua, it's easy to assume that *we're* in charge, that the church plant is our battle. But that puts us at odds with the true Commander, the Lord of the church. When we humble ourselves and listen, as Joshua did, the Lord will lead us in His victory.

What follows in Joshua 6 is the famous battle of Jericho. God's battle plan must have seemed ridiculous at first. March around the city every day for six days. Then on the seventh day, march around seven times, and have the priests blow their trumpets.

But on the seventh day, when the walls collapsed, Israel won a great victory—God's victory.

Prayer is all about humbling yourself, listening, and obeying. The Lord has a vision and a plan for your church to be planted. It may be a vision and plan that is unconventional. But following His vision and plan leads to His victory.

Third, prayer is important because it opens a door for the gospel.

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. Pray that I may proclaim it clearly, as I should. (Col. 4:2-4, emphasis added).

We church planters must be strategists and tacticians. Applying church growth principles will help us. Good research is essential. Learning good leadership skills is crucial. The right kind of practical, church planting training is vital.

But the message of the gospel will have impact only through prayer. Unless the gospel is proclaimed, no one will be saved. But without prayer, hearts will remain closed to the transforming power of the gospel. Prayer is as essential to the harvest as preaching the gospel.

Finally, prayer is important because it is the key to God's provision for church planting's many needs.

Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field (Mt. 9:38).

The Greek word (*deomai*) translated “ask” in this verse has the idea of crying out for help on behalf of the needs of someone else. It is this kind of intercession, crying out to God for the needs of others, that is so powerful as we pioneer new churches.

Do you need to build a core team? Jesus said to cry out to the Lord of the harvest.

Do you need resources? Cry out to the Lord of the harvest—pray!

Do you need courage in the face of danger and opposition to the gospel? Pray!

3. God's vision must lead to prayerful planning, the result of which should be a comprehensive TaskList set out upon a TimeLine.

Many church planters have an aversion to planning. They tend to be free-wheeling and spontaneous, and would rather get on with the project than take the time to lay down plans for a successful church plant.

Some even feel that it is “unspiritual” to plan; they want only to be “led by the Spirit.” But can the Holy Spirit lead us *through* our planning?

Just what does the Bible say about planning? Consider these examples:

- Jesus Himself affirmed planning with regard to finances when He said, “*Suppose one of you wants to build a tower. Will he not first sit down and estimate the cost to see if he has enough money to complete it?*” (Luke 14:28)
- Proverbs 16:9 says “*We should make plans . . . counting on God to direct us.*” (TLB) No plan should be made without God's direction. But God directs planning, not just spontaneous efforts.
- Proverbs 11:14 says, “*For want of a skillful strategy an army is lost; victory is the fruit of long planning.*” (NEB) Likewise, new churches have literally been lost “for want of a skillful strategy.” A church planter's heart may be right, his efforts diligent and goal noble. But without careful planning, the battle can be lost.

The Lord wants us to *plan*!

I (Mark) have served as the founding pastor of two churches. The first was started with no Vision, TaskList or TimeLine. We started with thirteen people in attendance on the first Sunday, and very slowly grew from there. We planned as we went along, and the fruit was limited.

The second church was started with a carefully planned vision, TaskList and TimeLine.

The foundation was laid out over a period of several months. On launch Sunday there were 225 people in attendance, most of whom came because of our outreach planning and efforts. Thirteen people were saved on the first Sunday! Over the next three years, 127 people professed faith in Christ.

Having done it “both ways,” I can tell you that I believe it is a lot more productive, enjoyable and God-honoring to utilize the minds God has given us to carefully plan out the work of church planting.

If God is not at work, even the best laid plans will fail. But if God is in a work, we can serve Him best by *prayerful planning*.

4. Every church planter needs a mentor.

Church planters need effective mentors to come alongside and help them establish the new church. A mentor brings wisdom, protection, care, resources, networking, support, accountability, and prayer to a church planter.

Mentoring is an ancient art. Most of the training of leaders in the Word of God occurred in mentoring relationships. Moses mentored Joshua. Elijah mentored Elisha. Barnabas mentored the Apostle Paul. And the Apostle Paul poured his life into a team of leaders.

Before he became Timothy’s mentor, Paul needed to be Barnabas’ protege. When Barnabas discovered that the new church in Antioch was in great need of leadership, he remembered Saul. It was a long, hard journey from Antioch to Tarsus. But Barnabas was willing to make that journey to recruit Saul as his protege and as a teacher for the new church in Antioch.

When Barnabas found Saul, he brought him to Antioch. For a whole year Barnabas and Saul (who becomes the Apostle Paul) met with the church and taught great numbers of people. (See Acts 2: 25, 26a).

In Acts 13: 2, the Holy Spirit said, “*Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.*” The mentor and his protege set off on their first missionary trip together. Acts 13 and 14 reveal that the work to which the Holy Spirit called them was preaching the Word and planting churches. Great learning adventures happen when a mentor and protege are able to minister together.

The Apostle Paul took the practice of mentoring and expanded it to a team of men that he recruited and trained for his church planting mission. Chief of his proteges was Timothy.

He came to Derbe and then to Lystra, where a disciple named Timothy lived, whose mother was a Jewess and a believer, but whose father was a Greek. The brothers at Lystra and Iconium spoke well of him. Paul wanted to take him along on the journey, so he circumcised him because of the Jews who lived in that area, for they all knew that his father was a Greek (Acts 16:1-3).

Paul discovered a young Christian who had impressed those who knew him best. Paul was able to get a clear picture of a young, emerging leader through the references of others who “spoke well of him.”

Paul began to travel with and mentor his team of church planting proteges. Acts 20:4 tells us that Paul was accompanied by Sopater, son of Pyrrhus from Berea, Aristarcus and Secundus

from Thessalonica, Gaius from Derbe, Timothy also, and Tychicus and Trophimus from the province of Asia.

Church planting is an incredibly difficult ministry. One of the greatest assets that a church planter can have in successfully establishing a new church is a mentor who will help him all along the way.

5. The church planting pastor is most effective as part of a team on which he serves as the visionary leader.

In the book of Acts, organized, Holy Spirit-prompted church planting was done by teams.

The Antioch church, for example, commissioned Barnabas and Saul as a daughter church planting team. And the Holy Spirit called these church planters through a leadership team of five prophet and teachers (Acts 13:1-3). (The Antioch church thus became the mother church for many, many generations of churches!)

Paul soon emerged as the lead church planter. In the beginning Barnabas is mentioned first (Acts 13:2, 7), but soon it became clear that Paul was gifted to be the lead church planting pastor. Starting in Acts 13:13a, he is recognized as the team leader: “From Paphos, Paul and his companions sailed to Perga in Pamphylia.”

In the same way, church plants today need a lead pastor. Willow Creek Community Church, the largest church in the US at this time, had no senior pastor in its early days. Bill Hybels was called the “coordinating pastor.” But it soon became clear that accountability, authority and responsibility were sorely lacking. So Hybels became the lead pastor.¹ The rest is history!

New Testament church planting was done as a team effort. Paul was accompanied at different times by various teammates: Barnabas, John Mark, Silas, Timothy, Luke and others.

Why did the Lord direct them to work as a team? There are many advantages to team ministry:

- accountability,
- balance of gifts and strengths,
- mutual encouragement,
- multiplied efforts,
- prayer support,
- companionship.

If a church plant starts with a team, it has a much better chance of surviving and thriving. God uses both solo and team efforts, so if you are unable to plant with a team, go forward in faith and God will use you.

But a team planting effort best fits the biblical model.

6. The central work of the new church will always be to help people put their trust in Christ, and grow into maturity as His followers.

Churches and church members have many agendas and priorities, but we must never forget that God's heartbeat is for the lost to be found.

In Luke 15 Jesus told three parables all with the same point: lost people matter to God and heaven rejoices when the lost are found.

The first parable is of a lost sheep. Though ninety-nine are in the fold, the shepherd leaves them all to find the one who is lost.

When the lost sheep is found, the shepherd calls his friends and neighbors together and celebrates.

Jesus applied his story in this way, *"I tell you that in the same way there will be more rejoicing in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who do not need to repent"* (15:7). Joy in heaven comes when lost sinners are found!

So is winning the lost all the church needs to do? Of course not! Indeed, some churches become so focused on evangelism that they neglect the nurture of the saints. Jesus' Great Commission balances both evangelism and discipleship.

... All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 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. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age (Mt. 28:18 - 20).

Not only are we to "make disciples of all nations," but we are also to be "baptizing them" and "teaching them to obey." New churches need to balance evangelism and discipleship.²

Which direction do most churches lean? Most established churches may lean too heavily toward nurture/discipleship.

Newer churches and church plants often have a better balance, but some may lean too heavily toward evangelism and neglect discipleship.



Sadly some churches don't practice either evangelism or discipleship, but seem mainly to focus on the social aspects of church life.

Regardless of its age, Christ has called every church to this central work—helping people become Christians and then grow into maturity as His followers.

7. Leadership development lies at the heart of the new church's mission, and the most important leadership quality to develop is spiritual maturity.

Central to the mission of any new church is the equipping of God's people for ministry. We church planters have the privilege and responsibility of overseeing a process by which unbelievers become converts, converts become growing Christians, and growing Christians become mature servant-leaders.

The Apostle Paul wrote definitively about this in his letter to the Ephesians:

- *It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up . . . (Eph. 4:11,12).*
- *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 (2 Tim. 2:2).*

But what does it mean to “prepare” God's people? The Greek word *katartizo* translated “prepare” or “equip” is a very rich word. In the first century world, mending a broken leg was said to be “equipping” it. When stalemated political parties, frozen by their differences, were brought together to work for the common good, they were “equipped.” When a torn fishing net was dragged up on the beach and mended so that it could be used again, it was “equipped.”

In every case, the “preparing” or “equipping” pictures a transformation from brokenness to wholeness, from ineffectiveness to usefulness.

God's design is for His church to be transforming broken people into people who are restored to wholeness and enabled to serve Him effectively.

The word of God is essential to this process of equipping:

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 (2 Tim. 3:16, 17).

So the goal of any new church's evangelism, follow-up, discipleship, counseling, and leadership training is to see unsaved people become fruitful followers of Jesus Christ.

And it is only as this process culminates in the identifying, training, and deploying of godly leaders that the new church can have ongoing impact in its community. The church will not be able to grow beyond its foundation of godly, gifted leaders.

Effective leadership is “three-dimensional”—it comes as the confluence of *personality* (“constitution”—the way God made us, our inclinations and passion), *ability* (“competence”—skills, education, learning), and *maturity* (“character”).³

Maturity is the foundation for everything else. The Pastoral Epistles focus almost exclusively on character qualities when describing those who are ready for leadership (see 1 Tim. 3:1-10; Titus 1:5-9).

Paying attention to this principle will keep the church planter from many unwise, even dangerous, practices that are all too common in new churches. For example, many church planters avoid the maturing process entirely, and the result is a church of spiritual infants. Or they may try to appoint leaders based on non-biblical qualifications—like money, education, secular ability, or personal likeability. In the end, leaders chosen by the wrong criteria will only hurt the church.

The wise church planter will see his responsibility to develop leaders based on Christlike character.

8. Understanding (and communicating sensitively to) the hearts and minds of people in the target community is essential to reaching them effectively with the gospel.

Each new church is planted within a subculture. This is true whether the church is established in North America or in other parts of the world. The sub-culture *may* be ethnic or linguistic. The church may be planted among Tamil-speakers in southern India. Or the church may have a core group of Serbians in Vienna, Austria. The subculture may be generational. The new church may focus on Generation Xers in Seattle or Boomers in Florida. Or the subculture may be socio-economic. The new church may be targeting the wealthy in Milan, Italy or the destitute in Accra, Ghana.

Understanding and communicating sensitively to the hearts and minds of people in the target community is essential to reaching them effectively with the gospel. The Apostle Paul understood this reality and was willing to make personal sacrifices to insure that all kinds of people were won to Christ.

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 those under the law I became like one under the law (though I myself am not under the law), so as to win those under the law. To those not having the law I became like one not having the law (though I am not free from God's law but am under Christ's law), so as to win those not having the law. 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 (1 Cor. 9:19-23).

He was determined to become like the people he was serving in order to see them come to Christ. He looked for ways to “bridge” the gospel to their culture. For example, when he was in Athens, he was greatly distressed to see so many idols. But when he spoke to them in Athens, he didn’t focus on his distress. Instead, he learned about them and made a “bridge.”

Paul then stood up in the meeting of the Areopagus and said: “Men of Athens! I see that in every way you are very religious. For as I walked around and looked carefully at your objects of worship, I even found an altar with this inscription: TO AN UNKNOWN GOD. Now what you worship as something unknown I am going to proclaim to you (Acts 17:22, 23).

Paul’s compliment about being “very religious” gave him the ear of the crowd. His reference to an altar dedicated TO AN UNKNOWN GOD enabled him to “bridge” from something they knew to something they didn’t.

Our goal at DCPI is to help church planters establish new, dynamic churches in every subculture throughout the world. We believe in training church planters who are planting within their

own sub-culture. They already understand their sub-culture and have the capability to communicate sensitively to their own people.

Rev. Christopher Sarkar is a church planter from the untouchable caste in Bangladesh. We want to better train him to plant churches among his own people whom he already understands. The biblical principles of church planting remain the same for all situations, but applying the principles and the methodology to establish a new church is going to be different in each situation. At DCPI, we can teach the principles. But we must look to church planting leaders from within to decode their own subculture and apply the most effective methodology.

9. When God plants a church, there should be widespread community awareness and interest.

Jesus said,

You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven (Mt. 5:14 – 16).

The entire tenor of this passage is that the good news of Jesus Christ is meant to light up the entire world. God's means for lighting up the world are Christ's disciples, who compose the church. When a new church is planted, there should be widespread awareness and interest. The new church should light up the entire community in which it is planted from the day it is launched.

The planting of the first church is a great illustration of this principle.

Now there were staying in Jerusalem God-fearing Jews from every nation under heaven. When they heard this sound, a crowd came together in bewilderment, because each one heard them speaking in his own language. (Acts 2:5, 6).

God chose a strategic day to launch the first church. It was Pentecost, a Jewish holiday in which God-fearing Jews from every nation under heaven were present in Jerusalem. Then, God used the sound of the wind to get the attention of the city and gather an interested crowd. God found a way to communicate the good news of Jesus to these people in their own language. As a result, three thousand were added to the new church on that day.

And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved (Acts 2:47b).

The new church continued to let their light shine for Christ throughout their city. Even the Jewish Sanhedrin realized that everybody in the city of Jerusalem knew about Christ. (Cf. Acts 4: 16b.)

When a new church was planted in Antioch of Syria, there was widespread community awareness and interest.

Some of them, however, men from Cyprus and Cyrene, went to Antioch and began to speak to Greeks also, telling them the good news about the Lord Jesus. The Lord's hand was with them, and a great number of people believed and turned to the Lord (Acts 11:20,21).

It is sad when a new church is planted and the news is kept to a small group of people. The new church is not merely for the care and nurture of a small group of Christians. The new church is meant to bring the light of eternal life to the broader community.

Church planters should prayerfully discern which methods of outreach the Lord means to use to bring about widespread community awareness and interest in the new church. This must be an on-going ministry of the new church to its community and to the world.

The Lord wants His church to be planted with widespread community awareness and interest. But obviously there are repressive societies around the world that force this principle to be modified. Where Christianity is outlawed upon pain of imprisonment or death, the Lord often conducts church planting in more of an “underground” fashion.

If God calls you to plant a church in such circumstances, let the Lord guide you to the appropriate level of advertisement and publicity. The Lord of the Church will be victorious!

10. The church planter's spiritual life, family life, and ministry life must be in biblical balance.

- *He must manage his own family well and see that his children obey him with proper respect. (If anyone does not know how to manage his own family, how can he take care of God's church?) (1 Tim. 3:4).*
- *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, so that nothing will hinder your prayers (1 Peter 3:7).*
- *Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her ... (Eph. 5:25).*

The planter's own walk with God is the wellspring for everything else. From his intimate connection to Jesus comes vision, unique strategies for reaching the community, and the spiritual power to share Christ's love in a transforming way. A leader who neglects the care of his own soul will end up starving both himself and his ministry.

Personal holiness can never be taken for granted among Christian leaders. A wise church planter knows that, apart from God's grace, “nothing good lives in me” (Rom. 7:18). He will make sure he is accountable to someone else (a same-sex friend) who will ask him hard questions about his prayer life and personal devotions, leisure time, and thought life. He will “feed himself” from God's word before he attempts to feed and shepherd others.

A balanced leader will also recognize that God has established the family as the foundation of society, as an institution that predates even the church. The family is God's proving ground and the first ministry priority for the church planter.

Church planting will require sacrifice and commitment on everyone's part: husband, wife, and children. But the church planter must never sacrifice the emotional, physical, or spiritual health of his family for the sake of the church plant. Healthy church planting families plant healthy new churches.

A balanced leader will attend to his own soul, care for his own family, and then will work hard and smart in the ministry. A church planter has to be a self-starter because there is no time clock to punch, and usually no one to monitor his weekly schedule. As a man of integrity he will have the reputation of a hard and persevering worker, as well as a humble follower of Christ and a loving and attentive family man.

11. Healthy churches will reproduce, and daughter church planting should be envisioned and planned from the new church's beginning.

Let's begin by asking a couple of humorous questions.

Who should give birth to cows: horses, mice, pigs or cows?

And who should give birth to sheep: shepherds or sheep?

The point is, *like* gives birth to *like*. And all believers are called to evangelize, not just the leaders (shepherds).

Now here's a related question, the focus of this principle: *Who should give birth to churches?*

It makes sense that churches give birth to churches, just as sheep give birth to sheep!

We believe God's best for every church is to reproduce. It is natural and normal that every church gives birth to "daughter" churches. The Scriptural pattern was set as early as Acts 8.

Though Jesus had instructed His followers to bear witness to Him throughout the world (Acts 1:8), it took persecution to prompt their obedience.

. . . On that day a great persecution broke out against the church at Jerusalem, and all except the apostles were scattered throughout Judea and Samaria. . . Those who had been scattered preached the word wherever they went (Acts 8:1b, 4).

Some believers fled to Antioch in Syria. As the result of their witness, "*The Lord's hand was with them, and a great number of people believed and turned to the Lord*" (Acts 11:21). The Jerusalem church had just given birth—an unplanned, but blessed, pregnancy! As a result they sent Barnabas, who brought along Saul, to provide leadership to the new church.

And it wasn't long before that church in Antioch was ready to give birth to its own daughter churches.

In the church at Antioch there were prophets and teachers: Barnabas, Simeon called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen (who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch) and Saul. While they were worshipping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them." So after they

had fasted and prayed, they placed their hands on them and sent them off (Acts 13:1-3).

Because it commissioned those two church planters, the church in Antioch became the mother, grandmother, and great-grandmother of churches all across what is today called Turkey and Greece.

It's fair to say that Christians through the ages and on every continent owe a debt of gratitude for the daughter church planting done by the church in Antioch.

And the reproductive pattern of Antioch continued. For example, the church in Ephesus, (apparently founded by the husband and wife team of Aquila and Priscilla after Paul's Second Missionary Journey⁴), one of the seven churches of Revelation, is thought to have been the mother church for the other six: Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea.⁵ These cities surround Ephesus and were connected by a circular Roman road which would have made a natural path for church planting in the region.⁶

We believe that it is natural, normal and God's expectation that every church gives birth to "daughter" churches. Without reproduction, eventually the life of the gospel will die.

When is the best time to envision and plan for daughtering another church? From the beginning of your church plant!

When couples dream of marriage, they usually envision where they would like to live, the home they would like to live in, and the children they would like to have some day. In the same way, we recommend that emerging Core Groups begin to envision the "daughter" churches you would like to give birth to some day. Such dreaming is normal, healthy, and pleasing to the Lord. We know of one new church that introduced their first daughter pastor on their opening Sunday!

Scripture speaks of the joy and blessing of having children:

*Sons are a heritage from the LORD, children a reward from him.
Like arrows in the hands of a warrior are sons born in one's youth.
Blessed is the man whose quiver is full of them* (Ps. 127:3 - 5).

And so it is with churches! Daughter congregations are a heritage, a reward, and a legacy. And blessed is the congregation that gives birth to them.

12. Attending to organizational and administrative matters will protect and stabilize the new church, and enable it to grow in a healthy way.

In those days when the number of disciples was increasing, the Grecian Jews among them complained against the Hebraic Jews because their widows were being overlooked in the daily distribution of food. So the Twelve gathered all the disciples together and said, "It would not be right for us to neglect the ministry of the word of God in order to wait on tables. Brothers, choose seven men from among you who are known to be full of the Spirit and wisdom. We will turn this responsibility over to them and will give our attention to prayer and the ministry of the word . . . This proposal pleased the whole group . . . So the word of God spread . . . (Acts 6:1-4, 5, 7a).

But everything should be done in a fitting and orderly way (1 Cor. 14:40).

Visionary church planters usually prefer freewheeling spontaneity to “stuffy” organization and administration. That’s why church planting with a team has so many advantages. Complementary gifts and multiplied skills can attend to both the larger vision and the details of daily ministry.

But even if a church planter doesn’t have a team, he needs to attend to the organization and administrative matters of his church plant. In the long run it will help bring stability and insure a healthy growth path.

Administration is not just about charts and graphs and reports. Rightly understood, it is all about ministry, about helping shepherd the people whom God has given us.

The new church in Jerusalem faced a sensitive problem that involved the neglect of a group of needy people—widows. What made the situation potentially explosive was the cultural tension between the diverse groups in the Jerusalem church. Widows from a Greek background were neglected, but their Jewish counterparts were not.

The new church’s elders developed a system to care for these widows. They identified qualified leaders from the very cultural group that was affected, and gave them responsibility and authority to care for the widows. At the same time they reaffirmed their own calling within the body of Christ: prayer and the ministry of the word.

This is a great example of dealing with a crisis and meeting a need, not by a spontaneous “reaction,” but with a compassionate, careful plan.

The result was that harmony was restored to the church (“This proposal pleased the whole group . . .”) and the ministry of the gospel was released with greater effectiveness into the community: “So the word of God spread.”

No wonder the word of God advises us church planters to do everything “in a fitting and orderly way!”

Notes

¹ Lynne and Bill Hybels, *Rediscovering Church* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1995), pp. 73-75.

² A good resource to help evaluate this balance is Christian Schwartz, *Natural Church Development* (Wheaton, IL: Churchsmart Resources, 1990).

³ See chapter 9 for a more complete discussion of “Three-Dimensional Leadership.”

⁴ John F. Walvoord and Roy B. Zuck, eds. *The Bible Knowledge Commentary, New Testament* (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1983), p. 409.

⁵ See Acts 19:10.

⁶ Dan Noorlander, *Journeys of Paul Study Guide*, (Lakeland, FL: Educational Opportunities, 1996), p. 64.

Chapter 6

What is a Church?

Imagine that it is time for the Olympics basketball championship game. The two teams are thrilled to represent their countries in the gold medal competition. The stands are filled with an excited crowd. But as the teams come on to the court, they realize that someone has removed both basketball hoops!

Do they play the game anyway? That would be pretty hard to do! How would they score? Where would they aim? How could they determine who had won? They could still shoot the ball—but at what goal?

Similarly, in church planting it is possible to shoot without knowing your goal. If you are shooting in the general direction of “church,” will you know when you have hit the mark?

Indeed, there are many goals—many definitions and understandings as to what constitutes a “church.” From quite simple definitions, to very complex, folks have different ideas and goals for which they are shooting. What is *your* goal? What do you believe the Bible presents on this issue?

Since Scripture does not have a specific definition, in this chapter our approach is not to define what a church is for you, but to help you crystallize your own understanding of the goal.

Arriving at a definition isn’t easy. But it’s a necessary exercise, and helps us state our assumptions. For example, some seem to think that you don’t have a real church unless you have a church building, or a steeple, or a full time paid pastor, or a choir.

But are any of these necessary minimal qualifications of what constitutes a church? There were no church buildings for the first three hundred years of church history. Still today, in persecuted areas of the world, erecting a church building is not permitted. In fact, the sad reality is that in some places, if believers meet together anywhere, including a home, they face certain persecution, perhaps even death. Can there be a church where the gathering is only a family worshiping secretly?

As you plant churches, it is vital to know exactly what you mean when you say you are beginning “a church.” You won’t know if you have reached your destination unless you know what the destination is!

DEVELOPING YOUR OWN CONVICTIONS

In order to help you determine what you believe are the minimal qualifications for a true local church, we have designed the following exercise. For each of the options below, choose A, B, C or D:

A = Absolute essentials of what constitutes a true local church.

B = A good goal, but not part of minimal requirements.

C = Perhaps for the future, but not important for a new church plant.

D = Not important at all.

Potential components of a true church:

- _____ The Gospel is proclaimed. (Evangelism)
- _____ Regular gatherings of professing believers for worship.
- _____ The Sacraments are properly administered (Baptism and the Lord's supper)
- _____ The group is self-supporting (not receiving support money from outside the local church.)
- _____ A bus ministry.
- _____ Biblical preaching and teaching are practiced.
- _____ The group is self-governing with no outside control.
- _____ Children's classes and youth ministry.
- _____ Biblical leadership: led by at least one biblically qualified pastor/elder.
- _____ Has a *paid* "pastor" or lead elder.
- _____ Has a *paid full-time* "pastor" or lead elder.
- _____ Multiple elders/overseers/board members.
- _____ Meets indoors.
- _____ Owns a building.
- _____ Incorporated or otherwise recognized by the government.
- _____ Participates in church multiplication/missions.
- _____ Has a functioning Constitution and By-laws.
- _____ A minimum _____ people gathering together regularly for worship.

_____ Has an official “membership” roster, with membership standards.

_____ A minimum of five or _____ official “members.”

_____ Church discipline is administered as necessary.

_____ Members build the body by practicing their spiritual gifts.

_____ Has a pipe organ.

MINIMAL DEFINITION OF WHAT CONSTITUTES A CHURCH:

From the above you should be able to easily determine what for you is part of your minimal definition of what constitutes a true church.

My minimal definition:

A church is: _____

PLEASE NOTE: It’s likely you will need to work with others in order to refine your definition of church. If you are a church planter in partnership or accountability with a sending church or agency, this issue may have already been determined, and you will need to work within the guidelines established.

IMPORTANT BUT NOT PART OF MINIMAL DEFINITION

Next, you should also be able to determine things you want to do and maybe believe that biblically you *must* do as a church, but are not part of the absolute minimal definition of a church (the items you marked with a “B”):

List these items: _____

PERHAPS FOR THE FUTURE:

Finally, you should be able to list items that you would like to do some day, but are not important in the beginning of a church.

List these items: _____

SOME DEFINITIONS FOR COMPARISON

One minimal definition of a local church:

A church is a group of professing believers who meet regularly for biblical teaching and worship, are led by at least one biblically qualified pastor/elder and whose goal is to fulfill the Great Commission.

Other definitions for comparison:

Steve Steele of DAWN suggests three minimal components for a church:¹

1. Regular gathering of believers.
2. Trained leadership.
3. Observance of the sacraments. (baptism, communion)

Gene Getz offers the following:²

When, then, can a body of believers be called a church? I personally tend toward a simple definition: a body of believers can be called a church whenever that group meets together regularly for mutual edification. Jesus said, in the context of talking about church discipline, “For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them” (Matt 18:20, KJV). And it is clear what Tertullian felt Jesus meant, for he said: “Where there are two or three people, even laymen, there is a church.”

Rev. Jayakumar of Bible Believing Churches and Mission (BBCM), Bangalore, India, suggests the following three qualities as essential in determining when a “mission” becomes a church.³

1. Self supporting.
2. Self governing.
3. Bible and Mission centered.

From another mission leader: “A church is the assembly of believers called by the Holy

Spirit where the Word is taught in its truth and purity and the sacraments are administered according to the Scriptures.”

And yet another missions leader from Canada suggests that a biblical church is defined by five criteria:

1. A recognized leader
2. Twelve people involved other than children
3. Meeting for 3 months
4. Meeting regularly for worship, Bible study and outreach
5. Giving, or collecting funds to give, to missions

Other church planting leaders would include the following as essential requirements of “church:”

- Regular, independent church service (worship, public).
- Recognized leader or team.
- Missional statement with resulting goals and activities.
- Intention of permanence—plan to continue and reproduce.
- The congregation has primary identification by the participants (i.e. the participant’s identification with his church takes priority over other affiliations – like a lodge or civic group).

As you seek to define “church,” may the Lord guide you and empower you. And may your definition help you plant many dynamic churches that reach whole communities of church people with the gospel!

Notes

¹ Based on a phone conversation with Paul Becker, March 2001.

² Gene Getz, *The Measure of a Church* (Ventura, CA: Regal Books, 1975; ninth printing, 1980), pp. 15, 16.

³ Based on a personal conversation with Rev. Jayakumar.

Chapter 7

Approaches to Church Planting in the New Millennium

An “approach” can be defined as a way a person or place can be reached. An approach is a means of access. We believe that church planting is the best way to access and disciple precious people around the world for our Lord Jesus Christ.

In this chapter, there are three sections: *What* Are We Planting?, *Who* Is Planting? and *How* Are We Planting?

The first section, the “what” of church planting, describes the different varieties of church planting in our world today.

In the second section, we will consider five approaches to the “Who” of church planting—who takes the initiative to get a church started? What relationships and resources are developed from the beginning of the church planting journey?

And the final section, the “How” of church planting, will take a brief look at a couple of different methods of beginning a new church.

Most of the research done for this chapter comes from an extensive website search done in August of 2001. While reading articles that encouraged one kind of new church, I (Paul) discovered that other kinds of new churches were being criticized harshly. That will not happen here. We will not lift up one kind of new church by putting the others down. While every kind of new church has strengths and weaknesses, each one expresses the creativity of God in planting His church. We, at DCPI, want to cultivate unity in the Body of Christ by respecting all the ways in which God establishes His church.

WHAT ARE WE PLANTING?

1. Cell Based Churches

“The ‘Cells’ are the basic building blocks of the church – the church is formed in Cells and is the sum of them. Cells seldom grow larger than 15 people and they multiply as they reach this number and new leaders have been identified and properly trained. In a ‘Cell,’ the primary activity is edification as members care for one another using spiritual gifts and support systems,” we learn from the website of FCBC International, a ministry of Touch Ministries International.

A “pure” Cell Church practice comprises three basic components: 1) Cell Group 2) Congregation and 3) Celebration. Cells are the central focus. In *Cell Groups*, members participate in the life of the church – people are nurtured, equipped and edified. Cells are where believers are called to be accountable to one another. *Congregation* is the large group interaction where mass teaching or information transfer takes place. Groups of

between 50-100 people are organized for these purposes. *Celebration* is a mass gathering of every Cell member of the church to worship together – much praise and worship, solid Bible teaching and evangelism.

The Cell Church provides a “new wineskin” that can stretch and grow, making room quickly and easily for many more people to join the community of believers. Cell Church methodology is rooted and practiced after the Early Church, as recorded in the Book of Acts. The Early Church met together in homes to worship, learn and fellowship.¹

In cell church planting, one cell group is planted. Then as a second cell group leader and interns are trained, a second cell is planted. As more leaders are developed and the cells grow in size, each cell multiplies. The result is a multi-cell church. Dr. Ralph Neighbour is one of the influential teachers in the cell group movement.

The following are some Cell Church Core Values identified by New Life On-Line.²

- Every member is a minister.
- Leaders are called to serve.
- Every cell reproduces itself.
- Nothing competes with cells.
- Cells function as basic church.
- Evangelism flows out of cell life.
- There will be clear accountability.
- Cells worship as the whole church.
- The church can survive persecution.
- Interns are developed at every level.
- Members are both “hearers & doers” of the word.

2. House Churches

In this approach, there is often an itinerant house church planter. The planter gathers two or three families, whose family members covenant together to become a church family that meets in a home. They reach out through their social circles to draw more people into their house church. The on-going leader of the house church is more the “father of the fellowship” than a trained pastor. In fact, the “father of the fellowship” may be a newly-discipled believer.

In time, leaders begin to emerge. Discipleship is promoted within the house church. The itinerant church planter lowers his profile in the more developed house church. This itinerant leader then goes on to form the next nucleus of families into a house church.

From the website of the *Handbook for House Churches* we read:

The house church has presented us with a structure simple and flexible enough to enable continued and unrestrained reproduction. Like a virus, under the right conditions it can replicate itself rapidly and adapt to new conditions. However, it can also turn inward, crystallize, and become an isolated small group of self-centered ‘naval gazers.’ Let us be the guerilla invasion force God has called us to be!³

Unlike the cell church that is meant to be a part of a larger group such as the congregation or the celebration, the house church is intended to be a church in and of itself. The house church planting movement has rapidly become a force around the world for Christ.

3. Seeker Churches

Seeker church planting has its roots in the ministries of two leaders and the churches God established through them in the United States. Pastor Bill Hybels planted and continues to pastor Willow Creek Community Church in the Chicago area. Pastor Rick Warren planted and continues to pastor Saddleback Valley Community Church in Orange County, California.

Bill Hybels and Willow Creek are advocates of the “Seeker Targeted” practice. The weekend services are targeted toward meeting the needs of those who are seeking Christ. It is a place where believers can bring their unbelieving friends to experience the good news of Jesus Christ. A mid-week worship and teaching service is designed to meet the needs of believers.

In order to plant a seeker-targeted church, the new church should begin with a highly-gifted pastor and multiple full time staff from the beginning.

Rick Warren and Saddleback Church teach a “purpose driven” ministry that is more “seeker sensitive” in nature. The weekend worship services benefit both the believer and the unbeliever. It is both a place where the seeker can come to Christ and the believer can be edified. Rick is the author of *The Purpose Driven Church*, which has had great impact around the world. Purpose Driven Ministries is Saddleback’s mission and teaching ministry worldwide.

More seeker-sensitive church plants are being started in North America today than seeker-targeted church plants.

4. Youth Churches

God is doing a great work around the world through young leaders and young people. These young people are part of an emerging culture called post modernism. Wolfgang Fernández writes: “The present understanding of cultural shifts has defined our society as living in a post-modern era. Post-modernity is most simply characterized by a rejection of the hope and expectations that the modern era with all of its technological advances brought to us.”⁴

The truth is that regardless whether young people live in India, Iran or Vietnam, they are all being influenced by the three great unifiers of global culture: movies, music and the Internet.

A great characterization of these times was made by “*The Matrix*,” the hit film of 1999 that has made hundreds of millions in the box office worldwide! The story line reveals a near perfect world where everyone lives a lie. In reality all human life is being used as fuel to provide energy. While everyone thinks that all they see and feel is real, the sinister fact is that “reality” is only the projection of a monstrous computer program.

This outlook on life has revealed a great hunger for a reality that will fill the emptiness uncovered by modernity. In Western nations people are looking everywhere for an experience

that will provide a means to fill that void.

While many strategists in Christian circles repeatedly point to the fact that Europe is the only continent where the church is shrinking, they miss one sector that is hard to account for. The Youth Church, or “Church-into-Emerging-Culture,” has become a phenomenon.

No one knows for sure, but there is an estimate that in just the past five years, hundreds of new churches, of all types have been established into Emerging Culture in England alone.

These “churches” reach people at raves—dance parties that last several hours into the night, on university campuses, or in town centers at pubs and discos.

In Germany, a group called the Jesus Freaks was started in Hamburg and mostly reaches out to punks who, while still wearing their chains and earrings, now speak of the love and power of Jesus to change lives.⁵

In another article, the DAWN-Europe website tells us that “The new emerging Churches are the forerunners of Churches for a New Culture which most likely will be the prevailing culture in the future. This culture is mystical, relational, expressive, holistic. Artistic expression, video, music and the Internet are its media. To communicate to this generation, the Church needs to understand postmodern thinking, learn to express biblical truth in new terms and find structures that appeal to postmodern way of life.”

In youth church planting, you will find coffee houses and concerts. The teaching will be direct and unadorned. Seeking the truth is of high value. Relationships are supreme. Christ is expressed through the arts like dancing, drama, and painting. Reality is of greater value than excellence in presentation.

5. Village Churches

As its name implies, Village Church Planting takes place in villages and in small towns primarily throughout developing nations. An Indian leader, S. Devasagayam Ponraj, tells us how it is done. I (Paul) have paraphrased his process.

The first stage is to find a responsive people group by discerning how interested they are in pre-evangelistic activities like literature distribution and special gatherings.

The second stage is to conduct evening meetings in the village using movies like the Jesus Film, singing and preaching.

The third stage is the gospel presentation. Bible “story telling which includes singing is one of the best methods of Gospel presentation to villagers.” This should be done in the local dialect or language. Testimonies of Christians from nearby villages are powerful.

Stage four is praying for felt needs. “People in India, especially tribals and villagers, believe in supernatural powers. They believe signs and wonders are from gods. Therefore, when they experience God’s power in their lives, healing from their sickness and deliverance from demons, they put their faith in the Gospel message and accept the God of Jesus as their God. It is an encounter in terms of power; a missionary should be prepared to pray for felt needs so that God’s power may be manifested in signs and wonders.”

The church planter should try to help groups of people come to Christ to insure mutual support for individual Christians. “A regular and systematic Bible and leadership training program must be worked out at the level of the new believers” This should be a top priority.⁶

Dr. Jim Montgomery, the founder of DAWN (Discipling a Whole Nation) Ministries

writes on DAWN's website: "Churches multiplying in Third World villages are looking less and less like denominational churches in Western nations. They are more frequently meeting in houses, huts - or even under trees - and the leader is more often a new believer, not a seminary trained pastor.

- This "changing face of the church" is happening in places where there is explosive responsiveness to the gospel.
- In such contexts, there are rapidly multiplying church planting movements.
- New believers, who have been mentored into leadership over a short space of time, rather than trained in a Bible school or seminary often lead these churches.

Montgomery continues:

When I wrote the book *DAWN 2000: 7 Million Churches To Go*, I realized that we would have to have a different definition of pastor. The first question people would ask is "when you're talking about 7 million churches to go worldwide, where are the pastors going to come from?" Well, we can't depend on the seminaries to produce enough pastors through their programs. We have to look to the pool of potential leaders among new converts.

K.P. Yohannan from Gospel for Asia writes that "a great number of churches were planted after our missionaries prayed for someone sick or demon possessed, and the Lord answered and set them free just like in the book of Acts. What does it take for a native missionary to be able to plant a church in an unreached, hostile village? It takes his willingness to lay down his life, if necessary; the conviction that the Bible is to live by; and a faith that touches God."⁷

WHO IS DOING THE PLANTING?

Church planting begins by someone's initiative. God speaks to a leader, or a group of leaders, and the project begins. In this section we'll try to summarize six approaches to the beginning of a new church, along with the strengths and weaknesses of each one.

1. Planting by a Catalytic Church Planting Couple

This could also be called "starting from scratch."

Tyler and Jennifer sense the leading of the Lord to plant a church in Atlanta, Georgia, USA. Tyler has a conviction that this church should be non-denominational and independent. As they pray both are burdened for Atlanta and believe they are called to establish the church. At their own expense, they pack up all their belongings in Flint, Michigan, and move to a rented condominium in Atlanta. They get part-time jobs and alternate taking care of their two small children. Tyler devotes all of his free time to planting the new church.

One of the advantages of beginning this way is freedom. The church planter is not restricted by denominational dictates or the decisions of other church leaders. He is also free of the traditions and styles of past churches if he, himself, doesn't promote them.

But beginning with a catalytic couple also has some significant weaknesses.

Church planting can be a very lonely business, and there is no built-in fellowship and support for the church planting couple. Some people assume, incorrectly that the church planter and his wife are so strong that they don't need to help them with the ministry or care for them as a family.

And while it's true that the catalytic couple do need to be rugged pioneers, they also need friendship and support. One of my (Paul's) great joys in ministry has been to "pastor the planters." I have cared for many church planting couples and their families. I have great love and respect for them, but I know that they are also very needy people.

During the planting of new churches, Satan will attack church planting couples. They will need special support. Who is going to care for the church planting couple as they start a new church? The catalytic couple must find their own friends and care-givers on the field.

One of my dreams for the church planters of the world is that every one of them would have a trained mentor available to pastor them.

Another weakness is a lack of resource-providers. The church planter must be a resource gatherer. He needs money to support his family and for the needs of the project. Since church planting involves so many needs, the catalytic planter must be especially creative to find help for his project. He'll need to consider family, friends, a ministry support team, and discovering resources in the target community.

The catalytic couple also lack guidance and accountability. In an independent church plant, the planter may be making all the decisions without consulting other mature Christian leaders. The evil one can influence the church planter into making fatal errors, errors that could cause the death of the church plant or lead the pastor into false doctrine or cultic behavior. The Word of God says, "For lack of guidance a nation falls, but many advisors make victory sure" (Prov. 11:14).

Planting a new church with only a catalytic church planting couple requires even greater faith and spiritual toughness than other practices. The church planter and his wife must be very creative in developing fellowship, support, guidance and accountability.

2. Planting with a Team

One experienced church planter was called to establish a church in Milan, Italy. He knew it would take a special kind of church to reach the people of Milan, with all its sophistication, style-consciousness and wealth. The church planter knew that he would need other full-time workers to complement the gifts he and his wife had. So he recruited couples from his own relationships who were strong in worship, administration and small groups. All four couples came to DCPI for church planting training.

There are several advantages to planting a church with a team. The baby church will have a multiple staff from the beginning. This will certainly help when people look for a church that can meet the needs of the entire family. When the new church starts with a number

of trained ministry couples who have different specialties the chances of attracting and keeping new people increase.

Planting with a team can provide friendship and support for the team members. One planter's wife spoke affectionately of the couples on her husband's team, "Through all the 'ups' and 'downs' of the early phases of the church plant, we have been there for each other." During weekly meetings of the team, they cared for one another and prayed for one another's needs. This served to strengthen each member of the team and bond the team together.

If the team shares the same goals, they can make a greater impact in the community than a single church planting couple. If they share the same philosophy of ministry, together they can protect the new church from false doctrine and incorrect expectations that people newly attracted to the church will tend to bring in.

But there are several potential disadvantages to planting with a team.

The team may not actually be formed. One young pastor and his wife moved to a new city to plant a church. They had been praying and planning for two years with a team couple. When the time came for the second couple to move to the field, they decided to stay where they were. Initially, this decision was devastating for the young pastor and his wife.

The team may not be able to work together. Planting with a team is good if you have the right team. But when you get on the field, you may discover personality problems or a lack of submission between team members. Or you may find that a member of the team is not competent to perform the specialized ministry that he or she was assigned. The lead planter will need to calmly guide the team through these problems.

Sometimes a team may still lack resource-providers. Team members should be encouraged to begin tithing to the new church as soon as possible. But the lead planter will have to look beyond his team for resources.

A lack of guidance and accountability may still be present in a team. Though they will tend to guide and hold one another accountable, the lead pastor will still need more accountability than they can offer. Often no one on a church planting team has experience in planting a new church, including the pastor. Finding a church planting mentor will have to be high on the pastor's priority list for needed guidance.

3. Planting from a Mother Church

A mother church can be a highly effective for starting healthy new "daughter" churches around the world. We will look at one example from India and another from the United States.

The Rev. Dr. P. Paramanandam is the pastor of Calvary Baptist Church in Chennai (or Madras), India. This one church has planted more than 60 daughter churches throughout the city. Dr. Paramanandam and his team travel to a place in the city, and begin to play instruments and sing to gather a crowd. Then Christ is preached and people are asked to make a decision. The people who come to Christ form the core group for a daughter church.

Almost twenty years ago, Eastside Christian Church in Indianapolis, Indiana, USA, had a vision to plant 20 churches in 20 years. As of this writing, it looks as if Eastside will exceed their goal—by planting 23 churches in 20 years! Rev. Jim Penhollow serves as their Pastor of Church Planting. Eastside began by establishing daughter churches close to home in the Indianapolis area. Then they were challenged to partner with other churches and associations to

daughter new churches in other states and countries. Under Rev. Penhollow's leadership they have established daughter churches in New Hampshire, New York, Minnesota, Colorado, Texas and England.

Planting a daughter church from a mother church provides real benefits for all concerned. If the mother church is healthy and growing there is greater likelihood for a healthy, growing daughter church. And the daughter church may very well inherit some of the mother's ministry strengths—a strong evangelism program, for example.

Another benefit: the mother church may be able to supply people, money, prayer, and equipment. The pastor of the mother church can motivate some of his people to become part of the new church, and can give the church planter the freedom to recruit a nucleus for his core group. If the mother church is able to put the planter on staff and on salary, it can alleviate a great deal of the stress of fundraising. Mother churches often provide money for start-up costs, facility rental, and needed equipment.

The mother church can also provide a place for the baby church to worship. One of the most common and heaviest pressures upon the church planter from the people in the nucleus of the new church is to meet prematurely on Sunday morning. Just weeks after the church planter is on the field, he may begin hearing comments like: "I just can't wait to worship together on Sunday morning," "When can we start having Sunday morning services?" "If there are only ten of us on Sunday morning, that is just fine."

Starting Sunday morning worship too early in the development of the new church has been one of the leading killers of new churches. Just like a baby needs nine months in the womb for a healthy birth, a new church should be full-term with a sizeable nucleus before it goes public. And yet, the core people have a valid need to worship. What to do?

The mother church can provide a solution by: (1) allowing the nucleus to worship at the mother church until the baby church is ready for a public worship service or (2) giving the daughter church nucleus space to worship in another room at the mother church. In either case, the needs of the core people to worship can be met without compromising the birth dynamic of the baby church.

Planting from a mother church also has built-in support and accountability for the church planter. Often the mother church already has an accountability structure in place, called a "church planting task force." The task force is usually composed of the church planter, the pastor of the mother church, leaders from the mother church, and leaders from the nucleus being sent out. The church planter is accountable for his ministry to either the mother church pastor or this task force. The task force is responsible for supporting the church planter, giving wise counsel, and meeting the needs of the baby church.

The mother church also benefits. Many mother church pastors testify that their churches were not hurt in attendance and giving by the birthing of a daughter church, and often they even grew in both while planting!

Jack Dennison cites a study done in England, comparing congregations that gave birth with those that didn't. "... the 55 congregations that had given birth to new church in the previous four years had grown an average of 31.5%, while non-planting churches grew at an average rate of 19.6%."⁸ The Lord blesses the obedience of the mother church in giving birth to another fellowship that will extend the Kingdom of God.

Planting from a mother church has potential concerns, though. Some who have

left the mother church to join the daughter may return after a few months. The initial nucleus people often expect the daughter church to be just like the mother church, an unrealistic expectation. The mother church is usually much larger and offers a variety of ministries. The two pastors are different in their approach to ministry and preaching. As the nucleus is forming within the mother church, both pastors should explain to the members of the nucleus the differences between the two churches. Just as a human daughter will not be “just like mother,” the daughter church will be unique.

Another potential problem is that core people in the daughter church may continue to serve in the mother church. One mother church helped to plant a daughter church in a community about fifteen miles away. Some in the nucleus were very involved in the children’s program in the mother church. Months after the daughter church was born, these people would be driving to the mother church to help in the children’s program. This contributed to a leadership and ministry shortage in the daughter church. When the nucleus is formed, the leadership of the mother church must strongly encourage them to pour their time, talent and treasure into the daughter church and cease their ministry with the mother church.

For comprehensive help in planting daughter churches, *The Dynamic Daughter Church Planting Handbook* is available from DCPI.

4. Planting with an Association

Planting a new church with the support of an association or denomination can be a real strength. Three of the four churches that the Lord planted through my (Paul’s) ministry were under the auspices of an association. The fourth, and most difficult church plant, was without any associational or denominational relationship. Here are some of the advantages of planting a new church with an association or denomination.

The church planter has supportive relationships with pastors and churches of like faith. In my fourth church plant, I felt alone and lonely. Though I knew other Christian pastors, we didn’t share the same common bond that I’d enjoyed with pastors in my previous association. Most associations of churches provide encouragement for the planter and his wife through local, state and national gatherings.

Often an association has staff who are available to help planters. One association had a General Director who really “pastored his pastors.” If they were experiencing either a personal or church problem, they received help from him. The Associate Director was an expert in finance, a licensed financial planner who provided valuable counsel to many church planting couples. Associations sponsor helpful seminars and provide many services to their constituent churches and pastors.

Sometimes associations may have a Director of Church Planting on staff to encourage and equip the Association’s church planters. It’s good to have someone who has planted churches on your team when church planting. Each of us needs to be accountable to someone who truly cares about us and is proficient in the ministry in which we are involved.

Another “plus” in planting through an association is financial resources. Personal support for the church planter’s family is necessary. The Association may offer training in support raising and may provide a network of churches and individuals who are committed to the association’s mission. In my second church plant, the association’s development fund purchased

land on a main street in the target community just before I began to gather the nucleus of the church. Later, the church was able to purchase that land at a very reasonable price. Financing was also available from the same development fund for the first phase of the church building.

Another advantage is that the association may help network people to your church plant. In that second church plant, the association helped me find two couples who deeply desired to start a new church. As the word spread through our brotherhood, I began to get referrals from many pastors and churches. The nucleus of this new church grew dramatically through networking.

But there are some potential liabilities with associational church planting. Denominations and associations may be either restrictive or supportive, so it is wise for the church planter to discover all of the association's expectations up front. It's naive to assume that an association is going to finance and nurture a church plant without expectations.

Does the association require a percentage of the missions budget after the new church is viable? Are there denominational distinctions that the association expects the new church to uphold? Is the financial support on a descending scale?⁹ Will the church planter and his church be expected to attend certain meetings of the association? Some associations will have reasonable expectations that benefit both the church planter and the association, but other groups may be quite restrictive. If a church planter cannot in good faith agree to the expectations of the association, then it is ethically wrong for him to accept the association's help in planting the church.

A potential conflict with pastors in or near the same community always exists. The pastors of churches within the same association are usually the most sensitive about a new church entering "their territory." If their churches are struggling in attendance and offerings, they may feel threatened by a new church.

The church planter will do well to pray for acceptance and then personally to approach area pastors, especially those in the same association, early in the planning phase. Let them learn privately of the project from the church planter before it begins and they will be more supportive. If they are hurt, frustrated, or combative, hear them out patiently and lovingly. Do not, however, be deflected from the community to which the Lord has called you because of an angry pastor.

5. Church Planting Through Multiple Relationships

One young church planting couple chose to plant a church with multiple relationships in Huntington Beach, California, USA. They were members of a large mother church that called them to plant a daughter church. They asked permission of the mother church to recruit twelve hand-picked couples to go with them. The church planting couple then applied to the mother church's association for appointment as church planters. Once that was granted, a Task Force was formed with members from the mother church, the association and leaders within the core of the new church. After months of planning and preparing, the church was born with 226 people in attendance on its first Sunday. After a month, the church's attendance had leveled off to the 160's – very respectable for the culture.

Planting a church with multiple relationships may multiply the strengths of other approaches: like built-in support, accountability and resource-providers. The benefit of a

multiple staff and increased ministry capability from the beginning may come with a team or nucleus. A mother church can offer a place for the baby church to grow and develop in the womb. The association may give the new pastor expertise in church-planting and in other critical areas. Both the mother church and the association can network people for the new church.

But one of the potential pitfalls in planting with multiple relationships is that accountability may not be clear. The church planter may have too many bosses, and wonder to whom he is really accountable.

A task force is a must when the multiple relationships are involved. Represented on that Task Force should be the Church planter, the Pastor of the mother church, the Director of Church planting from the Association, leaders from the mother church, and leaders from the nucleus of the daughter church.

Try to keep this task force to no more than eight people. It is often a good idea to have the Pastor of the mother church be the chairman of the task force. The church planter could be accountable to either the pastor of the mother church or the Director of Church Planting. Most church planters and task forces need to be coached in how to relate to one another. There must be a balance of freedom to function on the church planter's part with shared decision making on the part of the task force. Certainly no large policy, program, or financial decision should be made by the church planter alone. Remember the first rule of committees—do not surprise committee members!

6. Planting with Cross-Cultural Partnerships

This approach is both an effective way to plant a church as well as a strong witness to the gospel's power to overcome barriers between people groups.

These partnerships may take several forms. One common one in the United States is the sharing of facilities. For example, one evangelical church in Montebello, California, was a large growing congregation in the early 1970's. They had constructed a massive church complex, but in the 1980's, white people were moving out of the area.

More and more Hispanics were moving into the area, so the church decided to start a Spanish-speaking Sunday School class. Then the church started a Spanish-speaking worship service, led by a Spanish-speaking pastor.

In time the church building ended up the Hispanic congregation, the Anglo church, and a Filipino church. The Anglo mother started an Hispanic church nearby, this time for English-speakers, and began to plan for a Chinese church plant. Certainly this honors Christ's commission to reach "all the nations" (literally, "all people groups") in Matthew 28.

Another exciting variation of this cross-cultural partnership is the planting of deliberately multi-ethnic churches. The goal is for people from the different ethnic groups represented in the community to become members in the same church.

Antioch Bible Church of Redmond, Washington, USA, is a great example of this kind of church. The pastor, Rev. Ken Hutcherson, is an African-American, and the associate pastor is white. The leadership of the church and the membership of the church is multi-ethnic and the church has grown to about 2000 people. This is one church in a growing movement of multi-ethnic, multi-generational churches.

This kind of church planting makes a wonderful difference for the Kingdom. In the past many churches in changing communities have preferred to disband, rather than adapt to meet the needs of different ethnic groups. But cross-cultural partnerships honor the Lord and reach the developing ethnic mosaic with His love.

Both the mother or partner church and its ethnic daughter benefit from cross-cultural cooperation and fellowship.

At the same time, there are real challenges in cross-cultural partnerships. When facilities are shared, issues of control and conflict may emerge. Who is going to use the facility at what time?

And how will the partnership be configured? As two separate churches, or one multi-cultural church? If separate churches, will the daughter pay rent on shared facilities? Will there be shared or separate budgets?

Will major decisions be made by the daughter church's leadership or will they be made by the mother church's leadership board?

Who will communicate and mediate concerns and problems between the two ministries? How can you encourage people in both churches to understand and love one another? How can you handle cultural differences? What relationship will the pastors have with one another?

Cross-cultural partnerships have great potential to showcase God's reconciling love, but they should not be undertaken without much prayer and the wisdom of experienced leaders.

HOW ARE WE PLANTING?

The "how" of church planting is answered in at least two ways around the world.

1. Momentum Building. Sometimes called the "launch" or "birth" approach, Momentum Building attempts to develop a substantial core group of trained workers *before* the church actually offers public ministry. The Core Team promotes the "launch" with as much publicity as possible, to draw a large crowd for the first public service.

The planter and his team (if he has one) work very hard to recruit and train a group of volunteer workers so that they can offer as large and varied a ministry as possible after the church is "born." Thus the ministry of the developing church *before* its launch (or birth) is very distinct from the ministry *after* the launch.

Just as a human baby develops for nine months prior to its birth, so the baby church grows in its "prenatal" stage for many months before the "birth" takes place. The rationale for this approach is to start the church with as large and well developed a ministry as possible, so that as many people in a community may be reached for Christ.

The challenge is that Momentum Building requires a substantial investment of money, time, and personnel. It also demands a highly gifted church planter, preferably someone who can devote his full time and efforts to building the church.

Of course there are nations and communities whose culture or political climate is so closed or hostile to the church that this highly public approach simply is not appropriate.

2. Gradual Progression. This approach sees the growth and development of the new church as a continuous stream, with no definitive point of launch or birth. Building momentum toward a launch is either not possible or not valued.

The church may begin, in a home, cell, or rented hall, almost immediately. Simple worship and Bible teaching may be all the ministry possible or desired. In time other ministries, like Bible school, discipleship, leadership training, and evangelism may be added in time.

Gradual Progression has the advantage of removing time-pressure. It also allows a part-time pastor or lay elder to carry on the ministry. And it may be that Gradual Progression is the only viable option in a politically hostile environment.

The danger is that people who might have been reached for Christ by a larger, better-developed, and highly visible ministry may not be touched by the new church that is slowly and gradually progressing. In fact at DCPI we have frequently seen the dream of a new church never materialize because the church planter thought he could “gradually progress” rather than “building momentum” for a birth.

But however you answer the question, “*How* are we planting this church?” if you do so prayerfully and humbly under the leadership of the Lord of the Church, God will bring blessing. He will enable His church to develop and grow according to His design, to spread His fame among the nations and to lead precious people to Himself.

Notes

¹ <<http://www.fcbc.org.sg/index.htm>> (August 2001)

² <<http://www.newlife.ndirect.co.uk>> (August 2001)

³ <<http://www.fcpt.org/booklets/handbook.htm>> (August 2001)

⁴ Wolfgang Fernandez, “Reaching the Emerging Global Culture...Today’s Opportunity” <<http://www.dawnministries.org/regions/europe/europe.html>> (August 2001).

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Excerpted and paraphrased from S. Devansagayam Ponraj, *Church Planting Approach to Mission* (Tamil Nadu, India: Bethel Bible Institute, 1987).

⁷ K. P. Yohannan, <<http://www.gfa.org/>> (August 2001)

⁸ Jack Dennison, *City Reaching: On the Road to Community Transformation* (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 1999), p. 144.

⁹ A “descending scale” means that periodically the subsidy from the association will be reduced.

Chapter 8

Avoiding Church Planting Landmines

One of the tragic legacies of war on our planet is the ongoing lethal presence of landmines. Innocent people all over the world are killed or maimed by these terrible engines of destruction. Because landmines are concealed, they wait in stealthy silence for someone to wander off the path, to take a single misstep, and then they explode with horrific consequences.

We have chosen to use the term “landmine” to describe the deadly potential that exists if church planters wander off a path of Scriptural principles and proven wisdom. We would never trivialize the tragedy of the minefields that have wreaked such havoc in the lives of so many people. We do wish to illustrate how truly dangerous are the mistakes a church planter may make. These “landmines” wound the church planter and his family, and sometimes make ongoing ministry difficult or even impossible. They can explode with such force as to cripple or even destroy a church planting project.

Avoiding landmines, then, is serious business. And while this list is not exhaustive, it represents lessons learned the hard way, through the pain of triggered explosions on the church planting journey. Knowing what to look for may prevent unnecessary tragedy.

May the Lord give you extra grace to sidestep all the landmines and to walk confidently in the assurance of God’s call and guidance.

1. Trying to plant without being called by God.

Church planting is a romantic notion, especially for pastors who may be frustrated with established churches that seem tradition-bound, locked into the past, and ineffective at reaching the lost.

But frustration alone is not enough of a reason to plant a church. Even the desire to reach people for Christ and to disciple them into spiritual maturity is not enough.

God must call a leader to become a church planter. Attempting to plant a church without God’s call may very well bring a terrible “explosion.” Even if the prospective planter follows carefully all the recommended steps, without God’s call the church will not be established successfully. *“Unless the Lord builds the house, its builders labor in vain”* (Psalm 127:1).

The key to avoiding this “landmine” is to make sure of God’s call on your life. Chapter 3 of this book can help you discern God’s calling.

2. Trying to plant without being a church planter.

This second landmine is really an extension of the first. To plant a church successfully, a

leader must have both the call of God and the character, personality, and skills of a church planter. (This landmine is a danger for the church planter of a “launch” church plant, and for the apostolic or regional leadership of cell and house churches.)

The skills and personality necessary to plant a church are not necessarily the same as those needed to serve as the pastor of a church. The more we study church planting, the more we learn about what kind of leader it takes to be an effective church planter. Chapter 17 summarizes our best information so far. While any church plant is a miracle of God’s power, it is also true that the Lord tends to use leaders with certain gifts, personality traits, skills, and abilities.

While it’s difficult for a leader to assess himself with much accuracy, here are some of the questions a prospective church planter must answer:

- Are you a visionary?
- Do you take the initiative?
- Have you started other ministries, groups, or businesses?
- Do you relate well to the unchurched?
- If you’re married, is your spouse entirely supportive of your vision?
- Do you both persevere?
- Are you flexible and adaptable?
- Are you resilient?
- Do you have a gift for gathering people?
- Do you work hard?

One of the ways to avoid this landmine is to receive the suggestions and feedback of others. Before undertaking church planting, we strongly recommend an assessment from other church planting leaders who can confirm your call to church planting and bear witness that you have the character, personality, and skills necessary to plant a church.¹

3. Wrong Location.²

Paul and his companions traveled throughout the region of Phrygia and Galatia, having been kept by the Holy Spirit from preaching the word in the province of Asia. When they came to the border of Mysia, they tried to enter Bithynia, but the Spirit of Jesus would not allow them to. So they passed by Mysia and went down to Troas (Acts 16:6 – 8).

Twice in the same church planting journey, the Holy Spirit prevented the Apostle Paul’s church planting team from starting a church in the community they had selected.

The Lord of church planting has a plan for each new church, including where it should be planted. Though every community needs the gospel, not every one is best from the point of view of divine strategy. Planting in the wrong location is a terrible landmine. If detonated, it is almost guaranteed to bring the church planting project to a halt.

So what are some warning signs in selecting a location for the new church?

- *A community too small to support a new work.* What is “too small” will vary from culture to culture, but you should at least ask yourself three questions:
 - (1) What percentage of the population is likely to attend this new church?

Base your answer on demographic research of communities that are similar in size and culture. (2) How large would that make the church? (3) Would that represent a congregation large enough for viable ministry?

- *Multiple other church plants already in place.* If too many churches are planted in the same community in roughly the same time frame, it is likely only one of them will emerge as a healthy and viable new church.
- *The presence of a single church that looks exactly like what you are seeking to plant.* If the kind of church you feel called to plant is already represented in the community, you should pray about whether your new church would be redundant.
- *The presence of a large dominant church or churches nearby.* Particularly in North America, a mega-church in a community may very well inhibit the planting of a new church in its immediate vicinity.
- *No available public facility.* In some urban or suburban settings, finding a proper facility in which to hold beginning worship services is next to impossible.

4. Premature birth and lack of core group development

This landmine applies mainly to “launch” church plants. It is very dangerous because it is camouflaged in the enthusiasm and excitement of a new church’s core group. Most core groups want to start the new church before it is ready! They see what God is doing, they anticipate the joy of a new congregation worshipping together, and they begin to urge their church planting leader to start—immediately!

But new churches are like babies. They should come to full term in the “womb” before they are born. An infant born prematurely at five months has a much smaller chance of healthy survival than one born full-term at nine months. One of the most common killers of new churches is premature birth.

The church planter must have a good understanding of when the church is ready to go public. Gathering a core group and training them to provide those ministries in the new church will take months.

How large should the core group be? Large enough to enable the church to offer the range of ministries that will best serve the community. It is a mistake simply to “open the doors” with only a preaching and worship service, since church life depends upon evangelism, discipleship, small groups, Christian education, training of young people, and a host of other services.

New churches usually need substantial time in the pre-natal phase before they can experience a dynamic and healthy birth. Planning and executing an effective, God-honoring outreach strategy takes months.

Those in the core group need to be patiently taught the importance of waiting until the church is ready to be “born.” But their enthusiasm to meet together in worship can be satisfied without jeopardizing the birth of the church. For example, they might attend worship services together at a mother church. A mid-week gathering is another option.

Many new congregations have instituted “preview services” once a month for several months prior to the actual birth of the church. Preview services can help build momentum as well as giving the core group the experience of worship, teaching, and ministry together.

5. Rushing people into influential leadership.

Most church planters have a “horror story” to tell here. It is one of the most common landmines to encounter. New churches inevitably face a leadership crisis: so much to do, so many ministries to staff, but the core group consists of only a handful of unproven people.

Too often the path chosen by the church planter is to quickly recruit a little-known person for an influential leadership position. The pastor hopes all will go well. It usually doesn't.

The problem in recruiting leaders hinges on this key phrase: “little-known person.” It is almost always a mistake to place a person in a position of influential leadership whom you haven't had time to observe. Divisive people who are dissatisfied with past church experiences are often attracted to new churches. It takes time to spot them. If you place a divisive leader on a steering committee, for example, the explosion could be disastrous—a church split or a pastor who gets fired. That could be you.

While everyone needs a second chance, past behavior is the best indicator of future performance. Don't expect a person who has been critical and divisive in his past church automatically to change in the new church.

Even if the person isn't divisive, tapping them for leadership too quickly is still a mistake. You need time to discern their spiritual gifts and passion so you can point them to the ministry most appropriate for them. If you place a little-known person in the wrong ministry, you are doing them a disservice. If the ministry is not a good fit for them, they may end up dissatisfied and ineffective.

How do you find the right leaders for the right ministries?

First, watch potential leaders for a period of time. This is one of the benefits of many months spent in core development before the church is birthed. Look for spiritual maturity, the right attitude, unity, service, and giftedness during this time.

Second, thoroughly check the references and former church relationships of potential key leaders and staff people. This will help you know whether you want to consider a potential leader for a position. It will also enable you to know how you can best strengthen that leader for a task.

Third, evaluate the giftedness, personality, abilities, and temperament of those committed to the church. You may want to do this during a Member Orientation Class. A Ministry Placement Leader can then meet with potential leaders and help them find a ministry that is personally appropriate, fulfilling, and productive.

6. Poor planning

Most church planters are not gifted administrators. They tend to be visionaries who focus on the big picture.

At DCPI we tell a story about a pastor who had a dream to plant a church. Paul Becker met with the man, who told him enthusiastically, “We're starting from scratch. It's just my wife and I. But I believe that three months from now, we'll start with 500 attending the Birth Service.”

Paul asked, “Where is your plan?”

He said, “It's all up here,” pointing to his head.

“When it’s down here,” Paul said, pointing to a piece of paper, “let’s talk.”

This same man struggled fruitlessly for over a year to establish a church and finally gave up.

Poor planning is a landmine that can blow up in your face, crippling the healthy birth and growth of your new church. If you don’t attend to the details, your overall impact will be blunted. One church planter planned to mail thousands of invitations to his church’s first service. But he didn’t plan well, and the invitations arrived in the mail the week *after* the opening Sunday!

A TimeLine is a planning tool that allows you to determine the action steps that need to be accomplished at the right time if the church is going to be planted successfully. A TaskList is a summary of the action steps you need to take in your church plant. Section Five, “Prayerful Planning” will help you to determine that TaskList.

Then you can plot those steps on your TimeLine. (The Appendix has a sample TimeLine you can fill out for your new church.) When you have completed your TimeLine, post it prominently in your office or home so you’ll continue to follow it. This will enable you to complete the necessary ministry tasks at the right time, and you’ll be ready when your Birth Sunday arrives.

Since most church planters are not great administrators, it will be probably be helpful (maybe even essential) for you to find an able administrator as part of your team of leaders, someone with the gifts, skills, and character to oversee the details.

7. Spiritual Oppression

The goal of church planting is to extend the kingdom of God into territory previously occupied by the enemy. Establishing a dynamic new church is the means by which people are rescued from the dominion of darkness and brought into the kingdom of God’s beloved Son (Col. 1:13). Church planting is nothing less than an assault on the gates of hell.

Church planting’s greatest challenge is not materialism, government oppression, community apathy, or any of the other psychological or sociological barriers we encounter. Ephesians 6:12 reminds us that “our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.” We face real opposition from the evil one and his forces.

The level of spiritual oppression seems to vary in intensity from area to area. Some communities are blessedly open to the gospel, and many people are ready to become Christians. Other areas seem dark by contrast, oppressed and closed, and resistance to the gospel is high.

For example, we know of one community where three churches were planted during a two-year period. God blessed all three, and each experienced steady growth. In another region a few hundred miles away, all the new churches were small, struggling, and under obvious spiritual attack.

It is important to discern the spiritual climate of the community before you go. Community surveys, interviews among church and community leaders, and prayer walks (or drives) through the community can help evaluate the level of openness or oppression.³

If the Lord is calling you to a community that is oppressed, go. Realize, however, that

the work may be slower and more difficult than in other areas. Practice the Apostle Paul's teaching in Ephesians 6:10,11: "... be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes."

Make sure you have a team of intercessors committed to pray for you and your family. Especially ask God to raise up some on that team who are experienced in spiritual warfare, and who will pray fervently and intelligently. You may want to gather the other pastors in the area to fast and pray for God to defeat the enemy, end the oppression and open the community to Christ.

8. Lack of supervision, support and accountability

Church planters tend to be independent, catalytic, and self-assured. They don't like the idea of being supervised or of being accountable, and often they don't feel the need for much support. But every church planter desperately needs all three: supervision, support, and accountability. Without supervision the project may flounder, or the church planter may wander into problems an experienced supervisor could have prevented. Without support even the most intrepid church planter may become discouraged or overwhelmed. Without accountability the church planter may fall prey to temptation of various kinds.

One experienced planter pioneered three churches successfully. In each of these three, he was accountable to a supervisor and supported by an association of churches.

In his fourth church plant, he had no supervision or support, and his accountability to his denomination was not clearly defined. He started public services too soon with a core group that wasn't reaching the community. Within a year, the church closed.

So this landmine can prove dangerous even for veteran church planters. Those who are planting their first church are especially vulnerable.

In order to avoid this landmine, we have three suggestions. First, get a mentor. Every church planter needs and deserves a mentor.

Second, form a steering committee for your new church. The initial leadership structure of the new congregation is best drawn from experienced church leaders who are *outside* the core group and not directly part of the plant.⁴

Finally, develop an accountability relationship with one or two other friends. Your accountability should be based upon mutual respect and trust, confidentiality, and upon Scriptural standards of purity in word, thought, and deed. An agreed-upon list of questions concerning personal holiness can help guide your regular meetings together.

9. Insufficient outreach

The Lord is the one who draws people into His family. The birth of a new church is always a miracle.

But God also uses the prayerful, visionary planning and effort of His people to prepare for the start of a new church. And as He energizes those plans and efforts, there is usually widespread community interest and involvement. Certainly this was true in the day of Pentecost, when the whole city of Jerusalem was electrified by the dynamic birth of the first church. Wide-

spread public awareness of the new church continued to characterize its ministry.

. . . enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved (Acts 2:47, emphasis added).

Everybody living in Jerusalem knows . . . (Acts 4:16b, emphasis added).

Sadly, one of the landmines that damages some church planting projects is a failure by the planter and core group to work hard at reaching out to the community. How sad it is when a church is birthed and only a handful of people are aware. The growth of a baby church can be permanently stunted by failure to give sufficient attention to outreach in the early months and years.

It is true that some repressive or hostile governments around the world restrict the amount of overt publicity that can be done. In these extraordinary circumstances, God's church is planted as an underground movement. To do otherwise is to risk prison or martyrdom!

But in many places the church planter and his core group have the freedom to pray, plan, publicize, and promote the coming of a new church. Their goal should be that everyone in the community will know that a new church is being born on Birth Sunday.

The most common failure in this area is to rely upon only one or two means to publicize the new church. We suggest using multiple strategies: everything from word of mouth to flyers to posters and billboards. In industrialized countries, telemarketing, direct mail, and electronic media should be included.

10. Unrealistic expectations

Church planters often have unrealistic expectations of themselves and the churches they plant. They may try to set goals by the standard of someone else's church plant. Faith can sometimes be confused with presumption or wishful thinking. A church planter may have such a burning desire for a large, dynamic church that he will imagine that God has granted him certain numerical goals for the start of the new church. If attendance doesn't measure up, both the pastor and his people may feel they have failed. Instead of rejoicing in what God did, Birth Sunday may become a depressing experience.

Planting churches is a lot like raising children. Every child is unique. Each one has its own growth rate, and every child grows to a different size and shape. But parents love each one for who they are. Comparison with other children is unwise and unhealthy.

If the church planter and core group were obedient and faithful to the vision God gave them, if they prayed and planned well, if they worked hard at evangelism and discipleship, they should rejoice at what God does!

Whether 40 people came, or 400, or 4000, God was worshiped, the Bible was taught, and the love of Christ became real in a new church.

Let God set the expectations: it is His church.⁵

11. Lost focus on evangelism and discipleship

This subtle landmine often appears in the first year after the church was birthed. Somehow the church forgets why it was started in the first place: to bring lost people to faith in Christ and then on to maturity in Him.

At first the people will be praying for their friends, talking with them about Christ and the church, and bringing them to services. New people are invited for a meal and into small groups. And many people will be coming to Christ.

But after a few months people begin to socialize among themselves and guests find themselves standing alone. Fewer people will be making decisions for Christ. Complaints may even begin to surface that “There is too much emphasis on evangelism in this church.”

It is true that evangelism must always be balanced with discipleship. A church planter who spends all of his time and energy on evangelism and neglects the feeding of the flock will find his ministry counterproductive. He may see people saved only to have them go on to grow at another church.

But complaints about “too much evangelism” probably betray a lack of commitment to, or a misunderstanding of, the church’s purpose.

That purpose must continue to be taught in a variety of settings in a variety of means: in member orientation classes, small groups, Sunday morning messages, one-to-one discipleship, small groups, music, drama, brochures, and publicity.

The core leadership of the church must be lovingly firm that the new church’s purpose will always be to help people put their trust in Christ, and grow into maturity as His followers.

It is inevitable that some people will leave the church if it holds strongly to its purpose of leading people to Christ and making strong disciples. That’s to be anticipated. Prepare your people for this reality so that they are not surprised when some people leave. And continue to cast vision for evangelism and discipleship.

12. No process of ministry

The “process of ministry” is a summary of how your church makes disciples. It is a concise description of the steps, opportunities, and experiences your new church will offer to help unbelievers find Christ, come to the church, and grow into Christian maturity.

Some church planters don’t have such a plan. And without a plan, you can expect an explosion! You really aren’t ready to “make disciples” if you haven’t prepared the next steps of learning and growth for the new believers in your church.

You should begin by giving some thought to what a mature Christian looks like as you understand maturity from Scripture. Write a list of adjectives you would use. For example, “A mature Christian: is Spirit-filled, tithes, shares his faith, knows the Bible, loves others, has given up old patterns of sin, loves his wife and children, and has a ministry.”

This becomes a statement of your “goal”—what God wants to do in the lives of the unsaved people you’ll reach.

From this goal will come your plan. Your initial process of ministry may be very simple. It might sketch a few programs for evangelism, a small group for new believers, a membership

class, and a series of one-to-one discipleship lessons for ongoing growth.

Over time the Lord will change, refine, and add to your original plan. But the important thing is to have the beginning process thought out ahead of time.

13. Sin in leadership

The explosive force of this landmine cannot be overestimated. When a church planting leader falls into sin, it is always damaging, and often devastating. Jesus said that when the shepherd is struck, the sheep scatter. When an influential leader within a new church falls into sin, the core of the church is usually shaken. The evil one wants exploit this landmine to weaken or destroy a new church plant.

Temptations to fall into sin abound in new churches. Sexual immorality, abuse of drugs or alcohol, gossip and a critical spirit, repetitive lying—these are all dangers in church planting. More subtle sins like pride and laziness are also great temptations.

What can you do to avoid stepping on this landmine?

- *Make the care of your own soul a top priority.* Intimacy with Christ is the most important relationship for any Christian leader. Purity and holiness are prerequisites for church planting leaders. Your time of prayer and study (and application) of the Bible is your most important time each day. And as you pray, pray for protection from the evil one, just as Jesus taught us: “And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one” (Mt. 6:13).
- *Make sure you have the “prayer covering” of an intercessory team.* Jesus Himself interceded for us while on earth: “My prayer is not that you take them out of the world, but that you protect them from the evil one” (John 17:15) and continues to intercede for us in heaven (Heb. 7:25). And we need the prayers of others if we are to live in holiness and obedience.
- *Avoid situations where you might be tempted.* “Flee the evil desires of youth, and pursue righteousness, faith, love, and peace, along with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart” (2 Tim. 2:22). Run from moral compromise, just as Joseph ran from Potiphar’s wife when she tried to seduce him. For example, pastors should avoid visiting or counseling a woman alone. Delegate that ministry to a woman leader or make sure someone else is present for the appointment.
- *Resist the evil one.* When Jesus was tempted, He quoted Scripture, and so should we. And James counseled, “Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. Come near to God and he will come near to you” (Jas. 4:7, 8).
- *Have an accountability partner or group.* Obviously this means a same-sex friend or friends. You should be committed to one another, to confidentiality, and to moral purity and Scriptural integrity. Learn to ask and answer the important questions about your private life, your thoughts, and relationships. Knowing that someone will be asking if you’ve compromised yourself in a given area can

- help you avoid that compromise!
- *Get counseling.* If you run up against a temptation that is repetitive or compulsive in nature, find a Christian counselor to help you. Make sure he is someone who uses God's word and prays effectively. Seeking help is not shameful. Shame comes from living a lie or denying the impact of temptation.

And remember: “. . . the Lord is faithful, and he will strengthen and protect you from the evil one” (2 Thessalonians 3:3).

14. Missing Your Cultural Target

Most church planters do not have a cross-cultural gift that enables them to plant effectively among people that are culturally distant from them. The “distance” may be defined in many ways: language, ethnicity, socio-economic status, education, and race. Likely it is a combination of several of these. That's why church planters need supernatural guidance and discernment to hit their cultural target—to plant a church among people who are most reachable by them.

To try to start a church among people who are beyond your cultural reach is a landmine, one that can doom a church planter to years of ineffectiveness and frustration. More importantly, it can prevent people from being hearing the gospel in a compelling way in the language and culture of their heart.

Knowing yourself, knowing the people you are most able to reach, and knowing God's unique vision for your church are all essentials in sidestepping this landmine.

Elsewhere in this book we have written in greater detail about discerning your cultural target.⁶ That section will help you avoid the landmine, and keep you on target to reach the people God has called you to reach.

15. Exhausted core group

This landmine becomes dangerous when too few people in the core group are trying to do too much in the ministry.

Each person in your core has another life beyond their involvement at church. Most have jobs, families, interests and hobbies. If they also have three or four responsibilities at church, they can become weary even before the church is started. Exhausted people can become critical, unhappy, or uncommitted. They may feel their only option is to drop out of the new church completely.

That's another reason why it is so dangerous to begin the church prematurely. Recruit and train enough people so that no one bears too heavy a load in the new church.

Of course starting a new church is hard work. As people come in to the core group, they will need to be discipled and trained for their ministry. And they will be taught, challenged, and encouraged that planting the church is a huge task! They will need extra grace, added commitment, and heightened determination.

But the church planting leader must protect his leaders and workers from exhaustion.

This might mean delaying the start of the church's launch a few months until more people can be trained for ministry. This might mean always having an apprentice or two in every class to continue to train replacements and backups.

It might mean insisting on two teams of workers for high-stress ministry: like children's work or facilities set-up.

It might mean spelling out ahead of time the duration of each leader's and worker's term of ministry. After six months or a year, they would be interviewed and given the opportunity to take time off. (This also has the advantage of allowing the church planter to gently remove or replace, without a painful confrontation, a worker who is in the wrong spot.)

16. Exhausted church planting couple

Sometimes a church planting couple can become so wounded and weary by the struggles of church planting that they are in danger of falling into deeper problems. Their marriage may be strained. Their ability to lead can be seriously jeopardized.

Usually it will take a mentor or supervisor to spot this landmine. The couple themselves are often too close to the problem to ask for help. Intervention by a godly mentor or denominational leader can save the couple and the church plant.

Recognized early enough, the church planting leader and his family may simply need time off. Maybe the church planter needs to go on a prayer retreat, or to find healing and rest at a Christian camp. Perhaps the mentor will recommend the church planter's wife take a break from her ministry and travel to visit relatives.

In the most extreme cases, a mentor or denominational leader may have to recommend removing the couple from the church plant. If they are too exhausted and too hurt to recover in the ministry, the best course may be to ask them to leave the project, and to care for them, provide counsel and help, and in time restore them to ministry, if that is appropriate.

17. Critical spirit

Criticism and negativity is a danger for any church, and is particularly harmful to a new church. A critical spirit can stifle creativity, drive away new people, and quench the Holy Spirit.

After a critical, negative spirit is released in a church, it is very hard to root it out. It's far easier to avoid the landmine in the first place than to recover from it.

So what can you do to sidestep this danger?

- Pray for a core group of faithful, loyal, positive people. The Lord can sovereignly protect us by sending us the right kind of people from the beginning.
- Set the tone by being a positive person of faith yourself. Model the grace of God in your own interactions to people, including your own family.
- Have a process for joining the core group, and later for joining the church, which deals with this issue head on. One church planter requires anyone who joins his church to read or listen to an audiotape of a sermon he preached on the danger of

- gossip in the church.
- Follow the Biblical pattern of dealing with sin set up by Jesus in Mt. 18, and stick to it. Treat a critical spirit promptly and seriously.

18. A Toxic Steering Committee

The right kind of governing board or committee can be extremely helpful to the church planter. These leaders provide wisdom and counsel, encouragement, ideas, and resources. When tough decisions must be made, the church planter relies upon them for wisdom. They help protect him from acting precipitously or from shying away from Scriptural responsibilities.

Knowing there is a wise, experienced leadership team can be a comfort to the core group (and later the new congregation), since they know their pastor is accountable, supported, and supervised.

DCPI recommends the first governing board of the new church be an outside group of leaders called a “steering committee.” This allows the time to develop leaders from within the new church, without rushing untested, immature people into leadership (see #5).

But you still have to be very careful who ends up on that committee. Just as the right steering committee can be a godsend, so the wrong committee can be the equivalent of stepping on a landmine. The wrong person, with the wrong attitude, can make the steering committee very “toxic.” Instead of being supportive of the church planter and seeking what’s best for the church plant, the steering committee could become the greatest liability of the new church.

In general we recommend you look for steering committee members who:

1. Are elder-quality people (according to 1 Tim. 3, Titus 1);
2. Have some church planting experience;
3. Want to see the plant and the planter succeed!

19. Wrong facility

Unless you’re starting a cell-church, one of your most important tasks will be to find the right meeting place for the church. This can be a real challenge. Not every available building is the right building for a new church’s start-up facility.⁷

The wrong meeting place can inhibit, even harm, the health and growth of the new church. We know of a church planter who tried to start his church in a bowling alley, where the worship service competed with the crash of pins and bowling balls. Lodge rooms, smelling of old beer and cigarettes, are usually not a good choice. A funeral home is likely not your best choice, either, with its aura of grief and death.

Be careful about acquiring a permanent facility prematurely, before the Lord shows you what size property you’ll need. And beware of accepting a building given you by a well-meaning person or denomination. Such a facility may be more of a landmine than a blessing. It’s a liability if it requires so much renovation that it diverts you and your core group from evangelism and discipleship. It’s a liability if it is in the wrong location, distant from your target community. It may be an incredible liability if the church that once occupied it has a bad reputation in the community. In such cases it might be far better for the building to be sold and the proceeds

given for the start-up ministry of the new church.

You need to carefully and prayerfully determine ahead of time what kind of meeting place you need, bearing in mind the kind of people you're trying to reach, and how they will likely react to the location and appearance.

Notes

¹ DCPI publishes a couple of mini-workbooks to help you address these questions. A prospective church planting couple can use *The Pre-Assessment Profile* as an interactive guide to evaluate their possible fitness for church planting. *How to Improve Your Church Planting Leadership: A Three-Dimensional Approach* is another helpful interactive guide to refine your leadership in three dimensions: maturity, ability, and personality.

² We are indebted to Phil Spry, a great friend and experienced church planter, for summarizing this point. Phil and his wife Toni have planted multiple churches and are mentoring many others in church planting. The summary of this point is from Phil's book, *Planting Seeds/Fighting Crows: A Guide to Avoiding Some of the Most Common Church Planting Errors* (self-published).

³ DCPI publishes *The Site Selection Profile*, an interactive, mini-handbook that offers more suggestions about evaluating a community's spiritual climate.

⁴ We have suggested guidelines on forming a steering committee in the Appendix.

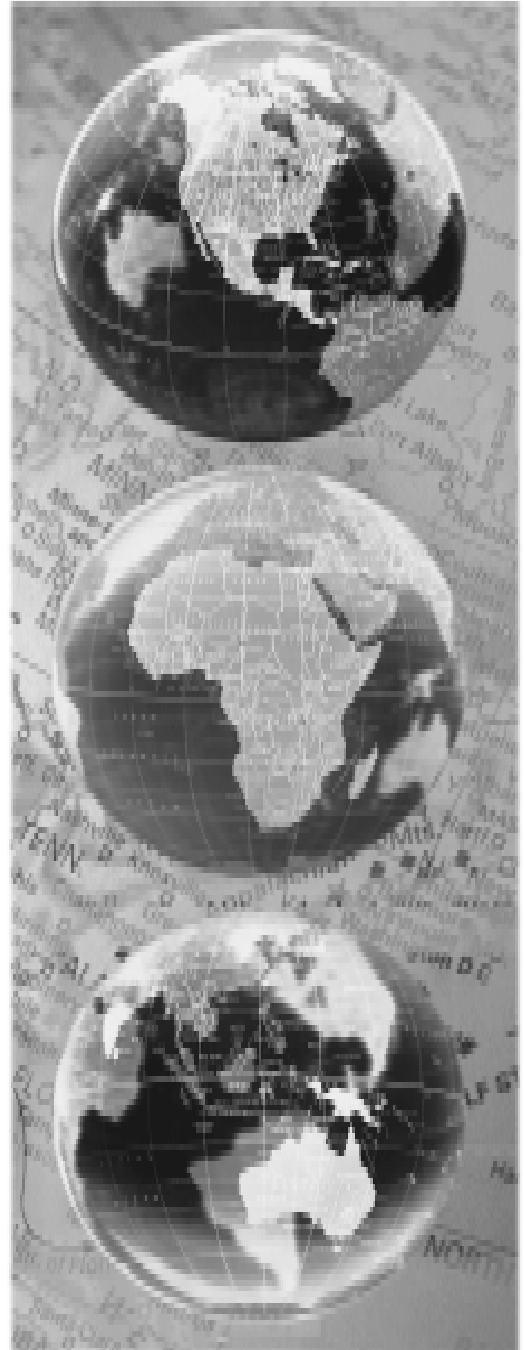
⁵ It may be helpful to re-read Chapter 2, "The Lord of Church Planting," to reinforce this truth.

⁶ See Chapter 23, "People to Reach."

⁷ DCPI publishes *How to Find Start-up Facilities for Your New Church*, a helpful mini-handbook that will take you through a process of discovering what you need in a meeting place, and how to find it.

Section Two

Leading Wisely and Well



Chapter 9

How to Improve Your Church Planting Leadership: A Three-Dimensional Approach

Leadership has been analyzed, parsed, and defined endlessly. Great books have been written about leaders and leadership. And one thing is obvious: leaders lead, and the way we know they lead is because people follow them. Leadership, in that sense, is influence. When people are influenced, leadership is occurring. And if no one is being influenced, then no one is really leading.

But how do leaders lead? Or a better question, how do leaders lead *effectively*? And even more to our point, how can a *church planting* leader lead effectively?

By “effectively” we mean “attaining to an intended goal.” So for church planters, effective leadership would be leading in such a way that churches are planted in a healthy and reproductive way. It would be leading so that the church planting launch team, and core group are influenced (led) toward the goal, while reflecting the particular values that are unique to the church planting project.

What makes church planting leadership effective?

THREE DIMENSIONS OF CHURCH PLANTING LEADERSHIP: A HOLISTIC PARADIGM¹

The following paradigm of leadership applies to Christian leaders of all sorts. But since we’re writing about church planting, we’ll focus on that in particular.

Let’s consider three dimensions of a Christian’s life: *personality*, *ability*, and *maturity*. We’ll define these in a non-technical, but very specific, way.

Personality is what’s true about us from birth. It encompasses our passions and motivations and inclinations. It’s our “hard wiring.”

Used in this way, personality doesn’t really change over time. It’s up to us, as we follow Christ, to be the best we can be. But it’s counter-productive, not to mention frustrating, to try to change this dimension of ourselves. In reality, being the best we can be is another way of saying, “Be who you are!”

Ability encompasses the sum of our learned experiences, both from formal education as well as from training we picked up in the school of hard knocks. It is in the area of “ability” where we discover what we’re naturally good at, and then we work to develop and hone those talents. *Ability* builds upon personality.

Maturity refers to the spiritual dimension of our lives. It is where character is forged,

where the fruit of the Spirit is developed. As leaders, this is the area where our walk with Christ is nurtured. It should provide the foundation for both our personality and ability.

A “shorthand” way of referring to these might be the following:

Personality means “knowing yourself,” *ability* refers to “knowing ‘the stuff’,” (as in, “She really knows her *stuff*.”) and *maturity* is all about “knowing Christ.”

DIMENSION	FOCUS	KEY WORDS	SHORTHAND
Personality	Passions and motivations	Inclination, characteristics	“knowing yourself”
Ability	Learned experiences	Instruction, competence	“knowing ‘the stuff’”
Maturity	Relationship to Christ	Intimacy, Character	“knowing Christ”

GIFTS AND ROLES

One word of disclaimer: we’re claiming “personality” is the “hard-wiring” of our selves, and that our greatest fulfillment comes from “being who we are.” But this is **not** an excuse for avoiding the mandates of Scripture that apply to all Christians.

For example, a given leader might recognize that she is a born teacher, and that she has the spiritual gift of teaching. She may also determine that God has not given her the gift of evangelism. But this is no excuse for not sharing the gospel. The *role* of witness is still a matter of obedience for all Christians, even those who do not have the *gift* of evangelism.

Or a church planter may discover his primary gifts are faith and leadership. On the other hand, he scores particularly low in the gift of mercy. But that certainly doesn’t exempt him from needing to express compassion and caring for hurting people.

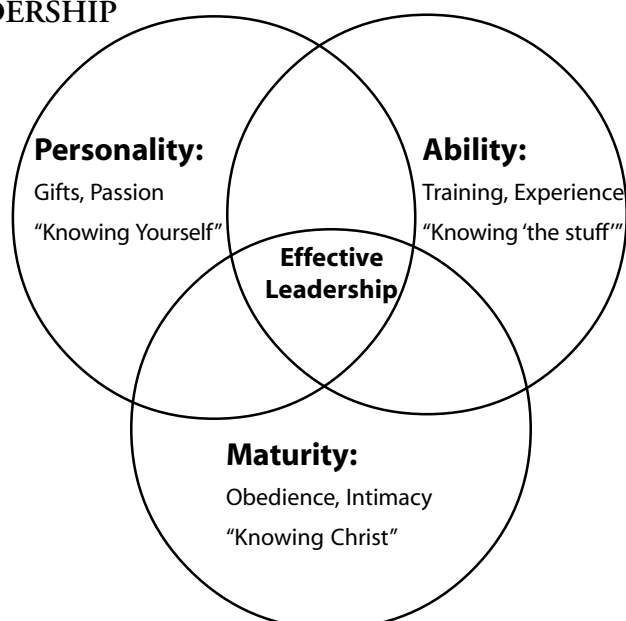
EFFECTIVE CHURCH PLANTING LEADERSHIP

If the purpose of a church planting leader is to plant a dynamic, reproductive, disciple-making church, what makes that leadership effective?

Effective church planting leadership comes from the confluence of the three dimensions of personality, ability and maturity.

It is only as a leader operates out of all three of these dimensions that he becomes truly effective.

It’s painfully obvious, though, that many leaders are *strong* in only one or two of these dimensions. Which means,



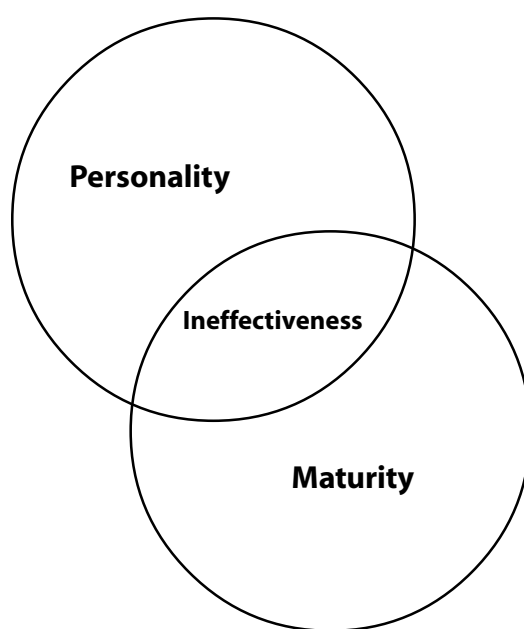
unfortunately, that their leadership is *weaker* in the other one or two dimensions.

For example, consider a leader who is strong in maturity and personality. He has a close walk with Christ, and has a clear call to church planting. He is a man of integrity and spiritual discipline.

Furthermore his personality fits the profile of a church planter. He is *inclined* to be a people-gatherer, a leader, an influencer, a visionary. Church planting seems like a “fit” for him—it’s “who he is.”

What’s missing? The dimension of ability is in a deficit position. Though he is walking with the Lord and is called to church planting, he hasn’t learned the skills necessary to do the job. He doesn’t “know the stuff.” He may have been appointed to church planting based on his testimony of love for the Lord and call to be a church planter.

But his deficit in the area of ability will be a significant hurdle to planting a healthy church. The result of this picture is ineffectiveness at best and a failed church plant at worst.



Or think about another church planter who has strengths in personality and ability. His “hard-wiring” suits him well for church planting. He has always been a leader, and he is comfortable in the role of visionary, agenda-setter, and influencer. Furthermore, though he has never planted before, he has a skill-set that fits church planting well. Not only has he had formal training in church planting, but he also was part of the launch team of a new church while he was in Bible college.

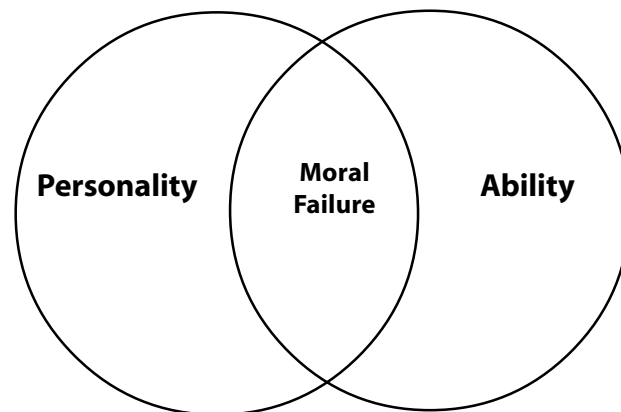
The problem for him is the deficit in maturity. Though he is a Christian, he doesn’t have a close walk with Christ. Spiritual disciplines are practiced very sporadically. He relies upon the very basic steps of growth he took as a new believer many years ago. An honest inventory of his life, based on the qualities listed in the Pastoral Epistles (1 Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:6-9), would reveal that he doesn’t qualify for the biblical office of elder. The “fruit of the Spirit” is not evident in his life (cf. Gal. 5:22-24).

Because he has an abundance of gifts and natural talents, he has not needed real spiritual depth to impress people. He has led, and led well, simply because God created him to be a leader.

His lack of spiritual development will surely emerge as a terrible liability in the high-

pressure environment of church planting, however. Church planting is not for the spiritually weak. It is the arena of warfare and conflict in the heavenlies. It demands a deep and intimate connection to Jesus, a Christ-like character forged from years of communion with Him.

He was appointed as a church planter because he seemed to be a dynamic leader who possessed all the tools to start a dynamic church. But the result of his maturity deficit could be moral failure and the potential shipwreck of his family and ministry.



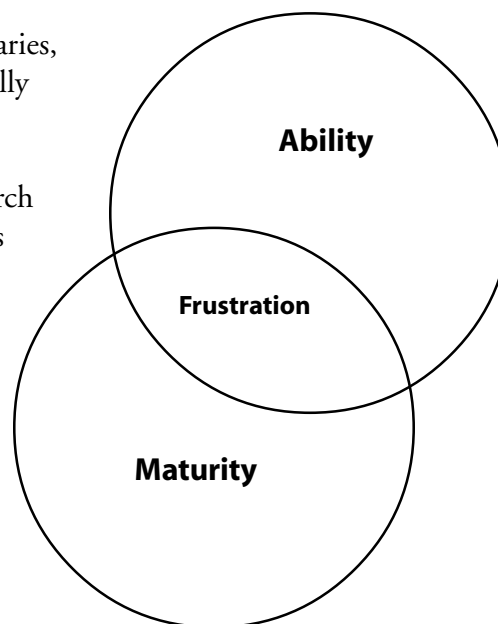
Let's consider another leadership deficit. Imagine a church planter who leads from his strengths in maturity and ability, but his deficiency is in personality.

He has a close walk with the Lord, cultivated through years of spiritual discipline and devotion. He has also been the recipient of good, practical ministry training.

The problem is that he has never reckoned with his own personality. By personality God has created him to be a Bible teacher. His natural bent is toward scholarship and study. He has *learned* to function in the roles of evangelist and visionary, but he doesn't operate with any real joy in these areas. His greatest fulfillment comes in studying the Bible and preparing to teach it in creative ways.

A couple of his closest friends are church planters, his heroes in college were pioneer missionaries, and so he gravitated to church planting without really considering if God had "wired" him for it.

The result for this leadership deficit is frustration for him and stunted growth for the church plant. He feels out of place, as if he hasn't found his true calling. He is frustrated that the church hasn't grown faster or larger.



THE IDEAL FOR CHURCH PLANTING LEADERSHIP

If we were to “unpack” the three dimensions, they might relate sequentially this way:

First, the church planting leader begins, not with the church plant in mind, but with his relationship to Christ. His *intimacy* with God (*maturity*) is the fountainhead from which everything else flows. From this intimacy comes *identity* (*personality*). Knowing Christ and knowing who he is allows him, then, to develop the giftedness God has given him. *Instruction* (*ability*) is the dimension that follows a sense of closeness with Christ and calling from Christ.

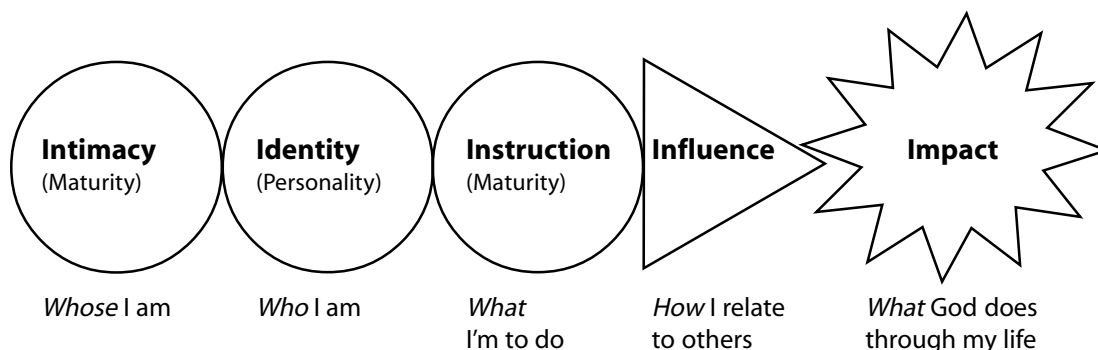
This prepares the leader to have *influence* because his vision comes from the Lord. He leads, not because of his position or power, but because of the very person God has called him to be.

And the result is *impact*, as a dynamic church is planted in a community. The effects of this explosion of grace continue to reverberate in the lives of individuals who hear the gospel and believe, and in the corporate lives of other daughter churches that are born in the years ahead.

Or to put it another way, *intimacy* tells me *whose* I am. A truly effective leader will settle the issue of self-worth based on his walk with Christ, and not be dependent upon his accomplishments or the accolades of others. The Apostle Paul, a man of great accomplishment, finally concluded that everything was “loss” compared to the “surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus” (Phil. 3:8).

These three dimensions relate to one another as *knowing*, *being*, and *doing*. Having the peace of knowing *whose* I am (“knowing”) leads me to the freedom of *identity*. *Identity* tells me *who* I am and what my calling is (“being”). *Instruction* tells me how I am to fulfill my calling (“doing”). And as these three align themselves in my life, I begin to have *influence*. *Influence* tells me how I am connected to others. And *influence* leads to *impact*, what God wants to produce through my life.

- “Intimacy” – *whose* I am. (Knowing)
- “Identity” – *who* I am and what my calling is. (Being)
- “Instruction” – how I am to do what I’m called to do. (Doing)
- “Influence” – how I’m connected to others
- “Impact” – what God does through my life



Notes

¹ DCPI publishes an expanded version of this chapter as a separate resource in the “Profile” series. It includes interactive sections for evaluating and improving in each of the three dimensions.

Chapter 10

A Leader's Prayer Life

What motivates us church planters? Why do we do what we do?

- A desire to build something out of nothing?
- Frustration with the “institutional church”?
- A compelling vision to “make a difference”?
- A love for adventure?
- Being gifted as a leader?
- Love for lost people?
- Obedience to God's call?

What would you say are the highest of these motivations? None is without merit, and all probably explain our church planting journey to some degree. But none of them will completely sustain us to finish the course well.

A desire to build something out of nothing can quickly cool in the face of the problems and challenges that are inevitable.

Frustration with the institutional or traditional church is only helpful if it spurs us on, not to criticism, but to build something better, more Scriptural, more honoring to God. And the truth is, church planting often means making our own mistakes, and building another cycle of frustration.

Wanting to “make a difference” is laudatory, but too nebulous. And in church planting, it's difficult to tell from week to week how much of a difference you are actually making!

The love of adventure may propel many into church planting, but like a booster engine on a rocket, it quickly drops away. The flight will continue only if there are deeper reserves of perseverance and commitment.

We can certainly thank God for gifts of leadership, but if our primary motivation is to exercise a spiritual gift, we may well begin to think of ourselves as more important than we are. (Some gifts, like leadership and teaching, may be more prone to pride.)

Even obedience to God's call can be a passionless motivation. We can grit our teeth and move forward only for so long. Our energy and enthusiasm must be fueled by something else.

Love for lost people may seem like the highest motivation of all. And of everything in that list, we would want to see a heartbeat for evangelism in church planters. But even that heartbeat will become erratic and weak without something to sustain it.

Apart from a living, growing intimacy with Christ, any other motivation can dry up as surely as a vine that is cut off from its branch.

I (Jim) heard a radio interview with Dr. Bill Bright of Campus Crusade of Christ as part of a celebration of Bright's 50 years of ministry. During that time, literally *millions* of people

have been won to Christ, and Crusade has grown to the point that over 110,000 staff and volunteers serve throughout the world in over 150 countries.

The interviewer asked Dr. Bright what was his most important achievement. Without hesitation Bill Bright said his most important achievement was his daily intimacy with Jesus Christ.

That intimacy, in large part, comes through the cultivation of a life of prayer.

Most church planters are full of energy and optimism, self-confident and strong. It might be harder for such leaders to think of drawing away from the frenetic activity of church planting in order to be alone with God.

But apart from a strong and growing connection to Christ through prayer, their ministries may be shipwrecked upon the deadly shoals of pride or carnality.

Jesus Himself modeled this dimension of leadership most perfectly. If anyone could have laid claim to self-sufficiency or autonomous wisdom, it was He. Yet prayer was one of the defining characteristics of His earthly ministry.

Though His time was short and the press of the crowd was urgent, He often withdrew to lonely places to pray (Lk. 5:16). Sometimes He rose before daybreak to pray (Mk. 1:35), and sometimes He prayed all night (Lk. 6:12). He prayed in lonely places, on the mountain and in the wilderness (Mt. 14:23; Lk. 5:16). Sometimes He took some of His disciples with Him on these “prayer retreats” (Lk. 9:28, 29).

He prayed in thanksgiving before meals (Mt. 14:19), He prayed to bless little children (Mk. 10:16), and He prayed in times of profound sorrow (Jn. 11:41, 42).

He prayed before the great decisions of His ministry, like choosing the twelve (Lk. 6:12, 13).

He prayed for individual disciples (Lk. 22:31, 32), for future believers (Jn. 17:1 – 26), and for those who put Him to death (Lk. 24:34).

He prayed as He hung on the cross. His last words from that cross were a prayer (Lk. 24:46).

Jesus’ influence on His disciples as a Man of prayer was so profound that it was the only thing they ever asked Him to teach them (Lk. 11:1).¹

Jesus is still praying, and He is praying for us!

Therefore he is able to save completely those who come to God through him, because he always lives to intercede for them (Heb. 7:25, emphasis added).

If we learn anything about leadership from our Master, we must learn this lesson: godly leaders must be people of prayer!

PRAYER AND THE CHURCH PLANTER

What does it take to become a person of prayer?

Prayer is not so much a skill to learn as it is a relationship to develop. For that reason, there are no “three easy steps to deepen your prayer life.” This could be frustrating to us church planters, who want to immediately find the quickest, most effective path to achieving our goals. But being a person of prayer just isn’t like that.

Deepening your prayer life begins with humility. The Lord promised, “This is the one I esteem: he who is humble and contrite in spirit, and trembles at my word” (Isa. 66:2).

Proud people don’t need prayer. Proud Christian leaders may think of prayer as a necessary step toward furthering their agenda, but they don’t think of it like Jesus did: as communion with the Father.

Humble leaders are the ones the Lord can bless, and the ones who grow in prayer.

Becoming a person of prayer also depends upon a deep hunger for God, a longing for intimacy with Him above everything else.

As the deer pants for streams of water, so my soul pants for you, O God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God (Ps. 42:1, 2a).

The Apostle Paul, a great church planting leader, concluded that everything else about his life was “a loss compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus” (Phil. 3:8).

But what if you don’t have such a hunger for God? Pray for it. “Come near to God and he will come near to you” (Jas. 4:8a).

Deepening your prayer life then becomes a matter of daily priority, of practicing regular spiritual disciplines, like:

- A daily quiet time. Not a time to study for a sermon, or simply a time to list all your requests of God, but a time for private worship, a time to commune with the Lord, to listen for His voice, and to learn His word for the sake of your own soul.
- Fasting, as a way of expressing your dependence on the Lord alone.
- Learning to “listen” in prayer.

The Sovereign LORD has given me an instructed tongue, to know the word that sustains the weary. He wakens me morning by morning, wakens my ear to listen like one being taught. The Sovereign LORD Has opened my ears, And I have not been rebellious; I have not drawn back (Isa. 50:4, 5).²

- Regular prayer retreats.³

The Lord desires our fellowship, as humbling and mysterious as that seems. So whatever else your church planting journey may bring, one thing is certain: God wants to draw you close to His heart, to teach you about Himself, and to mold you more into the image of Jesus. May it be so!

PRAYER AND THE CHURCH PLANT

Though the focus of this chapter is on the church planting leader, here’s a brief word about prayer in your new church.

1. Develop a prayer shield. It's absolutely crucial that you, as the church planting leader, have a team of people around you to pray for you and your family. Because of the intense nature of the spiritual conflict you're entering, you should never consider church planting without a team of intercessors.

Where do you find them? Pray for them, of course! They may be people who already pray for you, or who have already been touched by your ministry in some way. And look for people who:

- Love to pray, and often see answers to their prayers
- Enjoy spending extended periods of time in prayer
- Are probably quiet servants who prefer to be in the background
- Have Christlike integrity, and can keep a confidence

2. Mobilize prayer for the lost. One of the keys to releasing God's power for evangelism in your new church is prayer.⁴ Attempts at evangelism without a firm foundation of prayer for unsaved people will tend to be anemic, lacking the promised power of the gospel. "Prayer is given to us primarily as a means of power in the service of the spiritual weapon of God's Word."⁵

Or to put it another way, "Prayer is God's 'seedbed' where he implants the vision for what he intends to do in the hearts of his people."⁶

3. Become a church of prayer. May it be that your new church will be one where Jesus is truly the Head, and major decisions are routinely brought to Him, where leaders are taught (through your own example) to wait on the Lord. Where worship and praise abound and technology or giftedness or success or failure will never dislodge Him from the center of our affections or the center of the church!

Pray, and teach your church to pray!

Notes

¹ Not to overstate this point, we should say that at least it is the only time Scripture *records* their asking for instruction.

² These verses are about the Suffering Servant, but they provide a wonderful application for all of us who follow Him, and long to listen and obey.

³ DCPI publishes an interactive guide called "How to Experience an Effective Personal Prayer Retreat."

⁴ Read more about this in Chapter 24: Developing an Outreach Plan for Your New Church.

⁵ John Piper, *The Pleasures of God* (Sisters, Oregon: Multomah Publishers, 2000), p. 204.

⁶ Jack Dennison, *City Reaching: On the Road to Community Transformation* (Pasadena: William Carey Library, 1999), p. 236.

Chapter 11

Growing Leaders in Your New Church

“Leadership development lies at the heart of the new church’s mission, and the most important leadership quality to develop is spiritual maturity.” We believe so strongly in the truth of this statement that we have listed it as one of our twelve “Principles of Dynamic Church Planting.”

One of the essentials of a new church’s ongoing health and growth is the development of leaders who can continue to strengthen and expand the church’s ministry.

So how do you “grow leaders” in a new church? And what exactly is leadership?

Robert Clinton says that leadership is a dynamic process in which a man or woman with God-given capacity influences a specific group of God’s people toward his purposes for the group.¹

John Maxwell reduces it to a simple phrase: “Leadership is influence.” Unless you are able to influence people to help you establish a new church, you are not going to have a new church.

The difference between a single-cell church and a multi-cell church hinges on the ability of the church planting pastor to recruit and lead other leaders. A single-cell church describes a group where everyone can know one another. Usually this means no more than 60 - 80 people, though this number will vary from culture to culture. In a single-cell church the people look to the pastor alone for pastoral care. A multi-cell church has a number of groups in which people can find friends and ministry. In the multi-cell church other leaders serve as shepherds.

John Maxwell writes, “The key to success in any endeavor is the ability to lead others successfully. Everything rises and falls on leadership. Leadership can be taught.”² Leadership is a spiritual gift. Some Christians are more gifted to lead and to lead leaders. You can learn to be a better leader.

Jesus was the ultimate leader of leaders. He turned some very unlikely men into World Changers. He was with His disciples, and taught them. He demonstrated ministry for them, and then sent them out to do ministry. And He had them report back to Him about what God had done through them.

In this chapter, we are going to learn how to “grow leaders” in our new church from experts on leadership like John Maxwell and Bobb Biehl and Robert Clinton. But, most of all, we want to learn from Jesus about leadership.

This chapter is organized by six essential leadership skills: recruiting, motivating, communicating, delegating, leading leaders, and team building.

RECRUITING

How do you recruit leaders for a new church?

First, be a leader that people want to follow. It has been said, “If you think you are a leader, turn around. Is anyone following?”

As you are planning to recruit other leaders and followers, ask yourself: “Am I a leader that others want to follow?”

People first must believe in the leader. Then they will consider believing in the vision. John Maxwell has written, “People don’t at first follow worthy causes. They follow worthy leaders who promote worthy causes.”³

The leader finds the dream and then the people. The people find the leader and then the dream.

Peter Drucker writes, “The final requirement of effective leadership is to earn trust. Otherwise there won’t be any followers.”⁴

What can you do to become a better leader? You might want to review chapter 9, “How to Improve Your Church Planting Leadership.”⁵

There are many helpful books written on this topic. Here are just a few thoughts. In order to become a better leader, you can

- Build your credibility by telling the truth.
- Do what you say you are going to do.
- Serve the leaders and workers that follow you.
- Answer their questions.
- Point them to the goal.
- Complete your projects.
- Appreciate your followers.
- Take a spiritual gift inventory. Is leadership one of your strong gifts?
- Have a formal assessment for church planting. Are you affirmed for having the gift of leadership
- Devour books about leadership and continually learn about this skill.

Second, pray for leaders. Ask God, the Lord of the Harvest, to send leaders and workers to you for your new church.

Jesus went through all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the good news of the kingdom and healing every disease and sickness. When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. Then, he said to his disciples, The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field” (Matthew 9:35-38, emphasis added).

In your daily prayers, ask God to bring leaders and workers to join you in the ministry of the new church. Pray a prayer like this one: “Dear Lord, you have called me to plant this church.

You know we need leaders and workers for this new church. I am asking you to send me workers for this harvest field. Please show me leaders and workers for this church. In Jesus' powerful name, I pray. Amen."

Third, cast the vision and promote the values for your new church. (Review Section I, Chapter 4: "Discovering Vision and Values.") Having a clear and compelling vision and set of values is absolutely crucial to recruiting leaders and workers. The vision and values of the new church must be from God. They must meet the needs of the people you are trying to reach. They must inflame the hearts of those leaders and workers you are trying to recruit. Be sure to write them down and continually preach and teach them.

When followers like the leader and the vision, they will get behind both.

They will follow their leader no matter how bad conditions get or how much the odds are stacked against them. That's why the Indian people in Gandhi's day refused to fight back as soldiers mowed them down. That's what inspired the U.S. space program to fulfill John F. Kennedy's vision and put a man on the moon. That's the reason people continued to have hope and keep alive the dream of Martin Luther King, Jr. even after he was gunned down. That's what continues to inspire followers to keep running the race, even when they feel they've hit the wall and given everything they've got.⁶

Fourth, look for recruiting "pools." Obviously you'll want to "fish" in pools where you have a high potential for "catching" potential leaders and workers. Here are a few you should consider:

- A mother church.
- Partner churches.
- Your friends and relationships.
- Friends of friends.
- Para-church organizations.
- Your association or denomination.
- Seminaries and Bible colleges.
- The people in the community in which you are planting.

Remember, people will move from one place to another to be involved in planting a new church. What are some "pools" of potential leaders that you can think of?

Fifth, challenge leaders and workers to join your team. For Jesus, "men were his method. It all started by Jesus calling a few men to follow him. His concern was not with programs to reach the multitudes, but with men whom the multitudes would follow. The initial objective of Jesus' plan was to enlist men who could bear witness to His life."⁷

You need to clearly and directly ask leaders and workers to join you in the great adventure of establishing a new church. You will need to share your vision and values. You will need to give them a position description that describes what you are asking them to do. And the

position description must reflect their gifts and passions for ministry. You should ask them to pray and ask God if He wants them to serve in the new church that is being planted.

“Half the job of recruiting is knowing what you want done. The other half of successful recruiting is knowing what he or she (the person you are trying to recruit) wants done.”⁸

Always check references before you bring a potential leader or worker on your team.

MOTIVATING

What motivates leaders and workers? You don't have to be a motivational speaker to motivate people. How did Jesus inspire his disciples? We have a clue to Jesus' ongoing motivation of His disciples in the way He called them:

He appointed twelve—designating them apostles—that they might be with him and that he might send them out to preach and to have authority to drive out demons (Mk. 3:14, 15).

After a night of prayer (cf. Lk. 6:12), Jesus first appointed His leaders. And notice that His first plan for His newly appointed apostles was “that they might be with Him.” Only after they spent time with Him did He “send them out to preach and to have authority.”

Clearly being with Him was always the best motivation. Spending time with the Master, knowing Him as a person, experiencing His character, learning by seeing Him in action—what greater motivation could there be!

Your leaders will be most motivated by your personal example, your own lived-out passion and values, the way you treat the Word of God and care for people. This will motivate them to serve with you.

Robert Coleman writes, “All the disciples had to teach them was a Teacher who practiced with them what He expected them to learn. “It is well enough to tell people what we mean, but it is infinitely better to show them how to do it. People are looking for a demonstration, not an explanation.”⁹

When you are with your leaders, practice ministry toward them and others. Pray and expect God to answer. Praise God for what he does. Lead small groups. Teach the Word. Cast vision. Encourage.

About motivating others, Bobb Biehl writes:

I believe that the key factor is having the right assumptions about people:

- People do what makes sense to them.
- No one really wants to fail.
- Everyone wants to make a difference.
- Everyone wants to grow personally.
- Everyone needs and responds to encouragement.

How do you motivate leaders? Help them do what makes sense to them in the light of

the whole project. Help them succeed. Help them make a difference. Help that leader to grow personally. Encourage them often.

Ask questions like these about each leader you are trying to motivate:

1. What are the person's three most critical short-term tasks?
2. What are this person's top three measurable goals for the next month or quarter?
3. What are the three major obstacles facing this person? Help him or her to defeat their obstacles.
4. What are the three major resources this person can bring to bear on his or her situation? Help him or her to find these resources.
5. What are the person's fears? Dreams? Help the leader overcome fears and realize their dreams.¹⁰

COMMUNICATING

Jesus was a great communicator. He taught and talked with his leaders. He showed them how to do ministry, both by modeling it and also by teaching in formal and informal settings.

And he sent them out, with careful instructions on how to perform their own ministries:

He called his twelve disciples to him and gave them authority to drive out evil spirits and to heal every disease and sickness . . . These twelve Jesus sent out with the following instructions . . . (Mt. 10:1, 5a).

When they did ministry trips, he encouraged them to report back to him.

The apostles gathered around Jesus and reported to him all they had done and taught (Mark 6:30).

The more the church grows, the more important it becomes to communicate intentionally.

Like Jesus, you'll want to continually cast vision as well as instructing and informing your leaders. Whatever your communication strengths, you'll need to use a variety of styles: from formal preaching and teaching, to interactive dialogue, to informal sharing.

You'll need regular meetings with your leaders. Focus on issues like your Vision, Plan, and TimeLine. Make sure one person takes notes and records action items. Try to have the notes distributed immediately after the meeting, and then reviewed at the beginning of the next meeting.

You'll also find it helpful to meet with leaders one-on-one to hear what they are thinking and to share your heart and thoughts with them. Make it a habit to pray for them and their

needs often. And though it can be a challenge, it is important to respond quickly to phone or email messages.

DELEGATING

If you try to do everything yourself, you will suffer and the church will stay small. Even though it may be difficult, you must discipline yourself to delegate to other leaders.

This was the lesson Moses learned from Jethro, his father-in-law. Jethro noticed that Moses was trying to resolve all of the Israelite's problems by sitting as their only judge.

Jethro said, "What you are doing is not good. You and these people who come to you will only wear yourselves out. The work is too heavy for you; you cannot handle it alone" (Ex. 18:17,18).

Then Jethro taught Moses how to delegate. He told him to select capable, trustworthy men who feared God and make them officials over thousands, hundreds, fifties and tens. The simple cases would go to these leaders as judges. Only the most difficult cases would reach Moses.

Jethro promised, "If you do this and God so commands, you will be able to stand the strain, and all these people will go home satisfied."

Good delegation is a blessing to the church planting pastor. It is fulfilling for the leader and it blesses the people, because their needs are being met promptly. More leaders can meet the needs of more people. As a result, the church has the potential to grow.

Bobb Biehl gives us good understandings in delegation:

- In determining your leadership competence, your ability to delegate effectively is far more important than your innate intelligence.
- If you are doing something that someone else could do at least eighty percent as well as you could, then you're more than likely wasting time.
- Take a look at your "to do" list today. What items on this list could someone else do at least eighty per cent as well as you could? Which of these would you most like to delegate today?
- Define with crystal clarity exactly what you want accomplished before you ask someone else to do it.
- As you delegate a task, you should also explain why the task needs to be done.
- As you assign the responsibility, make sure you also assign the financial resources needed to carry it out.
- What training is needed for the task?¹¹

Try to delegate the task to the person who is most gifted at completing the task. It may be that they can do this job much better than you can and will receive real satisfaction from its

accomplishment. Make sure the leader reports back to you concerning the completion of the task. Delegate, but don't "dump" tasks on people.

LEADING LEADERS

When Jesus began his ministry, he started by recruiting leaders. He invested far more time, energy and teaching in his disciples than the crowds. Why?

Robert Coleman provides an answer:

"Jesus was not trying to impress the crowd, but to usher in a Kingdom. This meant He needed men who could lead the multitudes."¹²

"We must get to those whom the people follow; this, of course, puts a priority of winning and training those already in responsible positions of leadership."¹³

Again, if you lead followers, you will probably end up with a single-cell church of less than 75 people. If you can lead leaders, God may bless you with a multiple-cell church and many more people. John Maxwell calls this the Law of Explosive Growth. To add growth, lead followers; to multiply, lead leaders.

It is your job to build the people who are going to build the church. Maxwell writes,

Leaders who develop followers grow their organization only one person at a time. But leaders who develop leaders multiply their growth, because for every leader they develop, they also receive all of that leader's followers. Add ten followers to your organization, and you will have the power of ten people. Add ten leaders to your organization, and you have the power of ten leaders times all the followers and leaders they influence. That's the difference between addition and multiplication. It's like growing your organization by teams instead of by individuals. The better the leaders you develop, the greater the quality and quantity of followers. To go to the highest level, you have to develop leaders of leaders.

Leaders who develop leaders:

- Want to be succeeded
- Focus on strengths
- Develop the top 20 percent of their organization
- Treat their leaders as individuals for impact
- Give power away

- Invest time in others
- Grow by multiplication
- Impact people far beyond their reach¹⁴

John Maxwell goes on to write:

Developing leaders is difficult because potential leaders are harder to find and attract. They are also harder to hold on to once you find them because unlike followers, they are energetic and entrepreneurial and they tend to want to go their own way. Developing leaders is hard work. It takes time, energy and resources.¹⁵

Leaders like a meaningful challenge in their work. They want a significant role. They want to bring in other people to work on their challenge. They like the opportunity to do something big.

Pray for and look for people like this as you recruit. Meet with them often. Give them guidance so they will succeed in their challenge. Don't micro-manage them and tell them what to do all the time or you will lose them. Build the vision and the values into their lives. Love them and their families. Value and encourage them. Pray for them like Jesus did for his disciples in John 17. Listen to them. Be open and transparent with them. Treat them as friends as Jesus did the leaders that he developed.

Follow Jesus method of developing leaders. John Maxwell teaches Jesus' model like this:¹⁶

Action	Result
I do it.	I model.
I do it and you are with me.	I mentor.
You do it and I am with you	I monitor.
You do it.	You report and move forward.

Remember, "the one who influences others to lead is a leader without limitations."

TEAM BUILDING

When you think of a team, do you think of a soccer team? Or a baseball team? A team is composed of a group of people who are all striving for the same goal. In athletics, the team wants to win a game against another competitive team.

The church should be like a team: groups of people all striving to glorify God and disciple people for Jesus Christ. Ideally, the church should be a team composed of teams. Individual leaders should head up their own teams within the church like the Prayer Team, the Outreach Team, the Administration Team, the Finance Team, the Children's Ministry Team, the Evangelism Team, etc. Then, they and other leaders should come together as the Church Leadership Team.

How can you build your Church Leadership Team? How can you strengthen the many teams within the church?

Here are some lessons from Bobb Biehl on team building:

1. Answer the question: What is our team's inspirational dream? A dream is simply something that would happen if a need were met, a need that you deeply long to meet.
2. Obviously it is going for a goal (a dream) that makes being on a team worthwhile.
3. What is our practical Master Plan? The Master Plan should detail the dreams that your teams are shooting for. Is everyone on your team aware of your Master Plan?
4. Are your plans laid out in such a way that, as you pass milestones and reach goals, the team shares in the excitement?
5. What training and tools do we need individually and as a team? You'll be eager to provide the right training and tools as you commit yourself to building up the men and women on your team.
6. What communications system do we need to keep the team on one track?
7. Do we have a good team spirit? A positive team attitude?
8. Do we have team discipline?
9. Do we have leaders with different strengths on the team? Unity is the result of people with different gifts working toward the same goal.
10. Do we have the best leaders available?
11. Do we have a team "captain" responsible for final decisions?
12. Who can help us think and view our work more objectively?
13. Are we experienced in working as a team?
14. Are we fatigued as a team? Is it time for a break? Don't push the team so hard that they feel chronically fatigued.¹⁷

Developing the answers to these questions will help you build up the Church Leadership Team. As you teach these principles to your leaders, they will be equipped to build up their own teams. And you will fulfill the plan that the Lord of the Church has always had, to equip leaders to lead, to the glory of God and the extension of His kingdom.

It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ (Eph. 4:11-13).

Notes

¹ John Maxwell, *The Making of a Leader* (City: Publisher, year), p. 14.

² John Maxwell, *Developing the Leader Within You* (City: Publisher, year), p. 2).

³ Maxwell, *The 21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership: Follow Them and People Will Follow You* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 1998), p. 145.

⁴ Peter Drucker, *Developing the Leader Within You* (City: Publisher, year), p. 44.

⁵ We recommend our interactive booklet by the same title: "How to Improve Your Church Planting Leadership: A Three-Dimensional Approach."

⁶ Both the last two quotes are from Maxwell, *The 21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership*, p. 149.

⁷ Robert Coleman, *The Master Plan of Evangelism* (Old Tappan, New Jersey: Fleming H Revell, 1963), p. 21.

⁸ Bobb Biehl, *Increasing Your Leadership Confidence* (Sisters, Oregon: Questar Publications, 1989), p. 189.

⁹ Coleman, p. 78.

¹⁰ Biehl, *Increasing Your Leadership Confidence*, pp. 153ff.

¹¹ Biehl, *Increasing Your Leadership Confidence*, pp. 81-83.

¹² Coleman, p. 31.

¹³ Coleman, p. 36.

¹⁴ Maxwell, *The 21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership*, p. 210.

¹⁵ Maxwell, *The 21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership*, p. 210.

¹⁶ Both this and the quote that ends the section are from Maxwell, *Developing the Leader Within You*, p. 116.

¹⁷ Biehl, *Increasing Your Leadership Confidence*, pp. 207ff.

Chapter 12

Developing Church Planters in a New Church

AN INTERNSHIP APPROACH

A young man came to me (Paul) with a two-fold vision. He believed God was calling him to start both a relevant, contemporary, biblical church in Huntington Beach, California, and a church planting training center within the church. His name was Rev. David Reynolds. It was my joy to mentor him through the planting of ShoreLife Church.

During its first six years, ShoreLife Church gave birth to at least five new churches. The primary way these churches were planted was by developing church planters within the community of ShoreLife Church. David continues to use this model to develop church planters as the Executive Director of Northwest Church Planting in Vancouver, WA. I interviewed him for this chapter and these insights are his.

Developing church planters in a new church starts with the church planter. He must have a passion to develop church planting leaders, and then he must plant a healthy mother church whose purpose from the beginning is to be a church planting church. This reproductive vision must be central to the vision and values of the new congregation from the beginning, along with a commitment to “doing church planting well.”

With this kind of commitment, vision, and values, the Lord creates in the new church a great environment for nurturing church planting leaders. There is no better training ground for church planting leaders than a new church plant. “This environment was attractive to guys who were attracted to church planting,” David says.

Next, David recruited leaders who had the potential to be church planters, and offered them ministry opportunities as interns in the new church. These leaders signed up with the understanding that they would become church planters themselves at the conclusion of their internship. David designed a four-stage internship process based on the needs of his potential church planters.

Stage One: LOOK

During this stage, interns observe a variety of ministries. They become involved in the life of the new church and examine its overall ministry.

Stage Two: LEARN

Now the intern learns about ministries by participating. David and the team provided avenues of involvement for the interns. Future church planting leaders serve in the church, with the freedom to fail and to learn from their mistakes. Staff members provide on-going discussion and feedback.

Stage Three: LEAD

Interns are encouraged to lead established ministries during this stage. They are entrusted with significant roles in the life of church and are involved in pastoral staff meetings.

Stage Four: LAUNCH

The intern starts a new ministry within the church. By being involved in the life of the church, interns serve with people who later often become their team members in the churches they plant. For the last month or two in the LAUNCH stage, interns work exclusively on their own new church.

If the intern is able to proceed successfully through all four stages, he becomes better prepared to gather people and resources and plant a church. When it comes time for the newly developed church planter to plant, the mother church is willing to give them people, resources and finances.

David says, "The baby church decides when it is going to be born. It is essential to have the daughter church healthy in the womb."

Much of the information in Chapter 11, "Growing Leaders in Your New Church," will be helpful in developing church planters in a new church.

A BIBLE COLLEGE APPROACH

One other pattern for developing church planters should be mentioned. This one also comes from a gifted church planting leader who has a proven record of developing effective church planters.

Dr. Paramanandam, pastor of Calvary Baptist Church of Chennai, India, recommends starting a Bible institute/college within the mother church in order to train church planters. God has given "Dr. P" a vision for planting 1000 daughter churches all across India. By the end of 2001, Calvary Baptist had started over 60 branch churches.

Each year Dr. P accepts up to twelve young men for enrollment in a three-year course of study through his Bible college. He sees this as a model used by the Lord Jesus, who chose twelve disciples and prepared them for ministry over three years of training.

Calvary Baptist provides a basic pastoral education as well as "hands-on" training in evangelism and discipleship. Upon completion of the program, the graduates are commissioned to plant daughter churches.

There is real wisdom in this Bible college approach, particularly in nations where a Bible college or seminary education may be difficult to obtain otherwise.

But whether you train church planters as interns or enroll them in your own Bible college, the key is to take responsibility for raising up church planters within your own mother church.

Chapter 13

Small Groups

Developing healthy “small groups” is one of the most important ministries of the new church, but also one of the most controversial.

Some leaders are worried that small groups will be a seedbed for heresy or schism. Other leaders may wonder about the value of small groups, since the size of their congregations makes them virtually small groups anyway.

But there are some solid reasons for developing small groups in your new church:

1. Relationships. People come to a church for many reasons, but they stay at a church for only one reason: relationships. This is true virtually without exception. For people to continue to attend and support a church, they must develop relationships with others. God has placed this basic social need within us. We need to experience God’s love, but also love “with skin on it.”

The Lord designed the church with this in mind. The “one anothers” of Scripture emphasize the importance of fellowship.

- *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. 10:25).
- *Be devoted to one another in brotherly love. Honor one another above yourselves* (Rom. 12:10).
- *Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you, in order to bring praise to God* (Rom 15:7).
- *You, my brothers, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the sinful nature; rather, serve one another in love* (Gal 5:13).
- *Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you* (Eph. 4:32).
- *Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ* (Eph. 5:21).
- *Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom . . .* (Col. 3:16)
- *Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing* (1 Thes. 5:11).
- *And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds* (Heb. 10:24).
- *. . . love one another deeply, from the heart* (1 Pet. 1:22).
- *Finally, all of you, live in harmony with one another . . .* (1 Pet. 3:8);
- *Offer hospitality to one another without grumbling* (1 Pet. 4:9).

The “one anothers” call for close fellowship. They need the quality “face-to-face” time of true relationships, where people actually live their lives together.

And how can that happen if people only attend a worship service once a week? Even the short time of fellowship we sometimes have before or after a church service is really not the close *koinonia* of the New Testament.

When a church has more than just 25 people attending, it is extremely difficult to relate closely with one another. If you desired even a ten minute conversation with everyone in a group that size, it would amount to 250 minutes—over four hours!

New churches need a way to achieve true Biblical fellowship, and small groups provide an excellent way to do it.

2. Discipleship. Leadership is one of the crying needs of the church. Most churches need more leaders. The more leaders, the more ministry a church can do. But how can leaders be developed?

Two methods are most often used to develop church leaders: one to one discipleship, and small groups. Both methods are strong on personal nurturing, accountability, and mentoring.

Attending worship services is certainly vital. But if that is the only avenue for spiritual growth, imagine what will be missing:

- prayer for personal needs,
- someone who notices when you are missing and calls to see how you are doing,
- answering questions as they come up in the study of the Word,
- encouragement to memorize Scripture,
- gentle correction when behavior or doctrine get on the wrong track,
- advice about personal, marital, family, financial and other issues.
- Friends who will “rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn” (Rom. 12:15).

For the church that wants to develop leaders, small group ministry can be extremely effective.

3. *Shepherding a Growing Number of People.* As a church leader, you must face the fact that you can only personally shepherd a limited number of people. When Moses was leading the Children of Israel to the Promised Land, he was nearly killing himself trying to care for the needs of the multitude. Finally, Jethro, his father-in-law, came to him with some good advice.

The next day Moses took his seat to serve as judge for the people, and they stood around him from morning till evening. When his father-in-law saw all that Moses was doing for the people, he said, “What is this you are doing for the people? Why do you alone sit as judge, while all these people stand around you from morning till evening?”

Moses answered him, “Because the people come to me to seek God’s will. Whenever they have a dispute, it is brought to me, and I decide between the parties and inform them of God’s decrees and laws.”

Moses’ father-in-law replied, “What you are doing is not good. You and these people who come to you will only wear yourselves out. The work is too heavy for you; you cannot handle it alone. Listen now to me and I will give you some advice, and may God be with you. You must be the people’s representative before God and bring their disputes to him.”

“Teach them the decrees and laws, and show them the way to live and the duties they are to perform. But select capable men from all the people— men who fear God, trustworthy men who hate dishonest gain— and appoint them as officials over thousands, hundreds, fifties and tens. Have them serve as judges for the people at all times, but have them bring every difficult case to you; the simple cases they can decide themselves. That will make your load lighter, because they will share it with you. If you do this and God so commands, you will be able to stand the strain, and all these people will go home satisfied (Exod. 18:13 – 23).

Moses needed help! He was exhausted from trying to care for the people by himself. The same thing happens to church leaders unless they learn to use gifted people as small group “caregivers.”

When we reach the extent of our ability to care for people, we too become exhausted. We jeopardize our mental state, our physical health, and our family and marriage. Furthermore, we limit the size that our church ministry can grow by forcing it to conform to the size of our ability to shepherd.

We must learn to develop leaders who can shepherd groups within the church. Jesus set the example for us when he developed a small group of believers called the Disciples! He spoke to multitudes but spent a majority of his time caring for twelve. These twelve (minus one traitor) went on to transform the world.

Likewise, our greatest impact will be in developing leaders who have the ability to lead and multiply groups and even churches, as the twelve did. Do like Jesus: develop leaders, commission them, and send them off to win and shepherd others. That’s Jesus’ plan to change the world!

Questions and Answers

Many books have been written on the topic of small group ministry. At the end of this section we have listed some of the better ones that you might want to study. But to complete this brief overview, we will try to cover some of the major questions on small group ministry.

What is the best size for a small group?

When a group grows larger than ten or twelve people, group interaction becomes stifled. People become silent and only the more outgoing people tend to speak up. Group intimacy is diminished. Thus, the optimal size is ten to twelve.

How many small groups does a church need?

In order to grow, a church needs about seven small groups for every one hundred adults in the church. This means a participation rate of 70% to 84% of the adults (7 times 10 – 12 people), a realistic goal.

What is the difference between a small group, home group and house church?

A small group can also be called a home group, home Bible study or any of a number of other names. A small group is one ministry of the larger congregation.

In contrast, house churches are actual churches that meet in homes. They are not part of a church, they *are* the church. They often meet on Sunday mornings, and fulfill the functions of

a church, including communion, baptism, worship, and training.

House churches have been extremely effective in China where the church has been forced to go underground. House churches have also been the core of some dramatic church growth, particularly in Asia.

Do ministry teams qualify as small groups?

Ministry teams are able to function as small groups, but may need permission, encouragement, and instruction to do so. Too often, committees and other task groups do not take advantage of the opportunity to care for one another during their meetings. By incorporating prayer for one another, a short Bible study, and some accountability, ministry teams can become caring small groups.

What do small groups do when they meet?

Typically the core of a small group meeting is Bible study and prayer. Some groups include worship. The best small groups pray for lost friends and organize outreach activities and other social activities together.

How do I grow more small groups?

The key to growing small groups is raising up leaders. You cannot have a group without a leader. A good leader will bring people together.

How do I develop more small group leaders?

The best way to develop small group leaders is through an apprentice system where existing group leaders raise up apprentice leaders from within their groups. The goal is for the apprentice to become a group leader, either by beginning a new group or by leading the existing group while the first leader goes on to start a new group.

Will developing small groups lessen my leadership influence?

No, in fact the opposite will likely happen. When a church develops groups, people are happier. Their needs are met and their appreciation of the church grows. The church itself grows also, and the result is a widened ministry influence.

Bibliography

For further study on small group ministry, we recommend the following resources:

Leading Life Changing Small Groups by Bill Donahue, Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, MI, 1996.

Serendipity offers a wonderful selection of small group materials for training and group leadership. Serendipity House publishers, Box 1012 Littleton, CO 80160, 800-525-9563.

Chapter 14

Building Leadership Unity

“The church planting pastor is most effective as part of a team . . .”

Thus begins one of the “Twelve Principles of Dynamic Church Planting.” And it’s true—the leader’s influence and impact is multiplied by the leadership team around him. The ministry of a new church will continue to grow only as its leadership base is extended.

But as the team grows, so does the potential for problems within the team. In church planting lore, stories of leadership conflict are legion. For example, we know of a new church with a dynamic ministry and an attendance of about 400. But constant disunity on the leadership board led to three years of conflict in the church. Eventually the pastor resigned and there was a major split in the church. As of this writing, its very survival is in question.

So how can you build and maintain unity in the leadership of a new church, especially as it grows larger? Unity is absolutely essential to the growth and health of the church. Here are five principles for building leadership unity, with specific methods of applying the principles.

PRINCIPLE ONE: RECRUIT TO A SHARED VISION

Unity begins when a church planter develops a clear vision and values for a new church. If the leader isn’t clear about the vision, how can there be unity with others? The lead church planting pastor needs to follow carefully the direction given in the “Leadership” section of this book regarding developing vision and values. Once you’ve clarified your vision, here are some ways to recruit others to it.

Conduct recruitment interviews.

In order to build your Core Team, we recommend that the church planter (and spouse if possible) share face-to-face with individuals or couples interested in the new church. Set meetings in their homes, or wherever they find comfortable. When recruiting couples, both spouses should be present.

You may want to prepare a Presentation Booklet or Prospectus outlining some basics, like:

- Your guiding principles/values.
- Your vision and purpose statement for this new church.
- A tenth anniversary article—the article that you would like to be written about your church on its tenth anniversary describing its ministries, size, facilities and so on.
- The general flow of your church planting process.
- A description of your intended target community.

- Your doctrinal statement.
- A brief description of your denominational background, if applicable.
- Goals for the new church.
- Your Constitution and By-laws, if available.

After some general conversation, you share your presentation booklet with the prospective Core Team members. Be sure to leave it with them for further prayer and consideration.

The following are some discussion questions that you can use to become better acquainted with people you know casually already.

1. If you were to be involved in this new church, what ministry do you see yourself doing?
2. What do you feel your spiritual gifts are?
3. What is the current state of your walk with Christ?
4. Describe your plan for personal times with the Lord.
5. Who are five to ten unchurched friends in our target area that you can be praying for?
6. How many hours per week can you devote to ministry in the new church?

If, at the end of the interview, you feel God's leading, you may want to ask them to pray about joining the Core Team. Some may express a commitment even as you speak together.

Discern the possible motivations for helping.

What motivates people to get involved in a new church? We might wish that everyone who became active in a new church project did so out of simple obedience to the Lord's guidance. But people's motivations are usually complex, and the church planting leader would be wise to consider them. For example:

- The opportunity to help many people come to Christ
- The excitement of a new and fresh venture
- Need for a change from their current church
- The desire to make a greater impact for Christ
- The new church's vision and style of ministry fit them well
- They live in the target area and want to attend church locally
- The opportunity to use their gifts to a great degree
- Attraction to the planting pastor's personality, style, preaching, etc.
- The hope that they will be part of the leadership echelon in the new church
- A graceful way to exit their current church

Pray for discernment to understand people's motivations for joining the new church. Knowing this information will help you encourage the good motivations and discourage the negative ones. You might even need to be firm with manipulative people so they will *not* join.

Ask people to sign a statement of commitment.

People should make a commitment to the new church even in the early phases, even before formal membership is available. We recommend asking them to sign a church covenant.

Here's how one pastor dealt with this commitment: He began regular weekly meetings with the growing core group about nine months before the church was launched. He asked the group to suggest the kind of core group commitments the church would need to fulfill its vision. As group members expressed their ideas, he wrote them on a "whiteboard." Their suggestions included commitments like regular worship attendance, participation in a ministry, regular financial support, and involvement in a small group.

The next week he returned with a summary of these suggestions in the form of a covenant they could sign. He reviewed it with them, asked them to pray about it for a week, and in the next meeting asked them to sign the covenant.

Here is a suggested covenant:

CHURCH CORE TEAM COMMITMENT COVENANT

I wholeheartedly agree with the vision of the _____ Church to
(*summarize the church's vision here*).

I agree with the purpose of mobilizing a team of brothers and sisters who love Christ and want to use their gifts and abilities to help unchurched people become fully devoted followers of Christ.

I reaffirm my commitment to Jesus Christ and I promise to nurture my relationship with God through consistent Bible study and prayer.

I understand and agree with the church's strategy, philosophy, and doctrinal statement. I will be supportive of the leadership of the church plant.

Core Team Commitments:

1. I will attend this new church for at least one year after launch.
2. I will have a ministry in the new church.
3. I will give sacrificially to the new church.
4. I will be involved in a small group in the new church.
5. I will invite unsaved people to the new church.

I am committing myself to bringing God glory by building up this church in order to reach people for Christ:

Name

Date

PRINCIPLE TWO: HAVE A CLEAR LEADERSHIP STRUCTURE

A leadership vacuum can produce conflict.

In his biography *Rebel With a Cause*¹, William Franklin Graham writes of the

power struggle that occurred at Samaritan's Purse ministry when Bob Pierce, the founder, passed away. Though Pierce intended Franklin Graham as his successor, another staff member tried to seize control. Tremendous conflict ensued until the board decided that Graham was to be the new leader.

This can happen in a new church. Here are some ways to avoid the conflict:

Have a clearly designated lead pastor.

Attempts to share the role of lead pastor usually fail, and sometimes result in major conflict. DCPI recommends *one* lead pastor. (See Section I, Chapter 5: "Principles of Dynamic Church Planting, Principle #5).

Make sure the by-laws are clear.

The church organizational papers or by-laws must clearly define where the major decision making responsibility in the church rests. Usually this lies in a board that makes major decisions for the church. (Often the congregation must vote to make final approval of certain items such as the church budget, new pastoral staff, and the acquisition of property.)

It is imperative that board members are godly leaders who meet the Biblical qualifications for leadership found in 1 Timothy and Titus. Since the pastor must work with the board, it is important that these leaders be ones he can work with. DCPI offers a workbook with suggestions for developing the by-laws of a new church titled "The New Church Business Steps Profile." We also offer a booklet on "How to Develop a New Church Board."

Avoid competing boards.

This is an area the by-laws should address. Sometimes churches have two or more boards with competing roles and authority. DCPI recommends one leadership board.

PRINCIPLE THREE: CHURCH LEADERS MUST BE "SERVANT LEADERS"

A new church must have clearly designated leaders. But that leadership must *not* be self-centered, overbearing or arrogant. Jesus prescribed the "foot washing" leadership style:

When he had finished washing their feet, he put on his clothes and returned to his place. "Do you understand what I have done for you?" he asked them. "You call me 'Teacher' and 'Lord,' and rightly so, for that is what I am. Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet (John 13:12-14).

People love to follow a leader who loves them. When the leaders of the new church are servant leaders, people will find it much easier to follow them, and conflict is much less likely.

How can a leader exhibit servant leadership?

Express love.

Someone has said that, "People don't care how much you *know* until they know how much you *care*." Making sure that people know you care for them will help provide an atmosphere of unity. Forgiveness flows more easily if they know that you love them. People are more

likely to serve in the church when they know they are loved by the leader(s).

Express your love verbally. Read the epistles of Paul and see how often he expressed his love to his readers. “God can testify how I long for all of you with the affection of Christ Jesus” (Phil 1:8). He also told them how thankful he was for them. “We always thank God for all of you, mentioning you in all our prayers” (1 Thes. 1:2). You can do the same. Tell your church that you love them. Tell individuals that you love them and care about them. Express appreciation for them. Thank them for what they do in service to Christ and His Church.

Use appropriate physical affection. “Greet one another with a holy kiss” appears five times in the epistles (Rom. 16:16; cf. 1 Cor. 16:20, 2 Cor. 13:12, 1 Thes. 5:26, 1 Peter 5:14). Obviously “a holy kiss” must be interpreted by culture. For example, it may mean warm handshakes, hugging, a hand on the shoulder, or holding hands when praying together.

Develop people skills, especially active listening.

Another great way to express servanthood is to develop your “people skills.” How to do this is beyond the scope of this handbook, but there are other resources you might want to use. One classic work is *How to Win Friends and Influence People*² by Dale Carnegie. The title may sound a little manipulative, but that it is not the goal. It is really a book about people skills.

One of the most important people skills is listening carefully to people.

My dear brothers, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry . . . (Jas. 1:19).

Unfortunately many Christian leaders are just the opposite: quick to *speak*, slow to *listen*. Listening can be hard work. But we have to listen to understand exactly another person’s thoughts, feelings, and ideas. Listen beyond their words. Listen to their hearts. Let people know you are listening by actively responding to them through looking them in the eye, giving verbal feedback that shows you have heard what they said, and asking questions.

Take time for people.

Servant leaders take time for people. Obviously you don’t have all the time in the world for all the people in the world. But you can choose to spend *some* time with most people and *more* time with key people.

Sadly some leaders act as if they have more important things to do than care about people. But the few minutes a leader spends with a hurting person speaks volumes. That leader is a *servant* leader. The wise leader makes time for his key leaders, time which pays huge benefits in his influence with them. A wise servant leader makes time to visit a family in the hospital and pray with them before surgery.

A church leader needs quiet times with God and undistracted time for message preparation. But effective shepherds also spend time with their flock.

Provide small groups to care for people.

Unless you develop groups in your church, it will only grow to the size of your own personal shepherding. Though we have just said that you must shepherd people and care for them personally, your span of care can only be so large. At some point you bump against “The Moses Syndrome.” Remember when Moses was trying to arbitrate disputes among the children of Israel?

He was becoming exhausted, the people were not getting good care, and he was neglecting his own family in the process. Jethro, his father-in-law, spoke sense to him and showed him out to delegate.

So Moses divided up the responsibility of shepherding the people into groups, presided over by shepherding leaders.

Likewise, servant leadership means providing small groups to care for people. Look for more information about these groups in Section II, Chapter 15.

PRINCIPLE FOUR: KEEP PEOPLE INFORMED

Someone has said, “people are down on what they are not up on.” How true! If people don’t know what is happening and why, they tend to be disinterested or worse yet, disapproving. All of us are prone to be more supportive of ideas we have watched develop, or even had a part in shaping.

When leaders suddenly introduce change, people feel uncomfortable. They need time to process new ideas and information. Otherwise good ideas may fail to win support because people haven’t had time to get used to them. And if people conclude their involvement isn’t needed, they will likely be uninterested or resistant to change.

So how can you keep people informed?

Informational meetings:

Both before and after the launch, you should give people the opportunity to be involved in informational meetings.

Pre-Launch Meetings:

- **New Church Information Meetings** can be held in order to present the vision for the new church to all who might be interested in being a part of the launch. In a mother/daughter situation, these meetings could be in the form of a 13-week Sunday School class, or other weekly gathering which studies church planting and specifically strategize plans for the new daughter church.
- **Core Team Meetings** should be held regularly for those seriously interested in the church plant. The goal is to prepare for the launch of the new church. These meetings should include worship, Scripture, vision sharing, information sharing, prayer and fellowship.

Post-Launch Meetings:

- **Leadership Team Meetings.** Gather all the ministry leaders of the church each month for accountability, prayer, strategy sessions and problems solving.
- **Ministry Team Meetings.** These would be quarterly meetings for everyone (not just leaders) involved in any ministry. A good format is “VHS”—Vision, Huddle and Skill. Vision means worship, Scripture, and vision casting, probably led by the lead pastor. Huddle is the gathering of each ministry team (e.g. ushers, children’s ministry, etc.) with their leaders. Skill is time set aside to focus on a ministry skill, like witnessing, how to have a better quiet time, how to greet newcomers, organizational skills, and so on.

- **Business Meetings** should be held according to your by-laws and church values. Some churches prefer quarterly or even monthly meetings. Others prefer yearly meetings, and whenever necessary to decide major issues, like approving a budget, purchasing property, or hiring staff.

Whatever the scenario, give people time to process proposed changes. Give them time to evaluate before voting. Otherwise, they may vote “no” just because they are uncomfortable with change.

For example, consider holding a separate budget discussion meeting before you vote on the budget. Even if only a few people come to discuss the budget, you will have answered their questions. And if need be, you can make needed changes based on the insights you gained during the discussion time.

Printed Information.

Informing people in writing has two advantages:

- Writing forces us to clarify our thinking.
- A written documents is a more complete way of communicating our ideas, and eliminates some of the confusion or misunderstanding that may be created by verbal presentations alone.

Here are some of the printed documents you might consider in communicating to your new church.

1. *A presentation handbook/prospectus.* This prospectus can be a very valuable tool for recruiting additional staff and Core Team members, raising prayer and financial support, evaluating progress and staying on track. Unity is produced when everyone understands and agrees ahead of time. (See also the discussion under principle one above.)
2. *Policies and Procedures Manual.* As policy decisions are made, write them down as ongoing policies. This way you won't have to keep deciding the same types of issues over and over. Continuity will provide unity among your people since it will help you avoid inconsistencies.
3. *Weekly and monthly written information.* Repetition and redundancy are proven aids to communication. People usually need to hear information several times. Announcements, times, and details are easily forgotten unless they are printed in a bulletin/program, newsletters, PowerPoint announcements, etc.

Email.

Many church leaders have email capabilities. Email can be a great way of keeping in touch through electronic newsletters, prayer updates, and so on.

Personal Meetings.

You'll need to spend personal time with key leaders and opinion makers. Personally discussing your ideas with them will assure mutual understanding and allow you to receive their input and cooperation.

Computer Generated Calls.

It is possible to have a computer call the people on your phone list and give a recorded message updating and informing them about issues in the church. You should first get permission to call people this way, but having done so, it is a good way to communicate information.

PRINCIPLE FIVE: WORK THROUGH KEY OPINION LEADERS

Building leadership unity is often a matter of getting the right people on your side and allowing them to persuade others. Key Opinion Leaders are the formal or informal leaders in the emerging church that people look to for direction. With the support of these people, your ideas will move forward and there will be unity.

Here are some suggestions for working through Key Opinion Leaders:

First, **identify** five to ten key opinion leaders for every one hundred adults in your church. Look both for those who get things done, and those who stop or slow down progress. Write their names down on your private prayer list and begin to pray for their receptivity to the idea.

Second, **develop a relationship** with as many of these people as possible. Communicate your genuine love and care for them, their families and their concerns. If you care about them, they will care about you and your concerns.

Third, get to **know their greatest ministry interests**. They may have a passion for children's ministry, or foreign missions, or campus ministry or door-to-door evangelism. If you know their passion, you will be better able to speak their "language" and relate to their concerns.

Fourth, **share your vision and ideas with them individually**. In a personal conversation, they are likely to be more open to your vision. You'll be better able to understand and answer any concerns or objections they might have.

Fifth, **relate your vision and ideas to their greatest ministry interests**. Discuss how changes will affect their areas of concern, and if possible, point out the advantages for those areas.

Sixth, **give them time** to process new and perhaps intimidating ideas. Some will catch on more quickly than others. Your personal relationship with them will inform you as to how they are feeling about upcoming changes.

Seventh, **allow them to persuade others**. Once they enthusiastically agree, ask them to share their support publicly. If they are shy about public speaking, then get their permission to quote their opinion.

Notes

¹ William Franklin Graham, *Rebel with a Cause* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1997).

² Dale Carnegie, *How to Win Friends and Influence People* (New York: Pocket Books, reissued 1994).

Chapter 15

Resolving Conflict Biblically

Any new church will face conflict and issues of communication. Relationships produce differences and differences produce conflict. But conflict doesn't have to become a church discipline matter. As you use a Biblical approach to communication and conflict resolution, we hope that in most cases they will not.

How well we handle communication and conflict will determine to a large extent the level of peace and harmony in our church. People can actually have major differences and yet grow deeper in their love, if the Bible's principles are followed. But without using Biblical principles, conflict can produce rifts, separation, and broken fellowship.

The Bible Tells us What to do When a Believer Gets Off Course

The Bible tells us what to do when a fellow Christian appears to be erring in word or deed. Galatians 6:1 (GN) "My brothers, if someone is caught in any kind of wrongdoing, those of you who are spiritual should set him right; but you must do it in a gentle way. And keep an eye on yourselves, so that you will not be tempted, too."

The word translated "wrongdoing" here is the Greek word *hamartia*, which means literally "to miss the mark."¹ It was used of an archer who missed the target, and here refers to a brother or sister who is falling short of God's "target" of behavior.

Paul gave a similar instruction in 1 Thessalonians 5:15: "See that no one pays back wrong for wrong, but at all times make it your aim to do good to one another and to all people."

If someone seems to be somehow missing the mark, the loving thing is to make it your aim to help him or her get back on track.

The Temptation is to Gossip

Instead of helping a person get back on course, we may be tempted to gossip about them. Sometimes this is even spiritualized as a "prayer request." The Scriptures warn sternly about gossip. For example, in Romans 1:29-32 gossip is prominent among the list of sins deserving of death. Or as James 4:11 says, "Brothers, don't slander one another."

So How Does a Person Help to Restore A Fellow Christian?

In Matthew 18 Jesus gave a four-step process for resolving conflict. His words apply

specifically to issues of “sin,” but are also wonderful guidelines for resolving other conflicts.

If your brother sins against you, go and show him his fault, just between the two of you. If he listens to you, you have won your brother over. But if he will not listen, take one or two others along, so that “every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses.” If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if he refuses to listen even to the church, treat him as you would a pagan or a tax collector (Mt. 18:15 – 17).

Four Steps for Resolving Issues:

Step One: Speak Personally and Privately to the Brother or Sister

If your brother sins against you, go and show him his fault, just between the two of you. If he listens to you, you have won your brother over (v. 15).

We are to talk one to one with an erring fellow believer. We must “care enough to confront.” “Therefore each of you must put off falsehood and speak truthfully to his neighbor, for we are all members of one body” (Eph. 4:25).

We should go personally, privately and quickly and talk with the person.

Personally. Each believer is expected to have the courage to face a fellow believer in order to resolve an issue that is a problem! Though it may be extremely difficult, it is still vital.

Privately. We must go one to one, without telling others and allowing the person’s name and reputation to be damaged. We must recognize that we may not be seeing the issues correctly.

Quickly. The longer you wait,

- the harder it gets;
- the worse the sin may get;
- the more you are tempted to talk with others;
- the more difficult an issue of personal conflict can become.

The goal of this process is the restoration of the erring brother or sister. Or, the resolution of the conflict issue. If the person is willing to repent and change, then God gets the glory, a victory is won! If it is not, you must move on to step two.

Step Two: Obtain the Assistance of Others

But if he will not listen, take one or two others along, so that “every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses” (v. 16).

If step one doesn’t bring resolution, you must go again and this time take one or two others as “witnesses.”

Why did Jesus give this instruction?

- It makes a stronger appeal to the person. It is harder to ignore.
- It helps you make sure you are right. Unbiased outsiders can help resolve a difference of opinion. Who knows, *you* might be the one in the wrong!

- It helps resolve the issue if there is a personal problem between you and the person. Others can help bring reconciliation.
- But please note that the circle of those involved should still be limited to you and the one or two others you take with you. Spreading the issue around to others is still gossip.

Step Three: Tell it to the Church

If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church . . . (v. 17a)

If still unresolved, the matter should be brought to the church, especially the church leadership—those who are in a position to help resolve it. If the issue is a matter of personal differences or communication difficulties, they can help bring the parties to terms. If the issue is one of clear sin, they can seek to help restore the erring one(s).

Pastors of church plants should develop leaders they can have confidence in to handle difficult issues. They should be willing to allow these leaders to help resolve difficult issues.

Step Four: Treat a Unrepentant Person as an Outsider

. . . and if he refuses to listen even to the church, treat him as you would a pagan or a tax collector (v.17b).

If the problem is still unresolved, and there is clear Biblical disobedience, then the unrepentant believer is to be treated as a “pagan or a tax collector.” In the culture of Jesus’ day, being treated in this way meant being treated as an outsider. Also known as “excommunication,” this might mean exclusion from:

1. church membership;
2. fellowship at the Lord’s Supper/communion;
3. ministry in the church;
4. any and all personal fellowship as in 2 Th. 3:14: “If anyone does not obey our instruction in this letter, take special note of him. Do not associate with him, in order that he may feel ashamed.”

Does this mean that the person is not allowed to attend services of the church? If unbelievers are invited to attend, it might seem reasonable to allow unrepentant “excommunicated” “believers” to attend. However, if attendance would be disruptive in the opinion of the leadership, then it should not be allowed.

The ultimate goal in every case is restoration. And restoration means treating the formerly erring believer with forgiveness, love and comfort.

The punishment inflicted on him by the majority is sufficient for him. Now instead, you ought to forgive and comfort him, so that he will not be overwhelmed by excessive sorrow. I urge you, therefore, to reaffirm your love for him (2 Cor. 2:6 – 8).

What if the problem person is a leader in the church?

The guidelines apply to all Christians; no one is excluded.

However, the prescription on how to handle the process is slightly different for elders, whether full time and lay.

Do not entertain an accusation against an elder unless it is brought by two or three witnesses. Those who sin are to be rebuked publicly, so that the others may take warning (1 Tim. 5:19 – 20).

In order to protect elders from false accusations, 1 Timothy 5:19 says that the church is not to entertain accusations unless there are at least two eyewitnesses. This protects leaders from those who might fabricate misdeeds in order to destroy their ministries. For example, some pastors have been falsely accused of sexual misconduct. If an accusation alone were enough to discipline the pastor or even end his ministry, that would be a grave tragedy. Thus the requirement of at least two witnesses.

Along with the extra protection comes extra accountability. 1 Timothy 5:20 says that elders proven to be in sin are to be “rebuked publicly.” Though some churches still avoid this step, a leader caught in grievous sin should not be allowed to resign quietly.

What if my problem is with the whole Board?

The same principles apply if the problem is with a larger group of leaders. If people have a grievance with church leaders, those concerns must be addressed with the leaders, not with others in the church.

Expressing to third parties one’s dissatisfaction with leadership does nothing to solve the problem, and violates principles of Christian love.

In fact, the Scripture gives clear warning against gossip and dissension spread in the church:

- Proverbs 6:16-19 says that God “hates” one who “stirs up dissension among brothers.”
- Romans 16:17 says to “Watch out for those who cause divisions”
- Titus 3:10 (NASB) says to “Reject a factious man after a first and second warning.”

Anyone who stirs up strife in the church must be taken through the four steps of church discipline discussed above! Otherwise a complaint against leaders can cause strife and division in the church. Unchecked, this kind of gossip can literally destroy a church, especially a fragile “baby” church plant.

Does this mean that leaders should never be confronted about possible wrongdoing or the need for improvement? Certainly not! Leaders should lovingly and openly receive concerns that are brought directly to them. In fact, they should be thankful for the opportunity to improve and grow.

What if I know I have offended another believer?

Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to your brother; then come and offer your gift (Mt. 5:23, 24).

If you even think you have offended another believer, your Scriptural responsibility is to go to that person, before he approaches you. Try to resolve the problem by clarifying the issue, and then doing whatever is appropriate to make it right—including apologizing!

Remember, my responsibility is to take the initiative to seek reconciliation, even if my brother is the one who is aggrieved. The responsibility to communicate is always *mine*.

- If I am in the wrong, I must go and talk (Mt. 5:23, 24).
- If the other person is in the wrong, I must go and talk (Mt. 18:15).

Though we may not be comfortable with confrontation, it is never right to avoid it. Jesus expects us to pursue reconciliation.

Clear, direct communication without gossip is the mature way to handle differences. Immature ways (gossip, avoiding the one with whom you have the grievance, gossip, murmuring) produce only dissension, divisions and disaster.

What attitude should we have when seeking to resolve issues?

May the following verses guide our attitudes and actions when we face difficulties in communication, conflict and church discipline.

Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others (Phil. 2:3, 4).

Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen. And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you (Eph. 4:29 – 32).

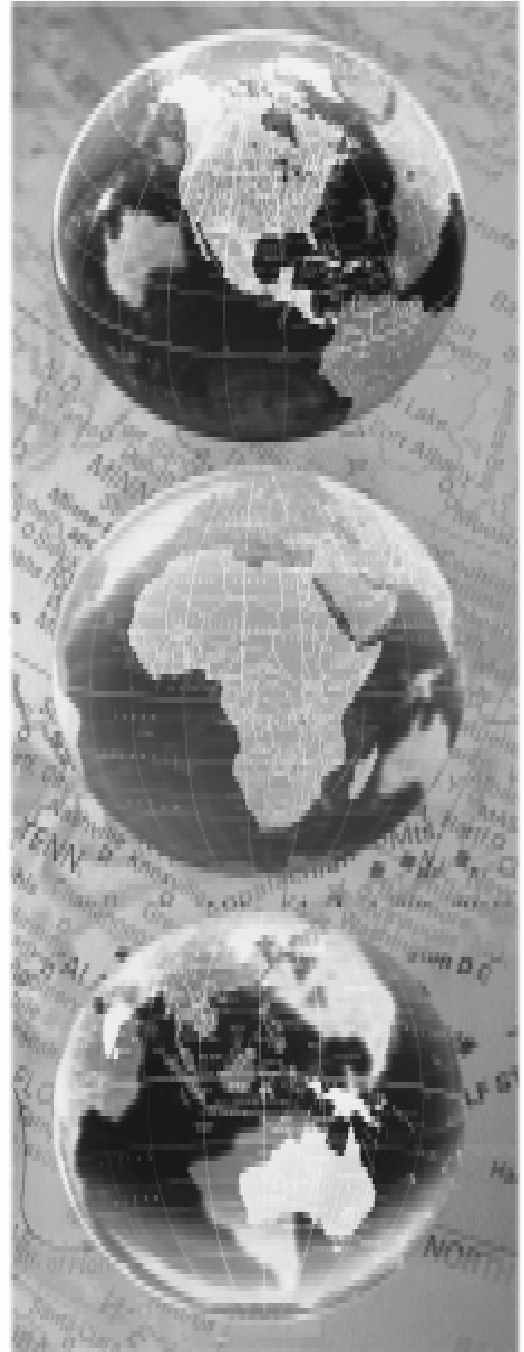
Brothers, if someone is caught in a sin, you who are spiritual should restore him gently. But watch yourself, or you also may be tempted. Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ (Gal. 6:1 – 2).

Notes

¹Vine's Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words, MacDonald Pub Co., n.d., p. 1055.

Section Three

Keeping Your Family Healthy Along the Way



Chapter 16

Healthy Church Planting Families

Church planting can be a great adventure for the whole family. In fact healthy churches are planted by leaders who have healthy families.

But while church planting can and should be an adventure, a joyous one for every member of the family, it is also uniquely stressful and challenging.

Sadly the church planting challenge can also impose painful, even destructive, stresses upon the leader's family. Sometimes a leader's own unconscious assumptions about leadership aggravate these built-in stresses. A church planter may assume his first priority is planting and leading the new church, to the neglect of his family.

It's true that our particular culture shapes how we view the relationship between husband and wife and children. A Christian family in South Korea will have a different outlook on the role of father, mother, and children than will a similar family in Rwanda or in North America.

But the standard for all of us is the Bible, God's holy word. What the Scriptures teach is more important than any culture or tradition.

Jesus is Lord of church planting, and He has a unique vision for your new church. But He is also Lord of your family, and He has designed the family as a unique model and demonstration of His own love for the church.

RECOGNIZE GOD'S HIGH PRIORITY FOR THE CHURCH PLANTING FAMILY

The New Testament qualifications for leadership highlight the need for an elder to care for his family.

Now the elder must be . . . the husband of one wife . . . He must manage his own family well . . . (1 Tim. 3: 2a, 4a).

Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her to make her holy . . . (Eph. 5:25 – 26a).

An elder (church planter) is to be the husband of one wife, literally, “a one woman man.” What is “one woman man?” Among other things, it is a man whose wife knows that, after Christ, she is closest to his heart. Not even the church can compete for his affections.

And a church planter must “manage” his own family well if he is to be trusted with the management of God's church. The word “manage” in the original Greek is the same word (*proistemi*) used for the spiritual gift of leadership (Rom. 12:8b). It's clear that the church planter's first leadership responsibility is within his family.

He is to love his wife in the same way that Jesus loved the church. Christian marriage is in itself a witness to the sacrifice and devotion the Lord extends to us. When a leader fails to love his wife in this way, he brings reproach to the name of Christ.

What a tragedy it would be for a leader to devote his life to church planting, but then to lose his wife to neglect and his children to the world. Loving, leading, and nurturing our families must represent the “first fruits” of our affection, prayer, and priorities. It is not what we do with our “left-over” time. The Lord will bless healthy church planting families with healthy churches.

After all, how will the people of our new churches ever learn what a biblical marriage is about if they don’t see it modeled by their pastor? How will new Christians ever learn about godly parenting if they don’t see it lived out in the pastor’s home?

The people we reach in our new churches are often emotionally damaged, more familiar with divorce, neglect, immorality, and abuse than with the warmth, nurture, and unconditional love of a true Christian home. What the church planting leader teaches by his own example of obedience to the Scriptures is even more powerful than what he teaches from the pulpit.

IDENTIFY THE UNIQUE STRESSES AND CHALLENGES FOR THE CHURCH PLANTING FAMILY

Each church planting family will need to identify its own list of challenges, but they do seem to come in familiar patterns. Here are some of the more common areas of tension:

Spiritual warfare. Because church planting is an assault on the kingdom of darkness, there is a spiritual dimension to the struggle we face. The evil one hates Jesus, the Lord of church planting, and he hates the church planters who serve Christ. Difficulties in church planting are not just temporal issues. Like a spiritual iceberg, 90% of the battle is invisible.

The magnifying glass effect. Just as a magnifying lens concentrates and focuses sunlight, so church planting intensifies the stress and strain of family life. Normal transitions often seem rockier, mundane problems more potent. Whether we’re talking about the toddler years of our children, the problems of teen years, or dealing with the emptiness of your home when the children are grown and gone, church planting magnifies the strain.

Loneliness and isolation. The church planting family has likely moved from their home, family, and friends to a new community. They may have crossed cultural and linguistic barriers for the cause of Christ. No wonder they may feel lonely and isolated. Of course the church planting husband may find great fulfillment in the hard work of church planting, and he may not feel as much of an emotional deficit.

But the wife and children are probably dealing with the uncertainty of change at every level. The new church may be a source of strength here, but usually it is not enough. Sometimes there is no relational connection with the people of the new church, and the loneliness may be intensified.

Financial Strains. Not every church planter raises financial support, but most do some fund raising. Many are responsible to develop a support team to fund not only their salary but

also the new church's expenses for the first year or so. When young families live each month with a fluctuating, or substandard, income, the strain can be very wearying. One result may be a decision for the wife to seek employment outside the home.

Unrealistic expectations. Most church planters are visionaries, and they should be. But the vision, and its magnitude, needs to be determined by God, not by an unhealthy comparison with the latest church planting superstar. Sometimes the sponsoring organization, denomination, or mother church can place unfair and unrealistic expectations on a planting family. And unrealistic expectations can cause trouble for the church planting family.

Unrealistic expectations can arise in a variety of places: the planter himself, his core team, or the sponsoring organization (or mother church). Expectations can be placed upon the spouse and children that are not only unrealistic but also unbiblical. Whatever the source, without a strong dose of wisdom, realism, and experience, unrealistic expectations can place everyone in trouble.

Privacy issues. “Why is this church in my house?” a church planter's wife could rightfully ask.

In the early days of the church plant, the church office may be in the planter's house. That office may be in a separate room, but all too often it is crowded into the dining room, laundry room or even the master bedroom. Boxes, books, filing cabinets, computers, copiers, and other equipment may compete for the family's living space.

At first the family's phone may also be the church phone. Spouse and children may end up taking ministry calls.

Counseling meetings and leadership training may end up in the living room. Spur of the moment invitations to dinner or to spend the night at his house may seem like a great idea to the church planter, but may feel like a serious invasion of privacy to his wife. Her patience may wear thin, even if she has the gift of hospitality.

No wonder this is a strain for the family!

HONOR YOUR FAMILY AS YOUR FIRST MINISTRY PRIORITY

What strategies will enable the church planting family to flourish as they face their unique challenges? Here are some suggestions.

1. *Demonstrate your commitment to care for your family.*

Our families see this commitment, or lack of it, in the use of our time. A church planter who is consistently away from home five or six nights a week needs new priorities. Yes, church planting is demanding. But his family needs him, and God holds him accountable for his ministry *at home*.

Wives need help with housework, and children need help with school assignments and prayer with dad at bedtime. The whole family needs time for fun and relaxation—a day off for everyone. Showing up at a child's music recital or sports competition speaks volumes about a father's priorities.

If spouse and children know that the church planter is scheduling his time with them in mind, the inevitable emergency can be handled in stride. If the norm is to be gone only two or

three nights a week, the family will flex for the crisis that demands his time over and above that in a given week.

We may need to demonstrate our commitment to the family by moving the office out of the home, or by arranging to have a second phone line for exclusive office use.

This commitment is for the benefit of the new church, too. The church planter does his family and his church a great service by making his commitment to both of them very clear. He allows his children to be children—not perfect little robots. He honors his wife, and allows her to have the ministry and the involvement in church life that best suits her.

A church planter's children need to grow up in an atmosphere of love and acceptance. They are *children*. Expecting perfection from them, or allowing others in the church to “put them in a box,” is very destructive. The church planting pastor must be loving but firm in setting the tone for how his wife and children will be viewed in the new church.

He honors them by how he treats them in public and private. They are not “sermon illustrations” (except with permission, and when the illustration is positive), and they are not just workers in the church. They are his first ministry priority.

2. *Work hard at good communication.*

The “great communicator” on Sundays may be a taciturn grouch at home. Good communication doesn't just happen. The church planter needs to be as intentional about listening to his children and communicating with his wife as he is with his leadership team.

“Marriage meetings,” scheduled each week into the palm pilot or Daytimer of both husband and wife, are one way of assuring that spouses don't lose touch with one another. They can enjoy a cup of coffee, debrief about the past week, and talk about the week ahead. Developing a pattern of sharing matters of the heart, how each partner is really *feeling* (as well as what they're thinking), builds a healthy relationship. Praying together, for one another and for the children, anchors the family to the grace and power of God.

For some couples the same thing is accomplished by taking a walk together a few times a week. Or with a “date night” when they go out for an inexpensive meal or dessert. The important thing is the commitment to spend time together.

Setting aside time for the children may need to be just as deliberate. But their own hurts and questions, triumphs and tragedies, aren't easily scheduled. Being at home on a consistent basis will allow children the freedom to talk to dad when they need to talk to him.

3. *Be intentional about developing a support system.*

The church planting wife needs friends. She will probably need to find them outside the church. She needs friends with whom she can laugh and cry and unburden herself without fearing repercussions of gossip or hurt feelings in the church.

The church planter needs to encourage his wife to take time for herself, and to do that which is nourishing for her. Whether it's shopping or a weekend retreat by herself, a short trip back home, or pursuing her own crafts, she needs freedom to be herself.

The planter himself needs friends, probably more than he realizes. He needs a male accountability partner, and he needs friends with whom he can relax and have fun. Again, he'll probably find them outside the church plant. He may need to look for friends among other pastors or church planters, perhaps those outside his particular denomination.

In the initial stages of the new church, there may be no youth group. If the church

planter has teenagers, he will need to help them find a support system elsewhere—through the ministry of another church in the area, a Christian school, or by developing a Bible study in their own home.

“A support system” may also include Christian counseling. The church planter and his family may very well need the help of a gifted, Christ-centered professional counselor. There is no shame in this—far from it! All of us Christian leaders are wounded healers, and there are seasons of life when we need extra help. A marriage may need a “tune-up,” a young person may need to talk to a caring adult outside the family, the planter or spouse may need one-on-one counseling for a time. They should get it!

4. *Develop good financial habits.*

Wise church planters raise their personal support and needed project funds before they “get to the field.” It is immeasurably more difficult to do extensive fund raising during the actual planting of the new church.

Wise church planters also avoid debt, and if they’re in debt, they should do their best to get out of it!

Sometimes financial counseling is needed, and church planters should get it. Perhaps a godly businessman or a Christian financial planner will be needed to help the church planting family establish good financial habits.

It’s probably wise also to limit the spouse’s outside employment. In some cases she may actually enjoy a part-time job outside the home. But if she is forced to go to work while the children are small, the strain on the family increases dramatically.

Learning how to stay on a simple budget is a skill that often eludes otherwise mature Christian leaders. But learning to live on what you have each month is more than a management principle. It is a spiritual discipline!

Another essential habit is sacrificial giving. God’s word is abundant in its promises of provision for those who learn to give to Him first.

5. *Think of the church plant as “the family farm.”*

The family farm is a place where everyone has a job and everyone enjoys the harvest. Even the smallest child is involved: gathering the eggs in the hen house, helping to weed the garden.

When church planting is seen as the *family’s* business, it gives unique opportunities for everyone to be themselves and to experience the joy of ministry.

The “family farm” is a place where the church planter shares Jesus and the ministry with his children. What a joy and privilege it is to lead your own children to Christ! And what a joy to see them involved in ministry, even at a young age.

Children can help in ways that are appropriate for their age and ability, and which reflect their own giftedness. Maybe they’ll enjoy ushering, facilities set-up, or greeting. Older children who show an aptitude for teaching may be “apprentices” in younger children’s classes. Those who are musical can be trained to be part of the worship teams. Some will have a bent toward electronics and “mixing” the sound, and can be trained in the technical side of worship production.

The church planting wife must have the freedom in a new church to be herself. Not all planters’ wives have the same gifts, and so she should be able to say no to unrealistic expectations and to choose ministry that fits her passion and gifts.¹

Healthy church planting families plant healthy churches.
In the first edition of this book, Paul Becker wrote,

My conviction is that if children are loved into a relationship with Christ and disciplined at their own speed into serving God, they will carry on their own ministry. Dr. Woodrow Phillips is a second-generation church planter and missionary. His father planted more than ten churches. Woody's son, Steve Phillips, has planted many churches in Chile. What a legacy the Phillips family has in being used of the Lord to extend his Kingdom!

Amen and amen.

Notes

¹ Obviously there are times in church planting when everyone on the leadership team is called upon to do ministry that isn't their first love. We all fill slots just because there is a need. But the goal should be to help each person find a job that fits his or her unique personality, training, and gifts.

Chapter 17

The Characteristics of a Church Planting Couple

We begin this chapter with a disclaimer. Single church planters can certainly start churches. The Apostle Paul was a world-changing church planter. Furthermore, we also recognize that lead church planters can be women.

But we have written this chapter with a view toward helping the vast majority of church planters, who are married men.

With that in mind, we focus upon “the church planting couple” to emphasize the critical role that the spouse has in the success of the plant. Planting a new church is a team effort. Unless his wife is solidly with him in his call, the church planter will probably fail in establishing a viable and growing new congregation.

So it is that we consider the characteristics of both the church planter and his wife.

We suggest that husbands and wives each read this chapter and then discuss their impressions. Gently evaluate yourselves and one another. Be sure to speak the truth in love.¹

Remember, no one perfectly exhibits all these characteristics, so don't be discouraged. Effective church planters would rate above average on most of them, but no one has them all! And God, the Lord of the church planting, sometimes chooses very unlikely people to accomplish His greatest work.

THE CHARACTERISTICS OF A CHURCH PLANTER

Dr. Charles Ridley's pioneering work forms the basis for the first thirteen characteristics.² Since 1984, they “have been used with a high degree of success in selecting and predicting effective church planters.”³ These characteristics, along with their defining descriptions, are listed below.

1. Has a vision capacity

- being a person who projects into the future beyond the present
- developing a theme that highlights the vision and philosophy of ministry
- persuasively selling the vision to the people
- approaching challenges as opportunities rather than obstacles
- coping effectively with non-visioning elements
- not erecting artificial walls or limits either overtly or subconsciously
- establishing a clear church identity related to the theme and vision
- believing in God's capacity to do great things

2. Is intrinsically motivated

- having a desire to do well and a commitment to excellence
- having stick-to-itiveness and persistence
- having initiative and aggressiveness without the negative connotations
- having a willingness to work long and hard
- being a self-starter with a willingness to build from nothing
- having a high energy and vitality level; physical stamina

3. Creates ownership of ministry

- helping people to “buy in” and feel responsible for the growth and success of the church
- gaining commitment of the people to the vision
- establishing a congregational identity
- avoiding stereotyping of congregation by imposing unrealistic goals for which it cannot claim ownership

4. Relates to the unchurched

- communicating in a style that is understood by the unchurched
- understanding the “psychology” or mentality of the unchurched
- moving and functioning in the “personal space” of the unchurched without fear
- quickly getting to know the unchurched on a personal level
- breaking through the barriers erected by the unchurched
- handling crises faced by the unchurched

5. Manages family well

- having an explicit agreement regarding each partner’s respective role and involvement in ministry
- having explicit rules regarding the use of home as an office
- evaluating the consequences of ministry demands upon the children
- functioning as a team through individual and collective action
- having a strategy for dealing with strangers
- modeling wholesome family life before church and community
- agreeing upon and sharing the ministry vision
- deliberately planning and protecting family life

6. Builds relationships effectively

- responding with urgency to expressed needs and concerns of people
- displaying Godly love and compassion to people
- getting to know people on a personal basis
- making others feel secure and comfortable in one’s presence
- not responding judgmentally or prejudicially to new people
- appreciating and accepting a variety of persons
- spending quality time with present parishioners without overstepping them for new people

7. Is committed to church growth

- believing in church growth as a theological principle

- appreciating steady and consistent growth without preoccupation with the quick success factor
- committing to numerical growth within the context of spiritual and relational growth (more and better disciples)
- recognizing that non-growth is threatening and self-defeating
- establishing the goal of becoming a financially self-supporting church within a specific period of time
- not prematurely falling into a ministry of maintenance
- seeing the church project within the larger context of God's Kingdom

8. Is responsive to the community

- understanding the culture of the community
- identifying and assessing community needs
- responding to community needs on a priority basis such that resources are most efficiently used
- determining successes and failures of other organized religious attempts to respond to community needs
- not confusing community needs with what the church wants to offer
- acquiring an understanding of the character and “pulse” of the community
- adapting the philosophy of ministry to the character of the community

9. Utilizes giftedness of others

- releasing and equipping people to do the task of ministry
- discerning of spiritual gifts in others
- matching the gifts of people with ministry needs and opportunities
- delegating effectively in areas of personal limitation
- avoiding personal overload by delegating effectively
- not prematurely assigning ministry assignments before people are adequately equipped
- not placing unwarranted restrictions on other's spiritual giftedness

10. Is flexible and adaptable

- coping effectively with ambiguity
- coping effectively with constant and abrupt change
- adapting oneself and one's methods to the uniqueness of the particular church planting project
- shifting priorities and emphasis during various stages of church growth
- doing “whatever” is necessary “whenever” necessary

11. Builds group cohesiveness

- developing a nucleus group or groups as a foundation
- quickly incorporating newcomers into a network of relationships
- engaging others in meaningful church activity
- monitoring the morale of people
- utilizing groups effectively

- dealing with conflict assertively, constructively and tactfully

12. Is resilient

- experiencing setbacks without defeat
- riding the ups and downs (i.e. attendance)
- expecting the unexpected
- rebounding from loss, disappointments and failure

13. Exercises faith

- possessing a conviction regarding one's call to church planting ministry
- believing in God's action
- having expectation and hope
- having a willingness to wait for answers to specific prayer requests

At DCPI we have identified another twelve characteristics that are almost always present in effective church planters.

14. An Entrepreneur. He sees a need. Then he finds a way to meet the need and market the solution. Entrepreneurs start businesses. Church planters start churches. Past experience is the best indicator of future performance. Unless a potential church planter has some experience starting viable groups, ministries, or businesses it is unlikely that he will be able to start a church.

15. An Encourager. The church planter must maintain a positive, encouraging spirit as he interacts with the nucleus of the new church and with the unchurched. This is not an easy attitude to maintain given the challenges.

16. A People Gatherer. Can the potential church planter gather people? One pastor believed he was to plant a new church, but he could not start one ongoing small group in an existing church plant. He was probably not meant to start a new church.

17. A Resource Gatherer. The church planter must not only gather people, he must be able to gather resources. He must be able to raise money. Planting a healthy, growing, new church can be expensive. Where will the money come from? The church planter will have to find it. New churches require buildings, tables, chairs, cribs and a hundred other items. Where will they come from? He will have to gather these resources. Wisdom and ministry knowledge is a needed resource. He must find the right people and information to organize the church.

18. A Motivational Bible Teacher. It is not enough to teach the Word of God. He must be able to communicate the Bible in an interesting and convicting manner to both the unchurched and the church. He must have a sense of humor. If you are saying to yourself, "Wow, that sounds like a big job," you are right. If you can't communicate effectively to the unchurched, the churchplant will be unable to reach the community. If you can't challenge the church, then solid Christians will leave your church for another.

19. An Effective Promoter. He must become adept in creatively communicating the message of

Christ and the new church in his cultural target group. He must know the media available in and appropriate to his culture. Being able to use these media to promote the new church and to reach new people for Christ is essential. Whether he uses mass mailings, newspaper ads, radio or television spots, or capitalizes on word-of-mouth, door-to-door calling, neighborhood study groups, or the attraction of big events, the church planter is an effective promoter.

20. A Leader. The church planter must be a leader. A leader is someone others follow. By definition, a church planter must find others who will follow him or he will not have a church. He must be able to recognize other potential leaders and then recruit, train, and delegate.

21. A Prayer Warrior. The task of planting a new church is often overwhelming and there are so many needs. The church planter must be a powerful prayer warrior. He must have inner confidence that God will answer his prayers and meet the needs of his people and the church.

22. An Organizer. Many highly-catalytic church planters are not adept at organizing. They tend to be more comfortable with the “big picture” than the “details.” Unless a church planter is able to organize the ministries and programs of the church, however, he will not be able to plant a viable church. If the planter is working as part of a team, this task can be shared with an able administrator.

23. A Generalist. Usually the church planter does not have the luxury of being responsible for just one or two specific functions like leadership and teaching. Even if he is leading a team, the church planter must be a generalist. He must be able to put on several “hats” and function well. On a given day he may be preacher, worship leader, counselor, copy proofer, evangelist, maintenance man, leader, manager, computer operator, executive secretary, and pastor. As the church grows and develops, he will be able to delegate some of these roles. But in the early days his ministry will be multi-faceted.

24. A Pioneer. Despite all the challenges and inconveniences of establishing a new outpost for the Lord, the church planter would rather be a pioneer than a settler. He loves the adventure and the dynamic of God’s working in a new church.

25. A Person of Integrity. One of the leading reasons why church plants fail is a lack of integrity on the part of the planter. A church planter who has integrity is not only honest but also emotionally and spiritually sound. For example, if a boat has structural integrity it will not sink during a storm. The church planter’s honesty and soundness will be put to the test during the “storms” of starting a new church.

THE CHARACTERISTICS OF A CHURCH PLANTING WIFE

One man on a denominational Church planting committee commented on the selection of church planters. He said, only half-jokingly, “I think we ought to look harder at the church planting wife than the church planter. If she has the right stuff, let’s give her a call. If her husband is OK, that’s fine.”

Many are the challenges and joys of the church planting wife. They require a woman with special qualities.

1. A Faithful Partner. Usually a church planter will come to his wife with a vision. He asks her to evaluate the project and pray with him concerning God's will for their lives and ministry. Often she will be asked to consider leaving home and moving their children to a new community, perhaps even a different culture. She must have faith in the Lord, faith in the vision, and faith in her husband. She must believe with him that God is going to birth a dynamic new church to His Glory. Like her husband, she must be a powerful prayer warrior who knows that God will answer.

Starting a new church is unlike going to an existing church. Rarely is a salary guaranteed. The church planter is usually called upon to raise much of his support and the start-up funds for the new church. Most wives are naturally concerned about the financial security of their families. Only if a church planter's wife is sincerely dependent upon God's provision for her family will she be able to experience inner peace during the start-up of the church.

2. A Resilient Person. Planting a strong, growing church is a tumultuous experience, with many "ups and downs." People's lives are transformed by the gospel, but conflict arises in the church. Marriages are strengthened, but friends leave the congregation. A church planter's wife must be emotionally tough and resilient. Her personal relationship with the Lord must be strong so that she is able to deal with all the joys and troubles of the new church without losing balance.

3. A Committed Wife and Mother. With all the pressures of church planting, the church planter's wife must do all that she can to keep her marriage relationship and family healthy and happy. Money may be tight. Her husband may be gone much of the time and focused primarily on the needs of the church plant. The children may feel uprooted. She needs to keep a watchful eye on her marriage and family. She must have the courage to make her husband and children aware of family needs.

4. An Encourager. Frequently the church planter may become discouraged. In the words of Elmer Towns, he is "an unaided man with limited resources against insurmountable obstacles in unlikely circumstances."⁴ He needs constant encouragement, especially from his wife. There will be others in the new church that will look to her for encouragement also.

5. A Wise Counselor. The church planter's wife will often be her husband's "sounding board" for dreams, ideas, concerns, and problems. She too must have people that she looks to for wisdom.

6. An Organizer. The Lord, in his wisdom, often pairs church planters who can see the "big picture" with wives who are excellent organizers and administrators. It is important to be sensitive to the church planter's wife in this regard and not expect too much from her. Paul Becker once met with a church planter and his wife to help them put together a TimeLine toward the birth of their new church. The next time they met, the church planter's wife had completely filled out the TimeLine. Her husband had given his input, but she was the organizer.

Many denominations will, in their selection process, require a church planting couple to go through an assessment. We strongly commend this practice. It is helpful to the prospective church planting couple and to the organization.

Praise God for the church planting couples God calls into this ministry! It is a wonderfully fulfilling way to serve the Lord. But it is painful to see a couple sacrifice so much trying to plant a church when they do not have the characteristics or the calling to plant.

Good assessment encourages and confirms those who are called to plant. It protects those who are not ready or right for church planting, and increases the effectiveness of those who are.

Notes

¹ DCPI publishes an interactive mini-handbook called “The Pre-Assessment Profile.” It is designed to take a prospective church planting couple through a process of evaluating themselves based on the characteristics outlined in this chapter. It can be a helpful tool to discern God’s next step if you think you may be called to church planting.

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³ Dr. Thomas M. Graham, Center for Organizational and Ministry Development, P.O. Box 49488, Colorado Springs, Colorado, 80949, (719) 590-8808.

⁴ Elmer Towns, *Getting a Church Started* (Lynchburg, VA: Church Growth Institute, 1985), p. 13.

Chapter 18

The Care of the Church Planting Pastor

The health and balance of the church planting pastor is essential to the health and balance of the new church. If the devil can hurt or neutralize the church planter early in his ministry, the church will likely be severely injured, if not destroyed.

As a church planter, you have a ministry to others, but you must also ministry to yourself.

Imagine trying to sit on a three legged stool with one leg broken. The stool will not stand and you will be in a heap on the floor. Likewise, a pastor has three major aspects of his well being. If any one of these three critical areas is broken or weakened, his ministry is headed for some type of collapse.

What are these three aspects of a church planter's total well being? They are his:

1. Spiritual Health
2. Emotional Health
3. Physical Health

These three are interrelated. If one area is suffering, the other two will also be dragged down. To maintain overall health, all three must be cared for.

So who is responsible for maintaining your health in these three areas? Clearly *you* are. Your supervisor, your wife, your board, and your doctor are not responsible. They can help, but they can't do what only you can do for yourself.

Here are some questions you will want to answer for each of these three vital areas. Use them regularly to help you do your own "health check up." You may want to schedule them every 60 days or so, throughout the course of your ministry.

CARING FOR YOUR SPIRITUAL HEALTH

As a pastor, you are called to minister to the spiritual needs of others. But what if your own spiritual health is flagging? How can you do that if your own spiritual health is not what it should be? Your first ministry is to your own spiritual welfare. Use these questions to help you make sure you are healthy spiritually.

1. Am I spending meaningful time nurturing my relationship with the Lord each day?

It is easy to feel that the press of ministry is more important than spending time with the Lord. But consider Jesus, our model. He could easily have spent all his time in ministry to people, but he knew that he must take time to be with His Father. Luke 5:15-16 says, "Yet the news about him spread all the more, so that crowds of people came to hear him and to be healed

of their sicknesses. But Jesus often withdrew to lonely places and prayed.”

Jesus didn't wait for some time to be available, He made time. “Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed (Mk. 1:35).” Like Jesus, you and I must make time to be with the Lord. If we wait for the time to be available, it won't happen. We too must make our time with the Lord a priority. Put the Lord first each day, and nothing else will crowd out that time.

2. Am I spending special extended times with the Lord when facing special ministry demands or crises?

Before intense times of ministry, you will need to get alone with God to pray, like Jesus did. Before He appointed the twelve, He spent the entire night in prayer. “One of those days Jesus went out to a mountainside to pray, and spent the night praying to God. When morning came, he called his disciples to him and chose twelve of them, whom he also designated apostles (Lk. 6:12, 13).”

After intense ministry, you will need to get alone with the Lord and pray also. After feeding 5,000 people, “Immediately Jesus made the disciples get into the boat and go on ahead of him to the other side, while he dismissed the crowd. After he had dismissed them, he went up on a mountainside by himself to pray. When evening came, he was there alone (Mt. 14:22, 23).”

Intense times of ministry bring intense challenges. Meet intense challenges with intense prayer! Compensate for spiritual output by allowing God to fill you up again. Your life and ministry will be richer for it.

3. Am I resisting temptation?

We are all aware of well-known Christian leaders who have fallen because they have failed to resist temptation. The damage to the Christian witness has been painful.

Could I fall? Could you? Yes, unless we are vigilant in resisting temptation.

From the evil one's perspective it must make sense to attack the pastor. God is using you to establish an outpost in the enemy's territory. As you share the good news of forgiveness with the enemy's captives, they are escaping from his kingdom and entering the Kingdom of God. When in a war, it is wise strategy to target an officer in the opposing army. If he is destroyed, then the soldiers in his outfit become disoriented and ineffective. Jesus puts it another way, “...strike the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock will be scattered” (Mt. 26:31b). If Satan causes the church planting pastor to fall, then the new church will probably fail in its disciple-making mission.

Satan attacks different men in different ways. One church planter may have difficulties in his marriage and fall prey to sexual immorality. Another new church pastor may misuse the church's money. Another may have a problem with anger, which he vents on his leaders within the church. Depression may cause another church planter to give up. Still another church planter may have a very successful start and allow a big salary and comfort to cool his evangelistic fervor. The evil one attacks subtly. He can be devastating unless we are vigilant in resisting temptation.

What can you do to resist temptation?

- *Make the care of your own soul a top priority.* Intimacy with Christ is the most important relationship for any Christian leader. Purity and holiness are prerequisites for church planting leaders. Your time of prayer and study (and application) of the

Bible is your most important time each day. And as you pray, pray for protection from the evil one, just as Jesus taught us: “And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one” (Mt. 6:13).

- *Make sure you have the “prayer covering” of an intercessory team.* Jesus Himself interceded for us while on earth: “My prayer is not that you take them out of the world, but that you protect them from the evil one” (John 17:15) and continues to intercede for us in heaven (Heb. 7:25). And we need the prayers of others if we are to live in holiness and obedience.
- *Avoid situations where you might be tempted.* “Flee the evil desires of youth, and pursue righteousness, faith, love, and peace, along with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart” (2 Tim. 2:22). Run from moral compromise, just as Joseph ran from Potiphar’s wife when she tried to seduce him. For example, pastors should avoid visiting or counseling a woman alone. Delegate that ministry to a woman leader or make sure someone else is present for the appointment.
- *Resist the evil one.* When Jesus was tempted, He quoted Scripture, and so should we. And James counseled, “Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. Come near to God and he will come near to you” (Jas. 4:7, 8).
- *Have an accountability partner or group.* Obviously this means a same-sex friend or friends. You should be committed to one another, to confidentiality, and to moral purity and Scriptural integrity. Learn to ask and answer the important questions about your private life, your thoughts, and relationships. Knowing that someone will be asking if you’ve compromised yourself in a given area can help you avoid that compromise!
- *Get counseling.* If you run up against a temptation that is repetitive or compulsive in nature, find a Christian counselor to help you. Make sure he is someone who uses God’s word and prays effectively. Seeking help is not shameful. Shame comes from living a lie or denying the impact of temptation.

And remember: “. . . the Lord is faithful, and he will strengthen and protect you from the evil one” (2 Thessalonians 3:3).

4. *Am I being totally obedient to every aspect of God’s will that I am aware of?*

If God has told you to do something and you are not doing it, you are headed for big trouble. Whether it is something that is directly stated in the Word, or something that you know He has laid on your heart, you must obey or else potential disaster lies ahead. Just ask Jonah—his defiance landed him in the digestive juices of a big fish before being regurgitated on the sand!

If God has told you *not* to do something and you are doing it, you are headed for trouble as well. If you are being disobedient, there is a seed of corruption in your heart. That seed may grow to be a weed that chokes out your relationship with the Lord. Kill the seed before it destroys your heart.

*Above all else, guard your heart, for it is the wellspring of life.
Put away perversity from your mouth; keep corrupt talk far from your lips.
Let your eyes look straight ahead, fix your gaze directly before you.
Make level paths for your feet and take only ways that are firm.*

Do not swerve to the right or the left; keep your foot from evil.

—Prov. 4:23 - 27

Take some time right now to get down on your knees and repent of any disobedience. Then make the corrections needed to get back on track. Find an accountability partner who can encourage you, pray for you and hold you responsible to be obedient. Remember the promise of 1 Peter 5:6 “Humble yourselves, therefore, under God’s mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time.”

CARING FOR YOUR EMOTIONAL HEALTH

What is it like to be emotionally unhealthy? In extreme cases it might mean the need for a stay in a mental hospital under the care of a psychiatrist.

But though most problems aren’t so severe, they can still cripple us in our ministries. Our emotional sickness may manifest itself in a host of ways—burnout, depression, emotional exhaustion, constant irritation at people, anger, joylessness, lack of compassion, lack of energy, a desire to fantasize, inability to relax or sleep, sleeping too much, a harsh spirit, strained relationships with family members, and so on.

What is God’s best for us? “The joy of the Lord is my strength” (Neh. 8:10b). Obviously emotional illness falls short of that. It robs us of the joy of our intimacy with Christ and of our ability to serve Him effectively.

The following questions can assist you to maintain good emotional health:

1. Am I working hard, but not too hard?

Paul Becker reflected on the early months of his ministry:

“About seven months after the birth of my first church, I found myself completely exhausted. After long Saturdays of meeting people and finishing my sermon, I would stand up to teach on Sunday mornings a spent man. For a time, I thought to myself, ‘My people will see how tired I am and realize how hard I’m working for the church.’ Later, I realized that all my people saw was a man who was too worn out to give his best.”

A church planter has to work hard, and most church planters are highly motivated to do so. Some are not, to which we say, “. . . faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead” (Jas. 2:17). Your church will never live unless you work and work hard! If you have trouble structuring your time, ask a supervisor or mentor to hold you accountable.

But the more common problem for church planters is working too hard. If you are working twelve hours a day, seven days a week, you are working too hard. The negative consequences of overwork are severe. It causes great stress on you and your whole family. You don’t have the time or the energy to serve your wife and children. Ultimately this could break your home and your ministry: “If anyone does not know how to manage his own family, how can he take care of God’s church? (1 Timothy 3:5).”

Exhaustion can also steal away the sweet encouraging spirit of the church planter that is

so attractive to people, to draw them to Christ and the church. You can work harder as the church grows smaller and smaller.

It is also much easier for Satan to discourage you when you are tired. If you become a “hard driver” when you’re exhausted, you can also strain relationships with those who are working with you.

So, how can you find a balance between working hard, but not too hard?

You may want to chart your work week according to your priorities, and mark out blocks of time. The first block should be time for you and the Lord at the beginning of every day. This is the most important time of your week.

In discussion with your wife, choose a day off, and make it your “family day”—time to minister to your own family. Whether it’s working around the house or having fun together, it’s day just for you, your wife, and children.

Make sure you also schedule time just for you and your wife.

On your yearly calendar, choose at least two days every quarter to retreat with God.

2. *Am I encouraged?*

Fear and discouragement are two of Satan’s most effective tools for paralyzing church planters. Fear can suddenly descend upon the planter as he asks himself questions like these:

Where are all the people? Where is all the money going to come from? Will that divisive leader split the church? Why isn’t the church growing? How am I going to get it all done?

Certainly everybody deals with fear on occasion. But if fear is allowed to gain a foothold, the church planter will dwell in discouragement. That discouragement may communicate to his lay leaders. Through the Sunday morning teaching, the church planter may telegraph this discouragement to the entire congregation. A discouraged church no longer has a positive climate for growth.

How can we combat fear and discouragement?

One very potent weapon in our arsenal is God’s Word. Throughout the Old and New Testaments, God encourages his workers.

I took you from the ends of the earth, from its farthest corners I called you. I said, “You are my servant; I have chosen you and have not rejected you. So do not fear for I am with you; do not be dismayed for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand” (Isa. 41:9, 10).

Or hear the words the Lord gave Joshua when he was preparing to lead his people into the Promised Land:

As I was with Moses, so I will be with you; I will never leave you or forsake you. Be strong and courageous, because you will lead these people to inherit the land I swore to their forefathers to give them. Be strong and very courageous. Be careful to obey all the law that my servant Moses gave you; do not turn from it to the right or to the left, that you may be successful wherever you go. Do not let this book of the law depart from your mouth; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful. Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be terrified; do not be discouraged, for the

Lord your God will be with you wherever you go (Jos. 1:5b-9).

Jesus said at the close of the Great Commission: “And surely I will be with you always to the very end of the age (Mt. 28:20b).” The Lord wants you to be strong and full of courage. He has promised to be your constant companion. Together, you and your Lord can overcome. “I can do everything through him who gives me strength” (Phil. 4:13).

Another protection against discouragement is to find an encouraging friend. Ecclesiastes 4:10 says, “If one falls down, his friend can help him up. But pity the man who falls and has no one to help him up.” You need someone, other than your wife, to share your heart with. Ask God for a friend, probably someone outside the church plant, who will listen to and encourage you.

Find a hobby that doesn’t consume much time. A hobby can give you some satisfaction and joy, and can keep you from becoming totally consumed by the hard work involved in planting a new church. Your mind can be freed to be more creative, and your body can be renewed for the ministry.

Certainly it’s always encouraging to give praise to God. Focus on the positive. Consider all the wonderful ways in which God is working in your new church. Think of the lives that have been changed. Consider those who have given their lives to Christ. Praise dispels fear and discouragement. As you lift up your praises daily to the Lord, he will lift your spirits.

Appreciate your family. When you find yourself down because of the church plant, think of your family. Enjoy your wife and children. No matter what is happening in the church, you will still be her husband and their daddy.

If you are discouraged because of a real issue in the church, you will want to pray about possible solutions. Get counsel from your advisors and take action. Indecision is discouraging. Make a decision.

3. Am I managing conflict well?

The ministry *is* conflict. It is conflict between the kingdom of light and the kingdom of darkness. A church planting pastor will often be in the middle of a battle. It is also true that “part of being a leader is that you must spend a considerable amount of energy absorbing other people’s complaints.”¹

Conflict can manifest itself in a variety of ways in a new church plant. A Christian will begin attending, expecting the new church to worship like his last church. He is shocked and dismayed when the worship experience is difference. He takes up his grievance with the church planter. Conflict.

An unchurched couple calls upon the pastor for marriage counseling. The first counseling session deteriorates into a yelling match between the husband and wife. When the church planter tries to intervene the husband and wife both turn on him. Conflict.

A small group leader within the new church wants to teach his own curriculum. He doesn’t see why he should have to follow the leadership’s guidelines. He meets with the church planter and subtly lets him know that he will leave the church if he doesn’t get his way. Conflict.

The church planter meets with his Steering Committee. He has been trying to get small groups developed to form a nucleus for the new church, but his efforts have been largely unsuccessful. His efforts have been largely unsuccessful. A member of the Steering Committee suggests that he try to gather a nucleus through monthly seminars on need-oriented topics. The

church planter finds himself stubbornly resistant to the idea. It wasn't his idea. Conflict.

The ministry is conflict. That isn't all bad. Dr. Ron and Mary Jenson write: "... conflict is a part of our lives . . . we can choose to either treat such conflicts as intruders in our lives or we can welcome them as friends. Our attitudes—our choices—are critical to the impact of conflict in our lives."² Conflict can stimulate creative problem solving. Here are some suggestions for handling conflict productively:

a. Watch your attitude. Usually, church planting pastors are dominant, influential individuals. In a conflict situation this kind of person has a natural tendency to dominate and influence. This has the potential to damage personal and ministry relationships. It may appear that the church planter is insensitive and a poor listener. Pastors who start churches must have a strong vision for what the church is to become and how the church will get there. But they must also listen to their people and adapt the plan when necessary. Try to maintain an attitude of love and listening even toward your critics.

b. Watch your anger. In most of us, conflict induces anger. Displays of anger in leadership erode confidence. Gifted church planters have lost the opportunity to plant healthy churches because of their outbursts of anger. When entering a conflict situation, pray for God to give you a good attitude and prevent an outburst. Dorothy Leeds writes "the key to positive confrontation is to stay cool and to discuss sensitive issues without overdramatizing them."³ Resolve to be calm even when you are under personal attack in a public setting. Try not to strike back or get defensive. Jesus said "... if someone strikes you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also" (Mt. 5:39b). People will notice when you exhibit grace under fire, and their confidence in your leadership will grow. If anger is an uncontrollable problem in your life, seriously consider receiving Christian counseling.

c. Follow the Biblical Pattern. "Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there in front of the altar. First, go and be reconciled to your brother . . ." (Mt. 5:23, 24a). Handle conflict as quickly as possible, no matter who is at fault. The goal is always reconciliation.

If a brother sins against you, go and show him his fault, just between the two of you. If he listens to you, you have won your brother over. But if he will not listen, take one or two others along, so that 'every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses.' If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if he refuses to listen even to the church, treat him as you would a pagan or a tax collector (Mt. 18:15-17).

The process of reconciliation should begin with the two who are experiencing the conflict. More people should be involved only if the one who has sinned refuses to repent. Again, the goal is always peace.

The process of reconciliation should be modeled within the congregation by the leadership. Too often, this process is ignored within church bodies. That results in unresolved conflicts and repetitive sin which damage people's lives and can render the church ineffective. The process of reconciliation should be spelled out in the constitution of the church and taught to every church member.

d. Find peacemakers in the church. You may have leaders in your church who have a gift for making peace in conflict. “Blessed are the peacemakers for they will be called sons of God” (Mt. 5:9). Take them with you when you are called into difficult situations. Listen to them as they mediate. Often, the church planter himself is the focus of conflict. A respected peacemaker in the church can often diffuse the conflict by meeting with the angered party.

e. Defer responsibility for difficult decisions to a Steering Committee. One of the reasons that the church planting pastor becomes the focal point for conflict is that he is constantly making decisions. Not all of them are popular. If the church body perceives that he is making all the decisions, he is going to make enemies of those who hold other points of view.

If major controversial decisions are made by the primary leadership group sometimes called a Steering Committee or Leadership Task Force, no single person becomes a focus of blame. It is critical for the Pastor, Steering Committee, and Staff to maintain a united front on a controversial decision. When questioned about a decision, the pastor can speak those wonderful words, “The Steering Committee decided . . .” and deflect undue criticism. He also gains the credibility when his people see that he is accountable to the other leaders in the church.

4. Do I have support and accountability for my ministry?

In speaking of “support and accountability,” I mean relationships with people in an organization or association.

Support and accountability usually involves a recognized relationship with a mother church or a denomination or association.

Church planting can be a very lonely pursuit without such connections. We church planters need relationships with those who can understand the special rigors of planting a church.

Furthermore, without support and accountability there may be no one who can say to the church planter, “Stop! Think about what you are doing.” Church history is replete with examples of ministers who have flown out of control and have led their people in dangerous directions. By nature, church planters have a desire to be unshackled. Creatively, that can be helpful. But if there is no check on the pastor’s power, that can make for a potentially destructive situation.

A relationship with a denomination or association can be helpful in a variety of ways. Usually you’ll connect with other church planters that way, for fellowship and resourcing.

Do you have support and accountability for your ministry?

If your answer is “no, not really,” then you may need to create support and accountability for yourself and your church plant. You may want to join an association or denomination that will meet those needs. Or you could seek out some church planters in the area and meet with them regularly.

5. Am I handling my time productively?

A wise pastor once said, “The person I have the most trouble with is me.”

That statement is especially true regarding time management. It is so easy to waste time. With so much to do to plant a new congregation, wasting time can seriously compromise the health and growth of the church. What begins as a glorious dream can turn into a pitiful reality if you are not using your time wisely.

Just working hard is not a cure-all. The familiar phrase “the tyranny of the urgent” means that we allow our time to be controlled by what cries for our attention the most. But we may end up neglecting or delaying the more important and strategic matters.

Praying and planning are truly important issues. Most church planters are not natural planners. They are activists—they just want to GO DO IT! But the collective wisdom of veteran church planters is clear: when we don’t plan, bad things happen.

If you have trouble managing your time productively, here are a few suggestions:

- a. Pray and ask God for wisdom for your time management.
- b. Constantly check your TimeLine for the birth and development of the new church.
- c. Determine what is really important in your church planting mission right now.
- d. Prioritize these important tasks.
- e. Graph your work week. Assign blocks of time based upon your priorities.
- f. Now that you have “planned your work,” “work your plan.”
- g. Read some good books or attend a seminar on time management.
- h. Be accountable to your supervisor or another church planter for your weekly work and time management.

CARING FOR YOUR PHYSICAL HEALTH

While serious illness may impact a person’s life, what often kills people is their own unhealthy lifestyle. The leading cause of death in many countries is heart disease, which is often caused by an unhealthy, high-fat diet and exacerbated by lack of exercise.

While in the process of writing this book, a mission leader friend suffered a heart attack and died. He was only 54 years of age. Could his early death have been prevented? We don’t know. But what we do know is that as a rule we can extend our lives and increase our productivity by maintaining a physically healthy lifestyle.

Busy church planters find it easy to neglect the disciplines that lead to physical health. Our schedules are already filled with the demands of church and family. It seems like there are better things to do.

But consider the benefits of making our physical health a priority. Better health brings increased ability to deal with the pressures of church planting, more energy, a more joyful attitude, the ability to think more clearly, a more attractive appearance and personality, a good testimony to those around us, and good stewardship of the bodies God has given us. Not to mention the possibility of increasing our life-span!

The following questions can help us maintain physical health in order to serve the Lord to the maximum of our ability.

1. Am I eating properly?

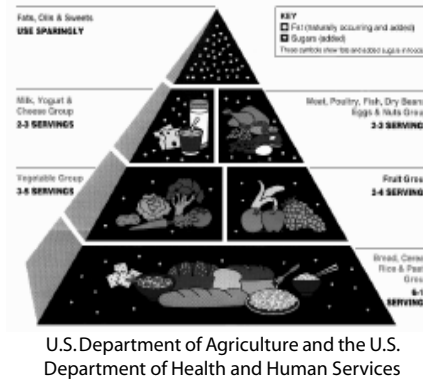
For some people, eating properly may mean eating more. A bulimic or anorexic teenager could die without proper nutrition.

For most of us, eating properly may mean eating less. Extra weight may be a constant struggle. It’s easy to ignore this issue until we remember it could literally mean life or an early death. The extra pounds on the outside of our bodies are usually a clear indica-

tion of the fatty deposits in our arteries that produce the increased stress on our cardiovascular system which can result in heart disease, heart attacks and strokes.

Eating properly essentially means eating a balanced diet that has the correct intake of calories. What do these two things mean?

- a. A balanced diet means a diet that follows the food pyramid, designed by the US Department of Agriculture.⁴



Along with the food we eat, it is very important to drink plenty of pure water. Six to ten glasses a day is a good benchmark.

- b. The proper intake of calories means the amount of calories your body needs each day. If you consume 2,500 calories in a day, but burn only 1,500, your body will store a thousand calories for the future in the form of body fat.

So how easy is it to gain extra weight? Dr. Michael D. Jacobson writes;

Consider the example of the relatively sedentary individual who needs only 1,500 calories per day but who eats an extra half sandwich (with the trimmings) and a couple of extra cookies after each meal. That extra food eaten each day amounts to about 500 calories. In one week, the total extra intake would reach 3,500 calories, the equivalent of a pound of body fat. Thus, by simply eating a little extra each day, an additional fifty-two pounds could be gained each year!⁵

Once gained, how does a person lose the extra pounds? Thankfully, the same thing works in reverse. If we need more calories in a day than we consume, our bodies will burn some of the stored energy (fat). Do this on a regular basis, and you will shed the extra pounds!⁶

In the western world it has become fairly easy to determine caloric intake, since food packaging is being labeled with the exact amount of calories listed. Restaurants are making it possible to find out the caloric content of the servings they provide. Anyone who wants to keep an accurate accounting of his or her calorie intake in order to maintain or lose weight can easily do so.

Since there is a direct correlation of caloric intake to weight, over time, anyone who seriously desires to change his or her weight, and is willing to use the self discipline necessary *is*

able to change in this area. Easy, no. Achievable, yes.

To reach your goals, you may need an accountability partner, or participation in an organized support group or program.

Allow the testimony of the Apostle Paul to help motivate you:

Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that will not last; but we do it to get a crown that will last forever. Therefore I do not run like a man running aimlessly; I do not fight like a man beating the air. No, I beat my body and make it my slave so that after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified for the prize (1 Cor. 9:25, 27, emphasis added).

Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God— this is your spiritual act of worship (Rom. 12:1).

2. Am I getting sufficient sleep?

God designed our bodies so that most of us need 7 to 9 hours of sleep each night. Some of us seem to think we have a better idea and try to get by on less. But we pay the price: irritability, edginess, diminished ability to think and concentrate, tiredness, weakened job performance, emotional imbalance, depression, and adverse physical effects as well.

Determine through trial and error how much sleep you need to perform at your optimum capacity. Then take measures to make sure you get the sleep you need.

3. Am I getting adequate exercise?

Recent medical research has determined that even modest amounts of exercise have excellent health results. You don't have to be a great athlete to enjoy great benefits from exercise.

Dr. Ken Cooper, well-known inventor of the term and study of "aerobics" and a committed Christian, writes:

There is solid evidence that physically active people live longer. Our landmark study at the Cooper Clinic in Dallas, which was published in the *Journal of the American Medical Association*, investigated the relationship between fitness levels and risk of dying in more than 10,000 men and 3,000 women. The report showed that men and women with low levels of physical fitness had more than twice the mortality rate of persons with even a moderate level of physical fitness. Fitness helped overcome all causes of mortality, including diabetes, cancer, and heart disease.⁷

So what is the minimum amount of exercise you need in order to increase the chances of living a longer and healthier life? Dr. Cooper's answer:

- *For women:* Walk two miles in less than thirty minutes three days per week. Or walk two miles in forty minutes, five days per week.
- *For men:* Walk two miles in less than twenty-seven minutes three days per week. Or walk two miles in thirty five minutes, five times per week.⁸

I (Mark) have found walking to be a wonderful way to exercise, and to double up on the use of my time as well. My wife Carolyn and I often walk and talk together. Other times I walk and pray. Some may want to listen to teaching tapes, music or Christian radio as they walk.

But walking is not the only way to get the exercise your body needs. Find a form (or two) of exercise that you enjoy. It might be

- Golf (without the golf cart!)
- Basketball
- Racquetball
- A stationary bike
- A tandem bike to ride with your spouse
- Hiking
- Volleyball
- Soccer
- Cycling
- Jogging

There are a myriad of possibilities! Find ones that are enjoyable and affordable. Go for it!

4. Am I getting a regular physical exam?

How often have you heard of someone whose death could have been prevented by early detection of a health problem? Sadly some people do better maintenance on their home or car than on their own bodies. Will you be the next one to die this way? We hope not.

Why not do your best to prevent an early and avoidable exit by getting a regular physical examination? Your family will be eternally grateful. The money you spend for the exam could be many times less than the cost for treating an illness that was not detected early! If you are due for a checkup, why not go to the phone right now and schedule a comprehensive physical exam?

Notes

¹ Alan Loy McGinnis, *Bringing Out the Best in People* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1985), p. 156.

² *High Ground Reports* (San Diego: International Leadership Group, 1990), p. 3.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 7.

⁴ For further study, check out the “Biblical Diet Pyramid” contained in the book by Dr. Michael D. Jacobson, *The Word on Health* (Chicago: Moody Press, 2000) p. 65.

⁵ Dr. Michael D. Jacobson, *The Word on Health* (Chicago: Moody Press, 2000) p. 65.

⁶ Please note, Dr. Ken Cooper warns that “It’s unwise to reduce calorie consumption below 1200 to 1500 calories a day unless you’re on a specific, balanced weight-loss program. Even with a reduction regimen, daily calories should not go below 1200 unless you’re being supervised by a physician.” Kenneth Cooper, MD. *It’s Better to Believe*, (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, Inc.) 1995, p. 214.

⁷ Kenneth Cooper, MD. *It’s Better to Believe*, (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, Inc.) 1995, p. 211.

⁸ *Ibid.*

Chapter 19

Seasons Of Church Planting

Church planting is very much like a journey. We set out with a destination in mind, with territory to traverse in order to arrive there. But the journey is not just about moving forward toward a destination. It is also about what we experience along the way.

The church planting journey is usually a long one, and it takes us through different seasons of the year. Sometimes it is hot and sunny, sometimes rainy and cold.

So church planting is both *linear*—going somewhere, and *cyclical*—experiencing reoccurring changes in our lives while we travel.

This Handbook focuses on the linear side of the journey, the planning necessary to see God's vision become reality. We want to make sure we keep the Landmarks¹ in sight to stay on the right path and to measure our progress. We must be careful to avoid the Landmines,² which can interrupt or even permanently halt our journey.

But in this section we want to talk about the cyclical side of the journey, about the seasons that come, go, and come again as we travel the path of church planting.

The church planting journey begins in *The Season of Vision and Challenge*. How could it begin anywhere else? This is a time of great excitement and some trepidation, as God's vision for your new church begins to take shape in your heart and mind. The enormity of the challenge, and the magnitude of the eternal impact your new church could make, capture your heart and energize your mind.

But this season must lead to another: *The Season of Planning and Implementation*. This is the time when you really begin to work, when you pray and plan and begin the important steps necessary to move toward God's design for your new church. Without this season, there will be no realization of God's vision. Vision can be stillborn if we don't enter into a season of planning and implementation.

The journey brings many changes, and one of the seasons you'll experience is inevitable: *The Season of Trials and Discouragement*. Your faith will be tested. The enemy will attack. It seems that trials and discouragement often occur in some predictable areas. Here are some common ones:

- *Spiritual Warfare*. The goal of church planting is to retake ground occupied by the enemy. Establishing a dynamic new church is nothing less than an assault on the gates of hell. Jesus Himself promised victory in such an ambitious offensive campaign (cf. Mt. 16:18), but it is fraught with trials and danger.
- *Family Pressures*. Church planting can strain a marriage. Normal family conflict and difficulty is only made more intense by church planting.
- *Financial Strains*. Church planting families are almost always called upon to make financial sacrifices. They must live by faith, and often face each month with a

- fluctuating income. The burden of financial concerns can lead to discouragement.
- ***Unrealistic Expectations.*** Church planters are visionaries, and they should be. But the vision, its shape and magnitude, needs to be determined by God, not by an unhealthy comparison with some other pastor or church planting leader. Setting the bar of “success” based on how God has blessed someone else is both dangerous and potentially discouraging.
 - ***Leadership and People Challenges.*** Church planting demands excellent leadership skills. Many church planters are still developing as leaders, and they often face challenges from difficult, problem people who may gravitate to a new church.
 - ***Loneliness and isolation.*** The church planter’s wife and children may feel this trouble spot more acutely, but it can affect him, too. Church planting may require a move to an unfamiliar city, entering a culture not your own, and learning a new language. Family and friends may be very far away.

Any one of the trials mentioned above can be devastating. Realizing that this is a normal season of church planting can help you get through it. But you must choose to enter the next season, the season that can and should follow: *The Season of Perseverance*.

Obviously church planting can be very difficult, and not everyone can handle it. Some give up, like John Mark in the Apostle Paul’s first church planting journey (see Acts 13:13). But the word of God reveals that trials are intended to lead, not to discouragement or resignation, but to perseverance. “. . . the testing of your faith develops perseverance” (Jas. 1:3b; Compare also Rom. 5:3, 4).

Paul commended the new church at Thessalonica, which, in the midst of trials and persecution, displayed faithful perseverance. “. . . Among God’s churches we boast about your perseverance and faith in all the persecutions and trials you are enduring” (2 Thes. 1:4).

What does it take to persevere? How can you take the next step in your journey, and move into the Season of Perseverance? Here are some essentials for the journey.

- Have a clear sense of God’s call to church planting, and a clear vision for the church He wants you to plant. In the hard times, it is essential that you *know* God has led you and will continue to lead you.
- Cultivate a close walk with God. There is no substitute for daily, intimate fellowship with Christ. Disciplines of prayer and Bible study, of learning to wait on God and listen for His guidance, of fasting and solitude—all these will strengthen you and enable you to walk forward in faith and perseverance.
- Develop a prayer team who can “fight on their knees” for you. Spiritual warfare must not be a solo experience. You and your family need prayer warriors who will pray for you and for the success of the church plant. You need to have this team in place well before you begin your church planting journey.
- Make your family a top priority. We all long to hear Jesus say, “Well done, good and faithful servant.” But if, at the end of our lives, we were to face Him and admit that, though we planted a church, we lost our marriage or our children, how could He commend us? Your wife and your children will always be your first ministry. Though they will sacrifice and serve as part of the church planting team, they must never be taken for granted or ignored along the way.

- Prepare to provide financially for your family. Plan for your life as a church planting family. Do what the Lord leads you to do, but prepare. Maybe you will need to raise support, or work at a secular job, or seek the employ of a church planting denomination or mission. Just don't enter church planting without financial preparation.
- Get a mentor! Every church planter needs a mentor. Where do you find one? Pray. Seek out leaders who have been where you want to go and are willing to help you get there. Look for someone who can commit at least a few hours each month for an extended period of time. The exact arrangements will vary, but both the planter and the mentor will recognize their relationship as an investment in the greater kingdom of God.
- Plan prayerfully, and then stick to your plan. Trials can easily throw you into confusion and doubt. They can impede your progress and tempt you to detour from your intended course. You will only be able to persevere if you have a plan to guide you. Plans are like a handheld light on a dark night. They may not show you the whole journey, but they help you take the next step.

The next two seasons are sobering to consider. We hope you never experience them. But many planters do.

The Season of Crisis will follow the Season of Trials and Discouragement *if* the church planting family does not move into the Season of Perseverance that we just discussed.

Crises come in all sizes and shapes. They are both personal and institutional. And a personal crisis will eventually impact the church in a negative way, just as the institutional crisis of your new church will affect your family.

Years ago my wife and I moved a thousand miles from our home and family to plant a church. Among the first people we met in our apartment building was another church planting couple. We did not become close friends, but we kept in touch as we both worked hard to establish a church in a large, growing community.

We moved from our apartment into a house, and lost touch with the other couple. Months later I heard that their marriage was in jeopardy. Eventually they divorced, and the infant church they started was disbanded.

Crises may not be inevitable, but they are all too common. The Season of Crisis will almost always need intervention from wise, godly leaders who love the church planting family and the church.

Unless there is intervention, The Season of Crisis will very likely lead to *The Season of Exhaustion and Withdrawal*. Both the church planting family and the church plant itself are at risk. The planter may just be too tired to continue. Sadly, sometimes there are sin issues that can only be dealt with by a withdrawal from ministry. Or there may be issues in his family that require a time away from active ministry. Or the church itself may be so weak and sick that it cannot continue.

A mentor or a godly leadership team from outside the church plant can still intervene. But at this point their role is to do what is best for the planting family and for the church plant, even if that means removing the church planter from the ministry or closing the church.

Thank God we serve the Lord of Second Chances! He has provided *The Season of Restoration and Healing*. God's design is to mend our brokenness and equip us to serve Him productively again. There is hope, even for the planting family who has endured The Season of

Exhaustion and Withdrawal. It will take God's gracious work and the help of wise loving mentors and leaders, but there can be a new chapter of fruitfulness and ministry ahead.

The last season to mention is the happiest of all: *The Season of Celebration and Rejoicing*. When you lead a family to Christ at a Bible study in their living room, when a couple on the brink of divorce commit to making Christ the head of their marriage, when a teenager is delivered from drugs, it is a time for celebration! When people who have never come to church before begin to attend your new congregation, it's time to shout to the Lord in gratitude and rejoicing!

The graphic that follows illustrates several things: first, the "seasons" are in fact a cycle. You'll enter them more than once in your journey. In fact it is God's plan that you enter some of them multiple times.

Notice also that there is a preferred "path" for these seasons. The Lord would prefer you go from *Trials and Discouragement* to *Perseverance*, and then to *Celebration and Rejoicing*, and then to *Vision and Challenge* again.

The hard path, the other route, leads from *Trials and Discouragement* to more serious trouble in *The Season of Crisis*. Even in a season of crisis, it is possible to move back into *Perseverance*.

And if, God forbid, your crisis led to *The Season of Exhaustion and Withdrawal*, please notice that the Lord wants to restore you and eventually bring you into *The Season of Vision and Challenge* again.

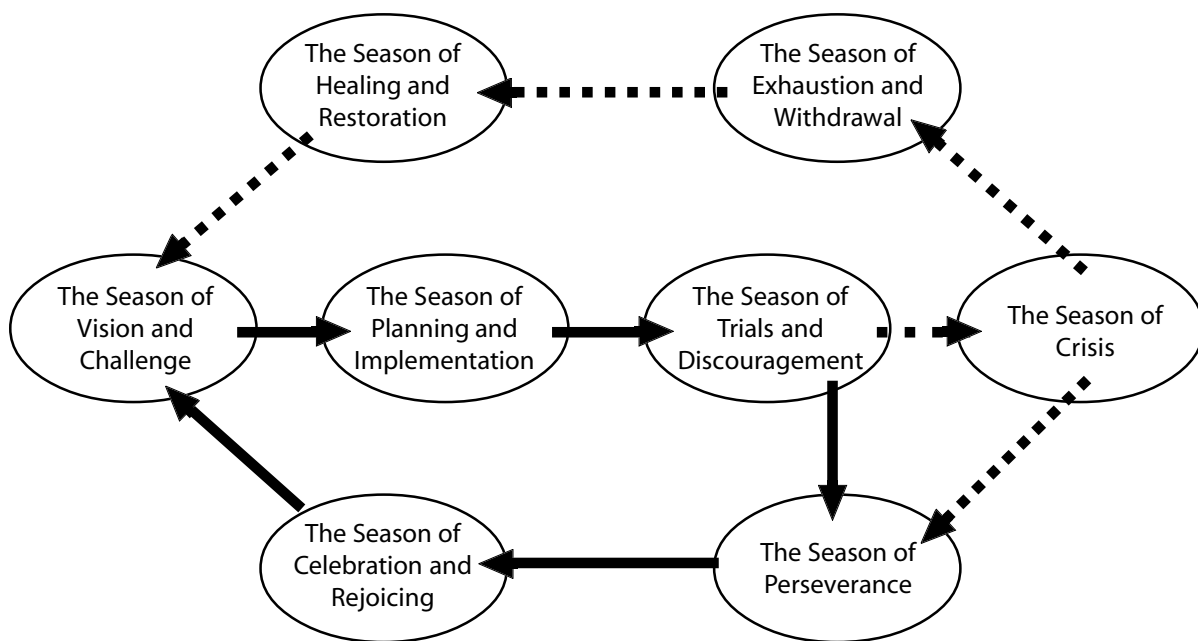
Notes

¹ We'll talk more about "Landmarks" in the Planning Section. Landmarks are major tasks that need to be completed in a given phase of church planting.

² "Landmines" also deserve special attention, and we discuss them at length in Chapter 8.

The Seasons of Church Planting

A Cyclical Model of the Church Planting Challenge



Chapter 20

Overcoming Discouragement

We have a saying at DCPI: “If you are in church planting, you are in trouble.” This is realism, not pessimism. If you are planting a church, you are on the front lines of spiritual warfare and you have undertaken a monumental task that will involve great challenges. Just read the Acts of the Apostles to see the huge challenges faced by church planters in the first century.

Because of the challenges of church planting, every church planting leader will have to learn to deal with discouragement. Even in the best of church planting situations, things won’t happen just as you would like them to, and there will be times of discouragement. You can count on it.

Paul and Mark worked together on the board of a church plant that started with three very gifted leaders. They had abundant resources and a supportive mother church. On opening Sunday nearly 200 people came, and attendance has never dipped below 150. God’s blessing has been abundant. The church purchased a multi-million dollar property after eight years, with attendance running about 600. Over 500 people have become Christians so far!

But as enviable as this situation sounds, the leaders have faced discouragement and disillusionment.

How do even seemingly successful church planting leaders become discouraged? There are many causes:

- Fatigue and burn out
- Being let down by trusted leaders
- Tight finances
- Family challenges
- Illness
- Conflict in the emerging church
- Spiritual warfare

These can cause discouragement even in the best of church planting situations. But imagine their impact when the ministry is *not* going so well . . .

When attendance is declining.

When core members abandon the project.

When you don’t have enough money to meet payroll and expenses.

When the church suddenly loses its rented facilities.

When people criticize you or your family.

When you wonder if the church plant will survive.

Church planters must learn how to handle discouragement. If they don’t, discouragement can lead to a dark pit of despair and depression.

I (Mark) faced discouragement early in my church planting mission. I became an unpleasant person—gloomy and overworked and continually preoccupied with ministry. I thought if I just worked harder, things would improve. My relationship with the Lord was not joyful and sometimes I was unkind to my family. Pessimism hampered my effectiveness with other people. Though I was in the prime of my life, I was wallowing in despair and the future seemed very bleak.

Thankfully I learned to deal with the inevitable discouragement of church planting. The solution came in three crucial areas of my life: spiritual, mental, and physical.

SPIRITUAL SOLUTIONS

Know you are called.

Be convinced of your calling first. Be sure the Lord has called you to church planting, and that He has led you to the particular community where you'll be planting.

Knowing God has called you is a wonderful foundation that will keep you secure and unshaken when hard times come. Then you can do your best and leave the results to God. You can face difficulties with the assurance that Christ is the Lord of the church, and the Lord of *your* church plant.

Was Paul successful in planting a church in every community where he preached? No. In some communities he was violently expelled. He was even stoned and left for dead! But he measured his success by faithfulness to his calling. His comfort came from the intimacy of his walk with Jesus, the Lord of the church.

I consider everything a loss compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord . . . (Phil. 3:8a).

I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. I can do everything through him who gives me strength (Phil 4:12-13).

Maintain spiritual disciplines.

Perhaps it should go without saying that a church leader must maintain personal spiritual disciplines. And yet sometimes God's front-line soldiers become haphazard and even apathetic about the care of their own souls.

What kinds of spiritual disciplines should be practiced?

- Daily time with God in prayer, Scripture, meditation.
- Times of fasting.
- Spiritual retreats or prayer retreats¹.
- Family devotions.
- Praying with one's spouse.

Remember a day of rest.

In the Scripture, the Sabbath had two purposes: worship and rest. In the Ten Command-

ments, God mandated a day of rest. For church planting leaders the Day of Worship is usually the most exhausting day of the week. We may worship, but we don't rest!

Without intentional time off somewhere else during the week, we will miss the second purpose of the Sabbath, rest. Take a day off each week for rest and rejuvenation. God knew what He was doing when He made the Sabbath rest a requirement under the Old Covenant.

MENTAL SOLUTIONS

Have realistic expectations.

Church planters often face discouragement because of unfulfilled expectations for their new church. Naively they may believe that, though other planters have struggled, their ministry will be done "right." Maybe they expect that everyone will love them that the new church will grow rapidly and consistently, and that problems will be easy to solve. They may even expect their church to become a well-publicized success story. But when the harsh realities of church planting hit, it is a serious blow.

The right perspective is to have high dreams and aspirations, but to remember to be thankful for whatever level of influence and success you may achieve.

Build relationships with family and friends.

God made us to 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!" (Eccl. 4:9, 10). When we fall into discouragement, we need others to help us up. We need a listening ear, encouraging words, the perspective, companionship and love of others.

Focus on whatever successes you have, especially leading people to Christ.

Listen to Paul's guidance in 2 Cor 10:5: "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."

Like Paul, we need to take our thoughts captive and put our minds on that which is right in God's sight. Phil 4:8 tells us, "Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things."

Remember the eternal value of a person's soul. If your ministry has resulted in the conversion of even one person, all of heaven rejoices, and so should you!

Focus on the good things that are happening. Praise God for whatever you can find to praise Him for. The result will be encouragement rather than discouragement.

PHYSICAL SOLUTIONS

Get proper rest and nutrition.

When Elijah was so discouraged that he prayed for the Lord to end his life, part of the reason was sheer physical exhaustion. What he needed most at that time was

sleep and food. So he lay down under a broom tree and slept, and God sent him an angel to cook for him.

Then he lay down under the tree and fell asleep. All at once an angel touched him and said, "Get up and eat." He looked around, and there by his head was a cake of bread baked over hot coals, and a jar of water. He ate and drank and then lay down again. The angel of the LORD came back a second time and touched him and said, "Get up and eat, for the journey is too much for you." So he got up and ate and drank (1 Kings 19:5-8, NIV).

Sometimes the most spiritual thing we can do is to sleep, eat and get something to drink! When our bodies are run down, fatigue can take a toll on our minds and on our souls.

We are not talking about overeating or oversleeping, both of which are also detrimental. The key is balance. We must care for the bodies God has given us. After all,

Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your body (1 Cor. 6:19-20).

Seek counseling and medical advice when you need them.

Some leaders may have emotional issues that need the care of a trained Christian counselor or pastor. They may need to be set free from abuse suffered as a child: physical, mental or sexual. Others may need counseling to recover from spiritual mistreatment suffered at the hands of abusive Christian leaders. It is not unspiritual to get help—just the opposite. Getting the best help available can bring the freedom, joy, and effectiveness in ministry that God really wants for us.

Medical research has taught us that depression is sometimes the result of a chemical imbalance or deficiency. Thankfully medication is available for those who need it.

A FINAL WORD

We have only touched the surface of this important subject. May the Lord Himself bless you with all that you need to be encouraged in Him.

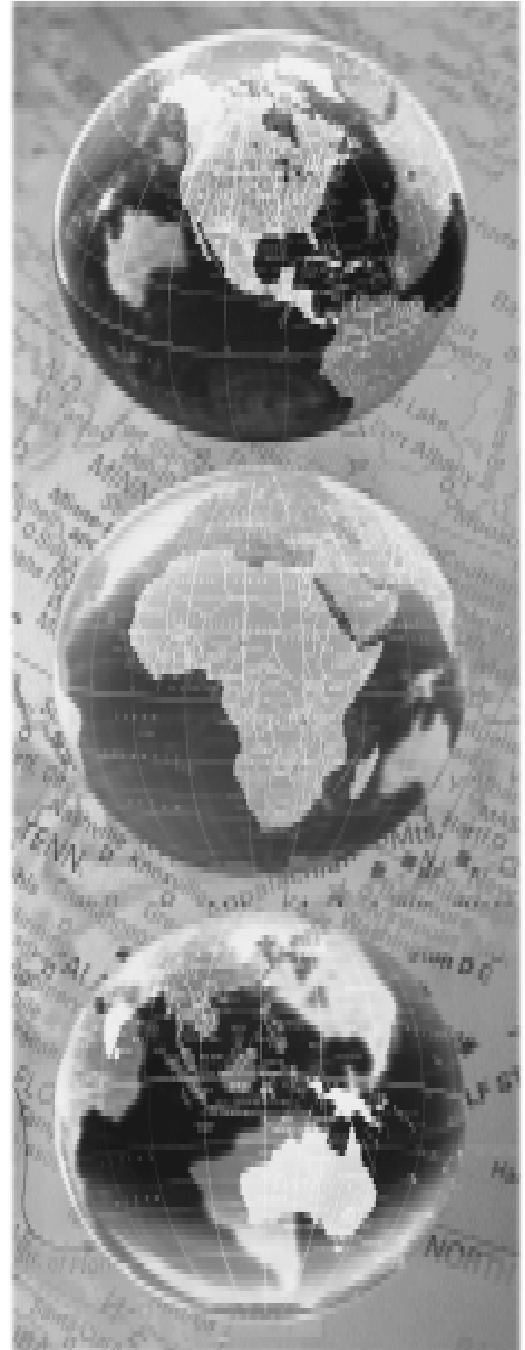
"And the God of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, will himself restore you and make you strong, firm and steadfast. To him be the power for ever and ever. Amen" (1 Peter 5:10, 11).

Notes

¹ You might want to get a copy of "How to Take an Effective Personal Prayer Retreat," an interactive mini-handbook published by DCPI.

Section Four

Reaching People Effectively



Chapter 21

How to Gather a Core Team for Your New Church

One of the big issues in the start of a church is the issue of developing the church's "Core Team."

But just what is a "Core Team?" It is that group of people that comprise the pre-launch members of a new church, the "pioneers" who prepare that launch pad so that your church can blast off into an incredible journey of serving Jesus and people. These are the people around whom the church is developed. Without them, not much will happen. They provide the bulk of the labor, prayer, finances, and leadership for the emerging church.

Some leaders may not desire to plant a large church, or may be in a situation where starting a church of more than a few families is not feasible. This section may need to be adapted accordingly by those in such situations. Perhaps you will not need to think in terms of a Core Team. It may be that your whole church is the size of another church's Core Team. That is OK. Use whatever parts of this chapter that are helpful to you.

The size of your core group ultimately depends upon your vision for the kind and size of church the Lord is calling you to plant. Your Core Team will need to be large enough to conduct ministry when the church launches. If God is calling you to plant a church with regional impact, one that will plant other daughter churches as part of its ongoing strategy, your Core Team will need to be large and well developed.

If your vision is for a house church, or for a cell-based church, your needs will be different. Let the Lord guide you in using the suggestions that follow.

STAGES OF CORE TEAM DEVELOPMENT

As you begin to think about how to develop your Core Team, it may be helpful for you to think of its development in stages. To build the core will require a different approach in each stage.

Let's begin with an overview of the stages. The following chart summarizes each of the Stages of Core Team Development.

STAGES OF CORE TEAM DEVELOPMENT

Title	Number of Adults	Description	Purposes
Stage I Share the Dream Stage	0-12?	The church planter is sharing the dream to recruit staff and Core Team members. Meets one-to-one and group meetings.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recruit the initial nucleus of the church Recruit staff Develop prayer and financial backers

Stage II Small Group Stage	12-24	The Core meets weekly or biweekly for VHS format meetings (Vision, Huddle and Skill Development)*.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coalesce the Team • Build momentum • Encourage and hold each other accountable • Deepen relationships • Sharpen ministry skills • Continue to grow
Stage III Private Service Stage	25-35?	The Core meets Sundays, probably in a home, for pre-launch worship. Personal invitations are given but no publicity is done. VHS meetings are still needed and should continue.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meet the desire to hold Sunday morning "church services." • Begin to "practice" holding church • Give observers an understanding of the style of the emerging church • Build momentum • Continue to grow
Stage IV Practice Service Stage	35-45?	The Core holds monthly, bi-monthly or weekly practice and preview worship services in the long-term facility. Invitations given, but only on a personal basis. VHS meetings might be cut back to monthly.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Become more proficient in your worship and children's ministry • Give an opportunity for potential core people to "come and see" • Receive evaluation from mentor or other key "outside" leader • Build momentum • Continue to grow
Stage V Official Church Stage	45+?	The church holds "grand opening" celebration through major publicity and personal invitations. Follow that with other outreaches and discipling opportunities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Begin the church's public ministry • Launch with as many people as possible • Evangelize and disciple • Propel you past some of the common new church growth barriers • Build momentum • Continue to grow

*These meetings may focus on practical issues like, "How to: have daily devotions, evangelize, meet and greet new people, disciple new believers, discover spiritual gifts, resolve conflict, organize your life and ministry."

APPROACHES TO CORE DEVELOPMENT

How long will all of these stages take? You are probably anxious to move ahead and develop your church. What kind of timing should you expect?

There are two extremes in approaching timing in the Core development process.

1. *Time Driven Approach*

This approach means that you move on to the next stage according to a set timeline, no matter where you are in terms of developing that stage. The calendar rules.

This kind of approach may seem especially important if you are receiving a financial subsidy from a denomination. You'll have a great incentive to move forward to meet your deadlines, even if you don't feel the stage objectives have been sufficiently met.

2. *Objective Driven Approach*

This approach focuses on your objectives for each of the stages. You won't move on to the next stage until the objectives of the present one are met.

For example, you might decide that you will not move from Stage I to Stage II until you have at least one other full time staff member serving with you in the launch of the new church. Or, you might decide not to move from Stage IV (Private Service Stage) to Stage V (Official Church Stage), until you have at least 40 Core Team members serving in effective ministry.

So which approach is better? The best approach is probably somewhere between these two extremes. Attempting a purely Objective Drive approach would proceed as if time didn't matter, but in the real world this is just not possible. Time pressure can come from:

- The Core Team. People almost always want to start too soon. People have a hard time being patient until "real church" begins.
- Decreasing financial subsidy, as noted above.
- Association leaders or key supporters, who want to see progress made, and may not understand what it takes to develop a core team.

On the other hand, there are obvious deficiencies in the purely Time Driven approach.

- Your timing may not be God's timing. You may have an Easter launch in mind, while the Lord's timing is a fall launch. Or vice versa!
- You might feel pressured to put unqualified, immature people in positions of leadership, just to meet a timeline.
- Illness, family emergencies, or other unexpected issues may delay your launch.

3. *A Spirit Driven approach*

So what is the best approach? The best approach is to avoid these two extremes and utilize a Spirit Driven approach.

A Spirit Driven approach looks at both the timing and the objectives, and brings everything before the Lord for His timing. Timeline dates are prayed for and then pre-planned, but they are always "written in pencil" to express ongoing dependence on the Lord. Plans are laid and decisions are made only after concerted prayer to wait upon the Lord. Everything is subject to revision by the Holy Spirit!

GOALS FOR CORE TEAM DEVELOPMENT

On the chart below there is a "number of adults" listed for each of the stages. But these are just suggestions—hence the question marks. Your situation and the progress of your Core development will dictate how many people you actually have. Some church plants exceed these numbers, some don't reach them. Ultimately the Lord is the Lord of your church plant, and growth is up to Him.

At the same time, it is helpful to set a target. "Aim at nothing and you'll probably hit it." God uses us and our efforts in order to build His church. And setting goals helps focus our attention and energy.

The far right column is for you to set your own goals for each stage. Before you do that, you may want to look over the suggestions (see below) for building your core team.

Remember, every church, every context, every church planter, every community

is different. What is right for one church plant will not be right for another. Bathe the process of setting goals in prayer, and then write them in pencil.

STAGES OF CORE TEAM NUMERICAL GOAL DEVELOPMENT

Title	Number of Adults	Description	Your Goal for Number of Adults
Stage I Share the Dream Stage	0-12?	The church planter is beginning to share the dream "one-on-one" and recruiting staff and Core Team members.	
Stage II Small Group Stage	12-24	The Core meets weekly or bi-weekly for VHS format meetings (Vision, Huddle and Skill development)*. Relationship bonding is very important.	
Stage III Private Service Stage	25-35?	The Core meets Sundays for pre-core worship. Personal invitations given but no publicity is done. Probably not in long-term facility, perhaps in a home.	
Stage IV Practice Service Stage	35-45?	The Core holds monthly, bi-monthly or weekly practice & preview worship services in the long-term facility, doing invitations on a personal basis only.	
Stage V Official Church Stage	45+?	The church "launches" its more permanent status through a major publicity and personal invitation thrust for its "grand opening" celebration.	

STRATEGIES FOR RECRUITING CORE TEAM MEMBERS

Just how do you go about recruiting a Core Team? Because if you can't gather them, the rest of the church plant is just a dream.

The following is a list of suggestions for how you can build your Core Team, both

Christians and Non-Christians.

Strategies for Recruiting Christians:

- Keep a list of all of the people you know who might be recruited for the Core of the new church. Continue to develop it, expand on it, pray over it.
- Network friends and family of Core Team members. Ask Core members to write down a list of potential new members. Ask them to introduce you and others in the Core to them. Go with them to help recruit.
- Recruit paid “staff” to work with you in paid positions. The Apostle Paul never planted a church by himself. Co-workers always surrounded him. Pray for part- or full-time staff to work with you. Look for funding for their salaries from a variety of sources: their own individual fund raising efforts, denominational assistance, mother or partner church help, foundations, tent-making (part-time) work, etc.
- Ask people to move to your target community to join your Core. God’s vision is a powerful motivator, and people are often willing to relocate to help plant a church.
- Recruit from a mother church—perhaps the easiest way to build a Core Team. See the *Dynamic Daughter Church Planting Handbook* for extensive instructions.
- Recruit from partner churches. These are churches that are willing to help in whatever way they can. There can be one mother, but as many partners as you can recruit. Ask the pastors of these churches to share names of potential Core Team members with you. Ask to share the vision in a church service so that people can indicate interest. Ask to speak in adult Sunday School classes or in other ways get contacts.
- Recruit people who will be short-term as well as those committed to long-term service.
- Use meal times to get together with people and deepen relationships. Having breakfast or lunch available five days a week creates a potential of ten meals a week to share with people.
- Perhaps use a denominational database to look up people who have moved into the area from your association. Contact them and invite them to join.
- TellStart Ministry, led by Phil Spry, uses computer generated phone calling to determine community interest and build Core Teams. After briefly describing the kind of church envisioned, the computer phone message asks interested people to leave their name. TellStart founder Phil Spry has seen significant core development in many churches using this strategy. For more information contact TellStart through their website: www.tellstart.com.

- Phil has also used temporary signs to build Core Teams. The signs are 2 feet wide by 18 inches high and read simply, “Coming soon, _____ Church,” followed by a web address and phone number. The signs, built from readily available plastic sign material with a small metal frame to stick into the ground, are relatively inexpensive to make. They are double-sided with white background and red letters. Again, contact Phil Spry through Tellstart: www.tellstart.com.
- _____ (What other strategies could you use?)

I will use the following strategies to recruit Christians:

Strategies for Reaching Non-Christians:

- Hold neighborhood evangelistic Bible studies in the homes of Core Team members. Have the team members invite their neighbors, family, coworkers and so on. Use “Getting to Know Your Bible,” a three-lesson home Bible study developed by Dr. Jim Carpenter. This study provides an opportunity to put their trust in Christ during the third study. Follow up with discipleship of new believers.
- Use Attraction Events like concerts, festivals in the park, special Easter services, music or athletic events, etc., to attract people. Plan ways to stay in contact with the people who come, and network them into Bible studies, small groups, get-acquainted meals, etc.
- Felt-need seminars can be used to attract people to hear about practical concerns such as: parenting, marriage, finances, etc. One church planter discovered that the many young parents in his community needed help learning to “toilet train” their children. He brought in an expert to speak on the topic and drew a crowd. Through these make contacts with people you can follow up with visits, Bible studies, informational meetings, etc.
- Get involved in the community to reach out to lost people. Coaching your child’s soccer or baseball team can put you in touch with families. Joining the local business clubs might produce opportunities to share Christ and provide a sense of presence and involvement in the community.

- Conduct door-to-door surveys to make contacts with interested people and determine the spiritual mindset of the area. Add the names of those most interested to your mailing list. They can be followed up with a neighborhood Bible study or informational meetings. Names can be added to your mailing list. See the potential survey in the appendix of this book.
- Use a strategy of direct mail contacts to inform people about the church and invite them to service. (In North America, Outreach Marketing has been helpful to many church planters: www.outreachmarketing.com.)
- Equip your people to network and invite. (Read more about this in chapter 24.)
- _____ (What other strategies could you use?)

I will use the following strategies to reach non-Christians:

Having a well-developed Core Team is crucial to the impact of your church plant. You will need to provide ministry for the people who come to your opening service as well as ongoing leaders and workers for the weeks and months of ministry ahead. You'll want to have the trained workers to minister to the people you're trying to reach: to welcome, evangelize, assimilate, disciple, and train them. May God guide and empower you to carefully apply the steps above as you gather your Core Team!

Chapter 22

Where is the Mission Field—according to Jesus?

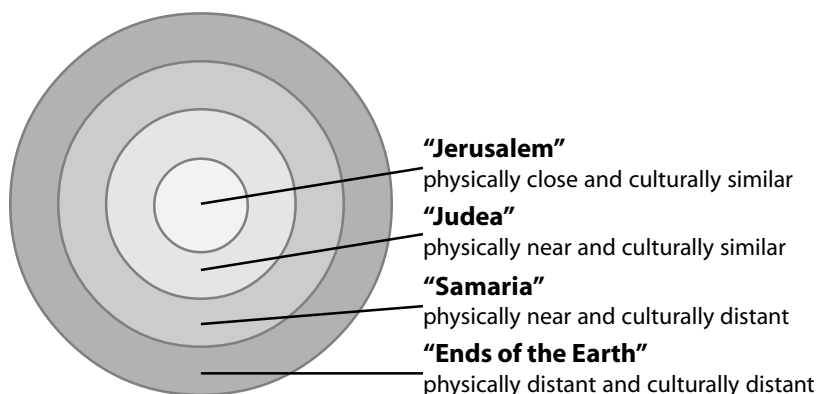
When new church leaders consider “missions,” they often think only about planting other churches nearby, in their culture and among their people. For them, missions is “here.”

Leaders in well established churches sometimes think that missionary work is only done far away in a foreign land. They may not think of their own city, region or nation as a mission field. For these leaders, missions is “there.”

Where is the mission field according to Jesus? Jesus said:

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 (Acts 1: 8).

Jesus’ promise mirrors exactly the spread of the gospel in the book of Acts—an ever-expanding series of concentric circles.



When you look at where the events of the Book of Acts take place, you find...

Act 1-7	Jerusalem	Culturally and geographically close.
Acts 8-12	Judea	Culturally and geographically near (but somewhat removed)
	Samaria	Culturally distant and geographically near
Acts 13-28	To the ends of the earth	Culturally and geographically distant

Robert Coleman writes in the *Master Plan of Evangelism*: “Keep the vision clear: the goal is world conquest.”¹

The truth is that the mission field isn’t just here. And it is not just there. The mission

field according to Jesus is “here, there and everywhere!” And Jesus has given us as Christian leaders and churches a responsibility to make disciples here, there and everywhere.

Where is your Jerusalem? What is your city? This is your immediate mission field. You can witness to people in the power of the Holy Spirit and bring them into your church and to other churches in the city to grow.

Where is your Judea? Judea was the larger region that surrounded Jerusalem. Judea was culturally like Jerusalem. Your Judea is the region that is geographically close to you. In your Judea, there are people who are somewhat like you. Where is your Judea?

Where is your Samaria? For the Jews, Samaria was a strange place. It wasn’t very far away in terms of distance. But culturally and spiritually, there were significant differences between the Jews and the Samaritans. What is your Samaria? What is a place that isn’t that far away from you geographically, but is very distant culturally and spiritually? This may include ethnic groups that are quite close by but who are different from you culturally and spiritually. Who are these people? How are you going to have an active witness to them?

To the ends of the earth is still to the ends of the earth. How are you going to make disciples of people on other continents?

Our mandate from Christ is to extend the Kingdom of God “here, there and everywhere.” We have a responsibility before God to be involved in missions at home and abroad.

We hope that you have a witness to people who are like you and to those who are radically different from you. We hope you invest in church planting missions in your city, in your region, in your nation and around the world. This is the mission field according to Jesus.

Notes

¹ Robert Coleman, *The Master Plan of Evangelism* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1993), p. 101.

Chapter 23

Who Will We Reach?

As you begin to pray and plan for your new church, you'll need to face this question: who will we reach? You probably want to reach everyone in your community with the gospel of Christ. But the truth is, no church penetrates every segment of a community's population with effectiveness. At least not at first.

It may be that the Lord will enable you to reach one segment of your community with greater ease because of their openness to the gospel. Or because you speak their language. Or because they easily identify with your age and social-economic status.

Does that mean you should ignore everyone else? Of course not. But simple stewardship of your time and gifts may lead you to prioritize your outreach efforts.

We recommend you begin by practicing three words: Pray, Look and Listen.

PRAY

Pray to God for an answer to the question: Lord, who are the people that you want us to reach for Christ through this new church?

In order to preach the gospel and plant churches, the Apostle Paul tried to go to Asia, Mysia and Bithynia. The Spirit of Jesus would not allow them to go to these people. And then the Scripture says:

During the night Paul had a vision of a man of Macedonia standing and begging him, "Come over to Macedonia and help us." After Paul had seen the vision, we got ready at once to leave for Macedonia, concluding that God had called us to preach the gospel to them (Acts 16:9, 10).

In this situation, God called Paul and his team to go to reach the Macedonians with a new church.

To what people group is God calling you to go and disciple? Inquire of the Lord. You may want to make this question the subject of a personal prayer retreat. DCPI offers an interactive workbook entitled: "How to Experience an Effective Personal Prayer Retreat."

LOOK

Look at your vision. The Lord may already have identified the people that He wants you to reach through your vision for the new church.

Ken Hutcherson and Mark Webster had a vision for a new church that was multi-ethnic and multi-cultural. Ken, the Senior Pastor, is black. Mark, the primary associate pastor, is white. With one church, they wanted to reach different ethnic and cultural groups within their sphere of influence in the eastern suburbs of Seattle, Washington. Antioch Bible Church was born and now numbers close to two thousand people. It has become a significant church planting church which has launched five daughter churches.

Look at yourself. Most of us do not have a cross-cultural gift. That means that we need to look carefully at ourselves. What is our ethnicity? What is our social and economic status within our country. Who can we reach most effectively for Christ? Most people tend to reach people who are like they are.

This is one reason why, under most circumstances, we believe that it is better for a missionary to empower and equip church planting leaders rather than have the missionary directly plant a church in a culture that is not his own. Leaders from within that culture can usually more easily de-code their own culture and lead their own people. It is usually much more productive for the Kingdom if a missionary will mentor and train many national leaders to plant dynamic churches within their own culture.

Look at your core team. Perhaps, the new church already has a small core team. Look at them. Who are they? What is their ethnicity? Social and economic status? Education? The people who comprise your core team will tend to reach people who are like them. Like tends to attract like.

Look at the people you have been able to lead to Christ. Who are the people that you and your core team leaders have led to Christ over the years? What are they like? Again, look at their ethnicity, social and economic status, education, subculture. Is this kind of people a significant segment of the population in the community that you want to reach.

The point here is that you will probably best reach people who are like you, your core team and those you have led to Christ through the years. We would hope that a person who is different from you or your core team would be accepted, loved and disciplined in your new church. *We are not asking you to look at people with a view to keep others out.* We are asking you to look at people so that you can invite those you can reach the best into your dynamic new church.

LISTEN

Listen to church leaders. When you are evaluating planting a church in a community, it is wise to listen to church leaders in that place. They can tell you about the kind of people that live there, what their needs are, and which churches are successful in reaching these people for Christ.

Listen to people's needs. It is absolutely crucial that a pastor listen well to people he is trying to reach for Christ and the new church. This can be done informally or formally. Informally, a pastor can go to the places where unchurched people are. He can begin a conversation

and ask questions that will surface the felt needs of people. At the same time, he will be beginning new relationships with people for the new church. If you want to formally hear the needs of people, DCPI has a tool called the Community Needs Survey which is included in the Appendix of this book. To use this survey, the pastor and a group of core team members ask the questions on the Community Needs Survey of 500 people in the area. This gives a clear understanding of the top needs that the people have (for example: alcohol and drug help, marriage and family help). You will build relationships with people that you are listening to and your hearts will go out to them because of the needs that they have.

After you have “prayed,” “looked,” and “listened,” it is time to pray again for God to reveal to you the people that He wants to reach for Christ and your new church.

A WORD ABOUT RECONCILIATION

One of the wonderful themes of the gospel is reconciliation. Christ’s sacrifice brings us into relationship with a holy God—a vertical reconciliation. But what Jesus did also overcomes the estrangement between people—a horizontal reconciliation.

In New Testament times, Jews and Gentiles were enemies. The racial enmity between these two groups was as divisive as any in modern times. Beyond the racial divide was an incredible cultural gulf. Slavery was more than commonplace. The number of slaves in the first-century Roman world may have been up to ten million, or one in every five or six persons!

The status of women at this time cannot be overlooked, either. In Roman society women were regarded as only slightly above slaves.

This world of racism, cultural elitism, and sexism was forever changed by the power of the risen Christ.

Hear the words of Paul to the Galatian church as he reflected on this wonderful transformation of relationships:

You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus, for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise (Gal. 3:26 – 29, emphasis added).

Or a lengthier passage to the Ephesian Christians, celebrating the peace that Christ’s blood bought for all people, uniting them as one body, “members of God’s own household” (2:19).

Therefore, remember that formerly you who are Gentiles by birth and called “uncircumcised” by those who call themselves “the circumcision” (that done in the body by the hands of men)—remember that at that time you were separate from Christ, excluded from citizenship in Israel and foreigners to the covenants of the promise, without hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near through the blood of Christ.

For he himself is our peace, who has made the two one and has destroyed the

barrier, the dividing wall of hostility, by abolishing in his flesh the law with its commandments and regulations. His purpose was to create in himself one new man out of the two, thus making peace, and in this one body to reconcile both of them to God through the cross, by which he put to death their hostility. He came and preached peace to you who were far away and peace to those who were near. For through him we both have access to the Father by one Spirit. Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God's people and members of God's household, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone. In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit (Eph. 2:11 – 22, emphasis added).

The healing of racial and cultural divisions in the New Testament church was a living testament to the gospel's power to forgive sin and heal the breach between holy God and sinful people.

Church planters in today's world must never forget that prejudice and racism are alive and well all over our planet. One of the primary ways that we demonstrate Christ's victory over sin is by the love we have for all people—especially those who are culturally or racially different from us.

What impact does the reconciling message of the gospel have for the church planter who is praying and planning for the start of a new church? At a bare minimum, three implications of gospel reconciliation come to mind:

1. It's likely the people who are first attracted to the new church will be most like the church planter and his family in terms of language, race, age, culture, and socio-economic status. But *all people* of whatever racial or cultural heritage must be embraced, welcomed, loved, and evangelized by the new church, as God brings opportunity.

2. Even if the church planter, for the sake of reaching the most reachable, "targets" a certain group of people within the community, he and his new church must still pray and plan for bringing the gospel message to all people.

This may mean envisioning daughter churches in every culture in the area. It may mean shared facilities and joint services with churches that, though culturally distant, are one in Christ with the church plant.

It may mean adding classes and small groups that deliberately stretch the racial and cultural make-up of the new church.

It may mean adding staff members who are diverse ethnically.

And in point of fact the Lord may bring a completely different mix of people than were targeted in the first place! The planter should embrace any and all people whom God brings.

3. The church planter should join hands with Christian leaders of all races and cultures, demonstrating to the world (and to his new church!) that we are all one in Christ. The inclusion of Christian leaders from other races and cultures in the worship services of the new church is a way to make sure racial barriers are battered down by the gospel.

Chapter 24

Developing an Outreach Plan for Your New Church

Our God is incredibly creative. The Bible begins with a testament to His creativity: “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth” (Gen. 1:1).

And the Lord’s creativity has not been diminished by the ages. He is still exercising His limitless power and skill. “Do you not know? Have you not heard? The Lord is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He will not grow tired or weary and his understanding no one can fathom” (Isa. 40:28).

His creativity is especially evident in church planting. He has a unique way in which he wants each church to start. And he is extremely imaginative about how he wants each church to reach people. As the planting pastor of four churches, I (Paul) can assure you that God wants to reach people in different ways through each new church.

This Handbook is meant to be helpful to leaders around the world in planting new churches. Certainly, God uses different methodologies in reaching people in Botswana than he does in Brazil. The methods that are unique to the Ukraine may not be helpful in the United States.

As we deal with this topic, we want to honor God’s creativity and respect the diversity of ethnic groups around the world. So we’ll focus upon principles of outreach rather than on specific methodologies.

PRINCIPLES

1. Seek God’s unique Outreach Plan for your new church.

In prayer, seek the Lord’s will for the strategies that He will use in reaching your target population for Christ and the new church plant. You may be led to fast as you pray. Fasting focuses our prayers and communicates to the Lord that we are really serious about receiving his wisdom.

What is the Lord’s outreach plan for your new church? An “outreach plan” is a comprehensive summary of how you will reach the people in your community with the gospel. Let the Lord of the Harvest direct you as you pray through your outreach options. He is Lord of your church, and that means He wants to be Lord of your outreach. “And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church” (Eph. 1:22). He has an outreach plan and productive strategies for each church planting situation. God wants to direct your mission just as He directed the planting of New Testament churches.

You’ll want to be sure to write the Outreach Plan in your TimeLine at least three months before the birth.

Don't just rely on your memory to keep your outreach plan moving forward. Productive outreach plans are composed of many tasks. To put your outreach plan into action you will need to rely upon many other leaders and workers.

So write it down. Make sure your plan is very clear and understandable. You will need to communicate this Outreach Plan to many key people within the church and community.

Don't allow yourself to fall behind on the tasks in your plan or you will risk crippling your outreach. Many are the church planters who have died inside when their massive direct mailing arrived in the mailboxes of their community the Monday after their first Sunday!

Understand that He may use a strategy productively in one church plant and not in another.

For example, in my (Paul's) second church plant the Lord used door-to-door surveying in a remarkable way. One morning after surveying, I was sitting in my car. A huge man with black hair and a black beard was working on his car. I thought, "Should I go talk to that man? . . . *Yes!* . . . I sure hope this guy likes Christians."

Both he and his wife came to Christ in a few weeks and were baptized in their bathtub. (Since he was well over six feet tall, it was quite a challenge.) Both of them became solid disciples in the church. Many families came into the church through door-to-door Community Needs Surveying in that church.

But in my fourth church plant, though we tried the door-to-door approach, it was almost completely fruitless.

The Lord of the Harvest blessed the strategy in one church, but not in another. Obviously He doesn't always use the same "proven" methods in every situation. Effective outreach is discerning what strategies the Lord of the Harvest wants to use in your situation.

So it is just common sense to find out which strategies are working and which are not.

You will want to invest in what God is using to reach people for Christ and the church. You will not want to spend time and money on what he is not using.

So how do you know, over time, what God is actually using, and what He isn't, to draw people to Himself and to the church?

One simple way is by designing and printing a "Welcome Card" for the Celebration service to help identify why visitors have come.

Ask this question on your Visitor Card: "How did you find out about our Church?" Then, list some options:

- ☐ Friend
- ☐ Direct Mail
- ☐ Door-to-door
- ☐ Flyer, handbill or brochure
- ☐ Newspaper
- ☐ Telephone
- ☐ Radio
- ☐ TV
- ☐ Telephone book
- ☐ Other

After Birth Sunday you should tabulate these cards and determine what strategies the Lord used to bring people to the church. Stop trying the strategies that the Lord isn't using. Keep investing in the strategies that he is using until he stops using them.

Continue using a Welcome Card on Sundays to have an ongoing understanding of what outreach strategies the Lord is using.

2. Equip Your People to Reach More People.

This is both a biblical principle of outreach and an incredibly effective method that works cross-culturally. Jesus followed this principle as He gathered His disciples:

Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, was one of the two who heard what John had said and who followed Jesus. The first thing Andrew did was to find his brother Simon and tell him, "We have found the Messiah" (that is, the Christ). And he brought him to Jesus ... (Jn. 1:40 – 42a).

Andrew became a follower of Jesus. The very first action he took was to bring his brother Simon to Jesus.

Usually the number one reason that people will attend your church is because someone has invited or brought them.

That is why it is so vital for you to equip your people to reach more people. There are many advantages to exercising this principle in your church:

- ***You are equipping people and making disciples.*** That is what Christ has called us to do. Training believers to invite and bring their friends to Christ and the church is a skill that they need to learn in order to be like Jesus.
- ***You are reaching your community for Christ.*** You are obeying a biblical mandate to win your world for Jesus. You are reaching people through people.
- ***This methodology does not cost much money.*** Many outreach options are very costly. For example, direct mail and newspaper advertising, though potentially effective, are very expensive. In contrast, to print handbills or brochures as a tool for your people to use to invite others is relatively inexpensive and extremely cost effective.
- ***It not only attracts people to the church, it also keeps people in the church.*** Most outreach methods are good at helping to get people to your church the first time. Then, depending upon what God does in their lives or how they experience the new church, they may return, or not. But if the new person has been invited by friends or family, his relationship with them is a great motivator for them to return, get connected, and begin to grow spiritually.

So how do you equip your people to bring their friends? This is the primary method that Rev. Rick Stedman used to plant Adventure Christian Church in central California, a congregation that has grown in a few short years to a church of 3000 people.

Rick says, "There are two steps that we follow to help people invite their friends. First, make sure that your people have ways to pray for the lost people they know and their neighbor-

hoods. For example, we like our people to have a prayer list with the names of lost people on it. As they pray, your people will develop a heart for inviting. And, as they pray, God will provide them with opportunities to invite.

“Second, find ways to encourage your people to invite their friends. They should invite their friends to church, but also to lunch, to coffee, and to the youth group. In other words, your people should invite the unchurched to a variety of settings where they hear about and experience Christ and the church.”

3. Focus on the existing “webs of relationship.”

One Sunday in my church, the pastor introduced a friend of mine named Ken Ries. At that time, the church was about 8 years old. Ken was one of the first members of the church. He began attending as a divorced man with a son. I still remember Ken handing me a program at the church’s first service.

Now, eight years later, he spoke about how Christ had changed his life. Then, he sat down in a chair in the front facing the congregation. Next his son came forward, shared how much Christ and the church meant to him, and sat next to his father. Then a woman went to the front to tell her story. She had come to the church as a divorced mother. At church the Lord led her to Ken, whom she married. She too sat next to Ken.

Then her daughter walked to the front and shared how the Lord had provided her a great dad through Ken. She took her seat next to her mother.

Ken’s sister came forward, gave her testimony, and sat down.

Soon there were nine chairs filled with people who had bonded with Christ and the church because of what the Lord had done through Ken. These people came to Christ and the church through a “web of relationships.”

When you are planting a church it is important that you “see” the relationships that your core group has. God uses webs of relationships to reach people for Christ and to grow his church in congregations around the world.

Who are the family members of the core group? Dads, moms, sisters, brothers, husbands, wives, children, aunts, uncles, nieces, nephews.

Who are the friends of the core group? Their friends at work? Their friends who have similar recreational interests and hobbies? Their friends from school?

Find a way for your core group to pray for these people by name. Pray that God will make Himself real to them. Pray that they will come to Christ and the church. To special events. To small groups. To cell groups. To the worship service.

Plan gatherings and church services to which your core leaders and workers will be proud to invite their friends and family. Equip them to invite and bring those in their webs of relationships.

4. Begin and build new relationships.

Sometimes this principles is called “farming,” a term that comes from American real estate sales. It simply means beginning and developing relationships with new people through a

number of contacts over time, like a farmer cultivates a field that he hopes will produce a rich harvest.

These contacts can and should be different. For example, the first contact could be a survey at their door. The second contact could be calling them on the phone and praying for a need that they have. The third contact could be a mailed invitation to an event designed for new people interested in the church. Be creative and sensitive to people in the kinds of contacts you use to “farm” people for the church.

Many church planters will contact those interested in the church three or four times. If there is no response, the pastor will conclude that these people are really not interested. This becomes discouraging and the “farming” stops. Obviously you should stop if the people emphatically tell you to leave them alone.

But usually the pastor and his team give up too soon. They have just not done enough caring. Let me encourage you to “pay the price” by genuinely and repetitively caring for those who are most interested. If after ten or twelve contacts a family is still resistant, then go on to those more receptive.

5. *Use penetration to reach people.*

Penetration is the number of people you reach with your message. For example, if a newspaper has a circulation of 40,000, the maximum penetration of a single ad is 40,000 households. (Realistically, far fewer people will ever actually see that ad because not every person reads the paper every day or turns to the section where your ad will be placed.)

We must find ways to penetrate the whole community not once but many times to really impact people for Christ and the church.

6. *Use repetition to reach people.*

Repetition is the number of times your message is received by the same person. If you saw the same newspaper ad five times that would be five repetitions.

Both penetration and repetition are extremely important as you consider reaching people for the new church. We live in an age in which we are bombarded by messages. We screen most of them out.

California Pastor Rick Warren (Saddleback Church) has said that the brain is adept at screening out almost everything except for:

- things we value,
- things that are unusual, and
- things that threaten us.

He goes on to say that while people will remember only a little of what they are not interested in and a little more of what they are interested in, we tend to forget 95% of what we hear in 72 hours.

That’s why your outreach strategy should include *penetrating* all of the households in your target community *repetitively* through a variety of media options.

7. *Use Synergism to reach people.*

Design the Outreach Plan to be a synergism.

A synergism according to Webster's New World Dictionary is "the simultaneous action of separate agencies, which together have greater total effect than the sum of their individual effects."

In other words, your prayerful strategies for reaching out to the community should be working together so that the effect on the day of the birth is a powerful attraction.

Pastor John Snyder in his first church plant at Sun Valley Community Church in Chandler, Arizona, used three outreach strategies. His team sent out 46,531 direct mail pieces to the community. They made 8650 phone calls with the "Phones for You" method and sent repetitive direct mail to households that had expressed interest. John also placed significant advertising in local newspapers. The Lord blessed the "working together," the synergism, of these three strategies and brought 298 people on the first Sunday.

Your goal should be to let everybody in the community know that an exciting new church is starting. You should let them know repeatedly and through a variety of outreach strategies.

Consider this scenario: Someone comes to Emmanuel's house to take a survey for a new church. He is marginally interested, but agrees to receive information through the mail. He begins receiving a newsletter once a month.

Then Emmanuel gets a phone call. "Oh, it's that new church that is starting." He starts getting even more information (direct mail) about the upcoming "birth" of the church. "This pastor sounds like a good person," he thinks.

As Emmanuel is reading the paper, he comes across an ad for the new church. "Wow, something is really happening with this new church." Another person stops by his house and invites him personally to the first Sunday. "You know," Emmanuel says to his family, "I think we'll go that first Sunday."

One caution: it is possible to try too many kinds of outreach and divide your resources in too many different ways. This can reduce your impact. Try not to exceed more than four or five major outreach strategies.

REPORTS OF WHAT GOD IS USING TO REACH PEOPLE AROUND THE WORLD:

Pastor Amani Placide from Rwanda, Africa

"The best methods in Rwanda are:

1. Crusade
2. House-to-house evangelism
3. Jesus film
4. Invite people in the restaurant
5. Person-to-person invitation
6. Prayer in the hospital
7. Radio and TV
8. Conference in the hotel."

Rev. Glenn Smith from Houston, Texas, US:

“Outreach principles that cross the spectrum for us:

1. “Our planter and his team have to be in close proximity to their target group— building relationships, rubbing shoulders.
2. Always have a list of at least 10 target relationships that the planter is cultivating. The core team must be doing the same –they must know their focus/target group well through first hand relationships!!
3. They need to be providing multiple entry points that connect with their target audience. Worship services seem to be less effective in reaching the unchurched. Target events seem to work better for us across the board. Worship services make a great second step. A sense of God’s presence is more drawing than seeker techniques, especially with the more post modern people.”

Pastor Williams Yindi from Tanzania, Africa:

“Trained leaders going back to their respective villages to plant local churches. This has proved to be a very, very powerful and a fast way of planting churches. A person coming from the culture is easily accepted in the community. Another group from our Head Office will go to the village to do house to house visiting, preaching and teaching. We are happy to give you a good report. We have added five more local churches within a very short time. That brings the total to 25 local churches since I took your training in Oceanside, California.”

Dr. Greg Kappas from Seattle, Washington, US:

“God is using:

1. Personal invitation
2. Targeted days for carnivals
3. Concerts
4. Preview services work well in the Northwest, especially people bringing people to preview services.
5. Direct mail and telemarketing is OK, but not the greatest.
6. Good movement in website communication.
7. CDs and DVDs going out to new people who are guests and then having them check out the church at their leisure.

“Our Generation X church plant is seeing phenomenal results through concert venues. They have 3-5 concerts each week.

“Our Chinese -American church planter does a great job with ethnic Sundays, and promoting that with dishes/potlucks after the worship time. The mother church has seen remarkable numbers of people come to Christ through memorial services. In the hundreds if not thousands by now.”

Rev. E.I Ohikhueme from Nigeria, Africa:

“Nigeria is a multi-cultural nation. What is applicable in the West may not work in the North of Nigeria. What we do in Abuja, which is in the middle of the country, is to establish our presence in a community and then follow that with the preaching of the Word.

Public preaching like outside crusades have not helped much. The most effective ways are:

1. Personal evangelism.
2. Radio.
3. TV.
4. Handbills (leaflets or brochures).”

Chapter 25

Discipling New Believers

New churches ought to grow by reaching lost people with the Good News. And most new churches are strong in evangelism.

But what is the next step for those who become new Christians? If they are not cared for spiritually, many will fall away.

Scripture is clear that new believers will grow by devouring the Word of God. “Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation” (1 Pet. 2:2).

New believers do have a responsibility to crave that spiritual milk. But on their own they will not receive it. God expects church leaders to provide the nourishment for baby Christians. “Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds of the church of God, which he bought with his own blood” (Acts 20:28). Without careful and compassionate leadership in this area, new believers will become stunted in their growth.

But how do you provide spiritual milk for new believers? Encouraging and expecting them to attend church and a small group is important, but not enough.

Most of the basic teaching of the Christian faith will not be communicated adequately through worship services and small groups. An infant cannot be fed adult food with the rest of the family. Babies need milk until they develop the ability to eat solid food.

Likewise, new believers need milk served to them. They must be nursed to spiritual maturity. Many churches are haphazard in their approach to providing milk for new believers. Since one of the central purposes of a new church is reaching unbelievers and helping them become Christians, we’d better do an excellent job of caring for spiritual infants.

Perhaps the best way to provide milk is through one to one discipleship. This is where a new believer meets once a week or so with a mature believer to study the Bible and be fed the milk he or she needs.

It will be important for you to decide what topics and experiences you think are most important to “feed” the new Christian. Following is a partial list of possibilities. Check the ones that will best fit your ministry style and values. Add other topics as needed.

Then you’ll want to find and purchase (or develop) materials and study courses that nourish the new Christians in the areas you’ve identified.

PROVIDING “MILK” FOR NEW CHRISTIANS

- ☐ Assurance of salvation (How to know you’ve become a Christian)
- ☐ Your testimony: how to tell “your story” to others

- ☐ How to begin to pray
- ☐ How to begin reading and studying the Bible
- ☐ Baptism: its meaning and practice
- ☐ Fellowship with others—importance of the body of Christ
- ☐ The ministry of the Holy Spirit
- ☐ How to be victorious over temptation and sin
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____

To help you find the best training for your new Christians, you might want to look at two courses we've used, both published by Church Dynamics International.¹

1. "Knowing God Personally," four lessons for new believers.
2. "One-to-One Discipling," nine lessons to help one believer disciple another.

For advanced discipleship training, Navpress publishes excellent resources, including *Studies in Christian Living* (6 study guides), *Design for Discipleship* (7 study guides), *Growing in Christ* (13-week follow-up course).² These studies are excellent for one to one study or small group study.

Two different times Paul lamented the fact that believers had not mastered the basics of the milk of the Word:

In fact, though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you the elementary truths of God's word all over again. You need milk, not solid food! Anyone who lives on milk, being still an infant, is not acquainted with the teaching about righteousness (Heb. 5:12, 13).

Brothers, I could not address you as spiritual but as worldly—mere infants in Christ. I gave you milk, not solid food, for you were not yet ready for it. Indeed, you are still not ready. You are still worldly. For since there is jealousy and quarreling among you, are you not worldly? Are you not acting like mere men? (1 Cor. 3:1-3)

Obviously you can't "force feed" God's word. But God has called us to shepherd His children, and baby Christians need special care. May the Lord lead you to be gentle, careful, prayerful, and well-prepared as you provide practical training for new Christians!

Notes

¹ CDI's publishing arm is called "Multiplication Ministries," and you can contact them through their website, www.multimin.com, or by phone (in the U.S.: 760-726-9700).

² Order online at www.navpress.com.

Chapter 26

Multiplying Daughter Churches: Vision and Strategy

VISION:

Here is a astonishing statement that we believe is true: *it is likely that the most significant ministry your church plant does will be the planting of daughter¹ churches.*

As you begin the adventure of planting a church, the idea of planting daughter churches may seem daunting. It's challenging enough just to envision planting your own church!

But here is our challenge: prepare now to impact the planting of other churches.

Why should you be concerned *now* about multiplying daughter churches? Here are some reasons:

1. *Your church plant will die some day.*

Certainly you don't want to think about this as you begin to pour yourself into the work of church planting. And we join you in hoping that your church lasts for many decades.

But the truth is that churches are living organisms, and eventually they will die. Try going to the Middle East and attending a church that the Apostle Paul founded. None of Paul's original church plants exist today. Turkey, where most of Paul's church plants were located, is now 99.9% Muslim.

Given that sobering reality, ask yourself: when my church eventually dies, will there be daughter churches through whom its life can continue? If not, your field of ministry may be lost to secularism or to another religion. If so, then the flame of the Gospel will continue to burn.

2. *Multiplied churches mean multiplied ministry.*

As wonderful as your church plant may be, it will probably reach only half the lost people that two churches can reach, a quarter of the people that four churches will reach, an eighth of the people that eight churches will reach, and so on.

It is simple math: multiply the number of churches and you multiply the number of opportunities for people to come to Christ. On the other hand, fewer churches usually means less outreach. (In the US, for example, Christianity is losing ground to secularism in part because more churches are dying than are being planted.)

One of the daughter churches that Mark planted has reached multiple times the number of people that the mother has reached and grown to several times the size of the mother. At the same time it has helped to daughter other churches. This could happen for your daughter churches. And if so, praise God!

Are we saying that churches should not grow large? No. We hope that your church plant will be able to *both* grow large *and* plant many healthy, reproductive daughter churches.

3. God blesses both people and churches that tithe their resources, and the most important resource for churches to tithe is people.

For churches, the most valuable resource is people. (Take away the people, and you take away the other resources, including money.) Many churches have tithed their offerings by giving a tenth back to missions. While this is commendable, how about giving a tenth of their most valuable resource back to the Lord—people! “Giving people” means encouraging them to go from the mother church to be part of the daughter congregations.

God blesses people who tithe. He blesses in all kinds of ways, not just monetarily. And God blesses churches that tithe their income and their people. He blesses in all kinds of ways. It is impossible to “outgive” God. Try it and see!

4. God blesses churches that utilize the most biblical and most effective strategy of evangelism.

Here are three Great Commission evangelism axioms:

- a. The most biblical method of evangelism is church planting.*
- b. The most effective method of evangelism is church planting.*
- c. The most effective way to plant churches is daughter church planting.*

Let’s take a closer look at each of those.

a. The most biblical method of evangelism is church planting.

There are many great evangelistic strategies in the world. But the most biblical strategy—the one that was practiced by the apostles in obedience to the Great Commission—is church planting. As they went from town to town, they didn’t start Christian camps, or orphanages, or hospitals, or campus ministries, or evangelistic associations. They led people to Jesus and planted churches.

Thank God for a variety of Christian ministries. But at DCPI we believe the central focus of the church is winning people to Christ and discipling them into maturity in Him. The most biblical method of doing that is church planting.

b. The most effective method of evangelism is church planting.

Research has shown that when compared with other outreach strategies, church planting is the most effective method of reaching people for Christ.

Dollar for dollar, hour for hour, the most effective way to invest our resources for the Great Commission, is in church planting.

c. The most effective way to plant churches is daughter church planting.

Where do babies come from? Most young children ask this question, and their parents do their best to give them correct information (without too much detail)! And though it is possible to conceive a child in a test tube, God’s original design is still the best.

Where do baby churches come from? While it is possible for mission agency or denomination to “give birth” to a church, God’s design is for churches to give birth to churches.

Healthy organisms reproduce. According to Christian Schwarz, in his excellent book *Natural Church Development*, “Hardly anything demonstrates the health of a congregation as

much as the willingness—and ability!—to give birth to new congregations. The opposite is true as well. Hardly anything is a more clear indication of illness than structures which by design hinder church multiplication, or at best permit it as an absolute exception.”²

Denominations are much more limited in their ability to start churches compared to the individual churches within an association. For example, an association of 300 churches might envision starting 15 churches in three years time. But if 100 local churches in that association decide to reproduce, they can start 100 churches in the same amount of time!

God blesses churches and their leaders when they use the most biblical, most effective method of evangelism! The Lord expresses His blessing and pleasure in His promise to those who give. Certainly this is a promise to claim for churches that give birth to daughter congregations.

Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you (Lk. 6:38).

STRATEGY:

What can you do to insure that your new church will reproduce soon? The time to begin to prepare is *now*, even as you dream of your church plant.

Here are five steps you can take at this time:

1. *Make daughtering an issue of intense prayer.*
2. *Ask God for a vision and a goal.*
3. *Build the concept into your new church's DNA.*
4. *Raise up church planters.*
5. *Take advantage of opportunities that come your way.*

ONE: *Make daughtering an issue of intense prayer.*

The devil would like to derail your efforts to plant daughter churches. He would like to start by discouraging you from ever having a vision for doing it. He wants you to think that it is not possible, or not reasonable, or not “safe” for you or your new church. He would like for it not to be an issue of interest or intention.

But through prayer, his strategies can be defeated.

TWO: *Ask God for a vision and a goal.*

As you pray, ask the Lord for His vision and goal for your daughter church planting efforts. Your goal might be to plant a daughter church by the time your new church is five years old. Or it might be to plant every other year. There is no right or wrong goal, since every church and every situation is different.

To stretch your vision, consider the story of Ralph Moore's ministry in Hawaii. He moved to Hawaii in the early 1980's to start a new church. Before the church was launched he felt impressed by the Holy Spirit to make it his and the church's goal to reach 10,000 people—one percent of the population in his area at that time.

But how could his church reach ten thousand people? Only a fraction of one percent of all churches are able to grow that large. The answer came in Ralph's goal of, “100 churches of

100 people in ten years.” Over the next ten years, Pastor Moore repeated that slogan many times.

Did they reach the goal? No and yes. The mother church, Hope Chapel in Kaneohe, Hawaii started “only” 35 churches in 11 years. (About three churches per year!) But in just over ten years those churches collectively were averaging over 10,000 people in attendance!³

Could the Lord do that same thing through the church that you plant? Perhaps. Or maybe even more! Ask Him for His goal and go for it! If you attempt ten plants in ten years, and reach only five, that is five more than if you hadn’t attempted any.

THREE: *Build the concept into your new church’s DNA.*

One of Moore’s successes was casting the vision of daughter church planting from the beginning. And his congregations caught that vision!

If a church planter waits to present the vision until his church is a year or two old, it is much more difficult for people to accept. But if they hear the vision from the beginning, the people are prepared, and there are no surprises. It becomes part of the DNA.

FOUR: *Raise up church planters.*

One of the keys to Ralph Moore’s success is the way he has raised up leaders from within his own church who became the pastors of the daughter churches. His philosophy is that he and the church are to disciple pastors to plant churches. In the western world, this may sound odd since we often have a mindset that seminaries produce pastors. But in the Scripture, pastors were produced via the calling of God and personal mentoring.

Don’t misunderstand, we believe in the ministry of theological schools: all three of the authors have earned advanced degrees, and we’re thankful for them. But we limit what God may want to do if we insist that only seminary-educated leaders are qualified to plant churches.

How can you raise up church planters within your church? See chapter 12. And for more information, study Ralph Moore’s material and attend one of our DCPI training events on daughter church planting.

FIVE: *Take advantage of opportunities that come your way.*

Prov 16:9 says, “In his heart a man plans his course, but the LORD determines his steps.”

Church planting is God’s business and He will do it His way. When we are open to His leading to plant daughter churches, He orchestrates events in ways that we would never have guessed. And the timing is often unexpected, too. Allow God to surprise you in how He determines to have your daughter churches planted.

Does this mean that you should not plan? No! Proverbs 11:14 says, “For want of a skillful strategy an army is lost; victory is the fruit of long planning.” (NEB) Not only is planning not wrong, the Bible commends it highly.

But what is wrong is making plans that exclude the possibility that God might have a better idea! This is strongly condemned in James 4:13-17:

Now listen, you who say, “Today or tomorrow we will go to this or that city, spend a year there, carry on business and make money.” Why, you do not even know what will happen tomorrow. What is your life? You are a mist that appears for a little while and then

vanishes. Instead, you ought to say, "If it is the Lord's will, we will live and do this or that." As it is, you boast and brag. All such boasting is evil. Anyone, then, who knows the good he ought to do and doesn't do it, sins.

One of the great lessons here is that we must make our plans, recognizing that God is in control. He may have another way to get the mission accomplished, one that we could never have dreamed of.

One of Mark's surprises concerned a couple in his first church. They seemed unlikely candidates for leadership. They moved out of the area, but returned to tell Mark they were thinking of planting a church in their new community. Mark had the privilege of mentoring his friend through the planting process. He planted a successful church!

God may surprise you, too. Be prepared to be surprised. Embrace what God is doing, even if you did not think of it!

Notes

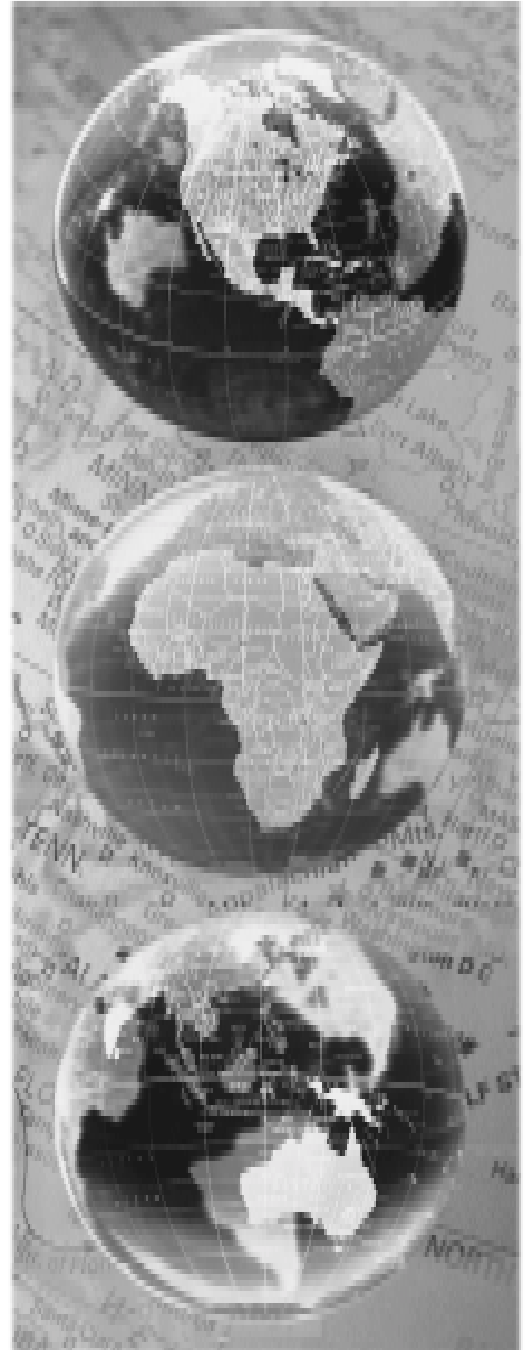
¹ We call them "daughter" churches since the church in the Bible is female and your church will be "giving birth" to them.

² Christian Schwarz, *Natural Church Development* (Carl Stream, IL: ChurchSmart Resources, 1996) p. 69.

³ Ralph Moore, *Discovering Advanced Church Planting* (Pasadena, CA, Charles E. Fuller Institute, 1994) p. 22.

Section Five

Prayerful Planning



Chapter 27

A Planned Approach to Church Planting

A vision that does not result in prayerful planning is only a dream. No one will ever know with complete certainty whether such a vision was from God at all, since without planning it may never reach even a fraction of the potential God intended.

Only with a godly plan, and the faithful, persevering implementation of that plan, will God's vision bear fruit in the lives of the people He wants to reach through your new church.

Our deep conviction is that “*God's vision must lead to prayerful planning, the result of which should be a comprehensive TaskList set out upon a TimeLine.*”

FOUR PHASES

With that principle in mind, we begin the key planning section of this book. The process of planning to establish a new church can be envisioned in four phases. Each phase requires prayerful planning with a specific focus in mind. Each phase is a part of the journey toward a dynamic, reproductive church.

The progress of the gospel in the book of Acts provides us with a wonderful illustration of each of these four phases. We've chosen to identify each of the phases with a specific geographical “marker.” The way the Lord started churches in the first century in Macedonia (Phase One), Ephesus (Phase Two), Jerusalem (Phase Three), and Antioch (Phase Four), is a good snapshot of how we must proceed to plant a church today.

Each phase also is titled in a descriptive way as a reminder of the “movement” of the vision—from God to you to a team to a church to the world.

Here are their full titles:

Macedonia: Phase One—God to You

Ephesus: Phase Two—You to the Team

Jerusalem: Phase Three—The Team to the Church

Antioch: Phase Four—The Church to the World

“LANDMARKS” FOR EACH PHASE

Each phase is also defined by specific “landmarks,” major tasks that must be completed in order to proceed on the journey. Like any traveler, you will find landmarks helpful in a couple of ways: they will provide direction and they will measure your progress toward your destination.

The Landmarks in each phase will keep you going the right way. In church planting it is easy to get distracted or stalled along the way. Landmarks will help you focus. And they will

reward you with a sense of progress. As you complete each major task, you will know you are another important step closer to the establishment of your new church.

A “TASKLIST” FOR EACH PHASE

Each phase also includes a number of small, but nonetheless important, tasks. We are providing a list of “Landmarks” for each phase, as well as a suggested “TaskList.” But the TaskList will vary according to culture and community. We recommend you develop your own TaskList in each Phase.

CATEGORIES OF TASKS

All of these smaller, but important tasks, can be grouped by categories. Here are the fourteen categories we suggest for grouping the tasks:

1. PRAYER (PR)
2. VISION AND PLANNING (VP)
3. LEADERSHIP (LE)
4. OUTREACH (OT)
5. CORE DEVELOPMENT (CD)
6. ADMINISTRATION (AD)
7. FINANCE (FN)
8. FACILITIES (FA)
9. CELEBRATION (CE)
10. CHILDREN (CH)
11. FOLLOW-UP AND EVANGELISM (FE)
12. DISCIPLING AND ASSIMILATION (DA)
13. CHURCH REPRODUCTION (CR)
14. PASTOR (PA)

As you plan your own TaskList, you may want to use these categories. Or you may want to adapt them to better fit your own style. The important thing is to have a comprehensive list of both the major tasks (Landmarks) for each phase as well as the small, but important jobs to be done—the TaskList.

Chapter 28

Phase One: Macedonia—God to You

The planning process to establish a new church begins with “Macedonia: Phase One—God to You.” The church planting journey of the Apostle Paul and his team in Acts 16 is a great illustration of how all church planting journeys must begin—from God’s heart and mind to you.

As Paul and his team traveled in Asia, revisiting churches that had been established (cf. Acts 16:1-5) in a previous journey, the Holy Spirit would not allow them to continue to preach the gospel in Southern Asia (v. 6). They tried to travel north, but again the Holy Spirit prevented them (v. 7).

Perhaps a bit confused by the Spirit’s restrictions, they headed for the seacoast town of Troas, and during the night God communicated with Paul through an amazing vision. Paul saw a man of Macedonia “standing and begging him to come over to Macedonia and help us” (v. 9).

Paul’s response to this vision is very telling. In the words of Dr. Luke, “After Paul had seen the vision, we got ready at once to leave for Macedonia, concluding that God had called us to preach the gospel to them” (v. 10). It’s worth noting that the same verb translated “begging” in v. 9, attributed to the Macedonian man, is used in v. 10 of God’s call.

The gospel of God’s grace cannot be contained. His preferred strategy for communicating that good news is church planting. When the Lord of the harvest energizes church planting, it transcends culture, language, and geography.

And so the gospel, and church planting, jumped continents and came to Europe. Churches were planted, and people became followers of Jesus, because God communicated His vision to His man.

Let’s summarize the lessons for us, as we begin this phase of planning.

First, God has a vision for church planting. Even an experienced church planter like Paul was intent on finding and following God’s vision. Our role is not to forge our own vision but to wait upon God for His.

Nearly two thousand years have passed, but it is dangerous for us to try to plant churches any other way. We must begin with Him. And His purposes may surprise us. Sometimes His vision is not at all what we might have come up with, were we relying only on our wisdom or technology or experience. Sometimes He closes doors we think should be open, and surprises us with a totally new and different call.

Second, God’s vision is intimately connected to the needs of real people. The vision Paul saw was of a man begging for help. His purposes and ways are often mysterious, but it’s clear His heartbeat is for wayward people, living in the darkness of their sin. He wants to reach them, and He has a plan to do so.

Third, the Lord communicated His vision to His leader. Whether it’s through a startling vision or through a quiet inner voice or through a gradual, settled sense of conviction, the Lord wants to communicate His vision for your new church, and He wants to communicate it to

you.¹

So may God enable and empower you as you begin this part of the journey. Be sure to take note of the Landmarks along the way. The ones for “Macedonia: Phase One—God to You” are:

1. **Prayer Retreat.** Set aside time to pray and fast for God’s vision for the new church.
2. **Vision Statement.** Summarize your vision for the new church in a simple, memorable way. Include a description of the kind of person your new church will be reaching.
3. **TaskList and TimeLine.** Complete a comprehensive TaskList and set it upon your TimeLine.
4. **Process of Ministry.** Design a process of ministry that shows the steps (programs, activities, experiences) your new church will take to help unbelievers become Christians and then grow over time to become active, devoted, and fruitful followers of Christ.
5. **Mentor.** Find a church planting mentor who will serve as a supervisor, coach, shepherd and friend to you and your family as you plant the new church.
6. **Steering Committee.** Recruit a steering committee of elder-quality leaders to help given direction to the new church.
7. **Core Group.** Begin developing a core group. Begin a regular gathering to cast vision for the new church, and that may include worship, fellowship, and Bible teaching.
8. **One-to-one discipleship.** Begin to train others, one-to-one, in the basics of the Christian life. Equip them in turn to train others.

SUGGESTED TASKLIST

PRAYER (PR)

PR 1 Pray and fast for God’s vision for the new church.

The Lord is the Master Strategist. He has a vision for the church that He wants to plant through you. “For we are God’s workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do” (Ephesians 2:10).

Inquire of God in prayer for his vision of the new church. You may want to refer to the principles in Chapter 2 “The Lord of Church Planting” and Chapter 3 “The Call to Plant a Church.”

In Acts 13, godly leaders were praying and fasting. As a result, the Holy Spirit called upon Paul

and Barnabas to take their first church planting missionary journey. The foundation for their success in planting these churches was laid by prayer and fasting. Fasting often intensifies and focuses prayer. It removes the distraction of food and provides more time for communicating with God. Fasting says to the Lord, “I am serious about this prayer.”

PR 2 Find a place in your target community to pray for the new church.

In preparing for one church plant, a young man and I (Paul) hiked to the top of a large hill we called Prayer Mountain. Prayer Mountain had a commanding view of the entire community. It was a place where we often prayed for the salvation of the people in that town and for the healthy birth of that church. As we were hiking to the top that day, I heard this young man say, “Oh, I get it, this is how you plant a church!”

Only God can plant a church. The prayers of the planter are essential for a healthy birth. Find a place where you have a good view of the community. It may be a hill or an office or an apartment. Commit yourself to extended periods of serious prayer.

PR 3 Covenant with others to pray and fast for God to create this new church.

The creation of a new church is a direct threat to the enemy’s kingdom. In order to overcome his opposition, you will need to gather a committed Prayer Team. Choose people for this Team who will truly pray for you, your family, and this new Family of God. The more Prayer Team members the better! Before planting, aim for at least 30 intercessors. Keep these people well aware of your needs and the needs of the new church through a monthly Prayer Letter.

At this point develop a list of prayer needs for Phase One and communicate them to your Prayer Team.

VISION AND PLANNING (VP)

VP 1 Work out the vision for this new church.

Before you take this step, consider steps OT 1, OT 2, and OT 3 in the Outreach category in Phase One. The information you gain from these three preliminary steps will be crucial to establishing your vision. Keep praying fervently for God’s vision for the church.

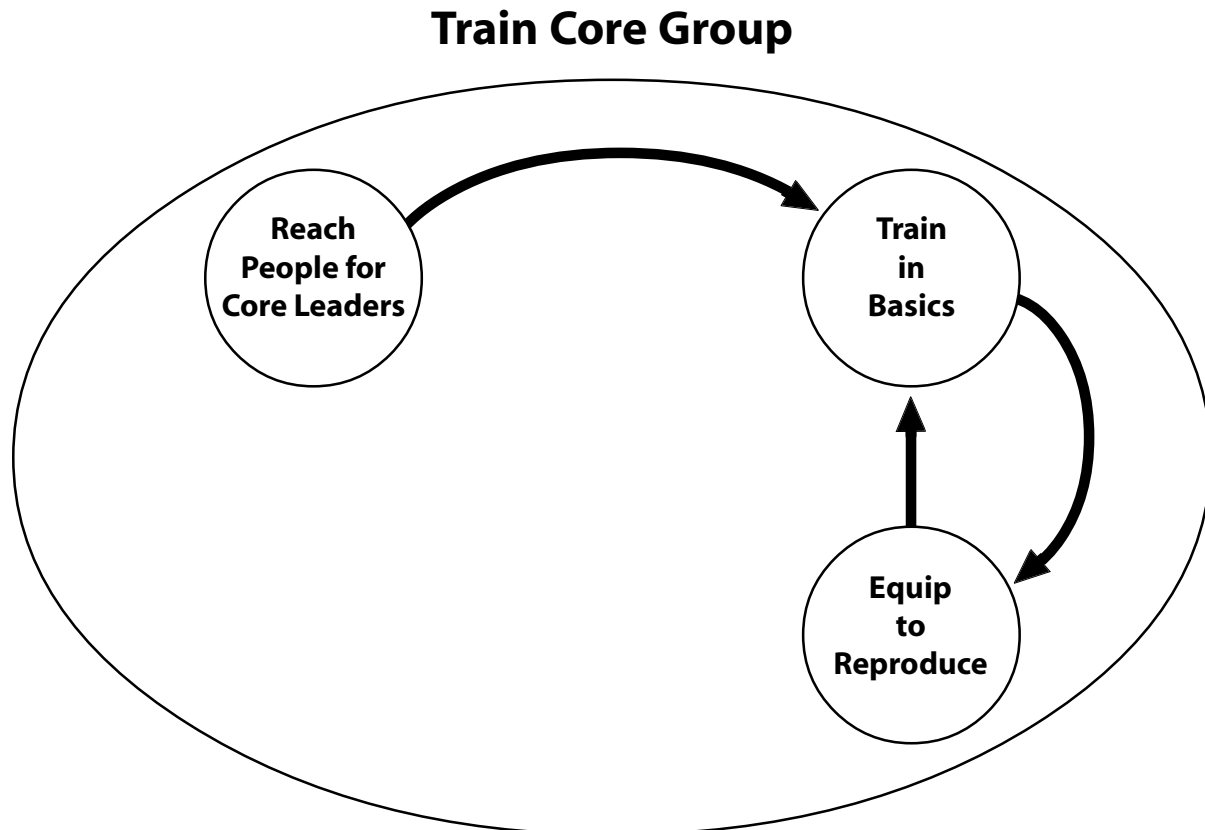
Now, write it down. It is vital that you know and can communicate the distinctives of this new church. What is it going to be like? What kinds of ministries is it going to offer? What style of music will be used in worship? What kind of people primarily will be attracted to the church? Try to communicate this vision as briefly and vividly as possible. Consult chapter 4 for examples of vision statements.

VP 2 Develop an overall strategy for planting the church.

It is important for you to have a grasp of the “big picture” at this foundational stage. What is your overall strategy for planting this church?

The following is Church Dynamics’ overall strategy, which includes:

- (1) Train Core Group
- (2) Birthing the Church.



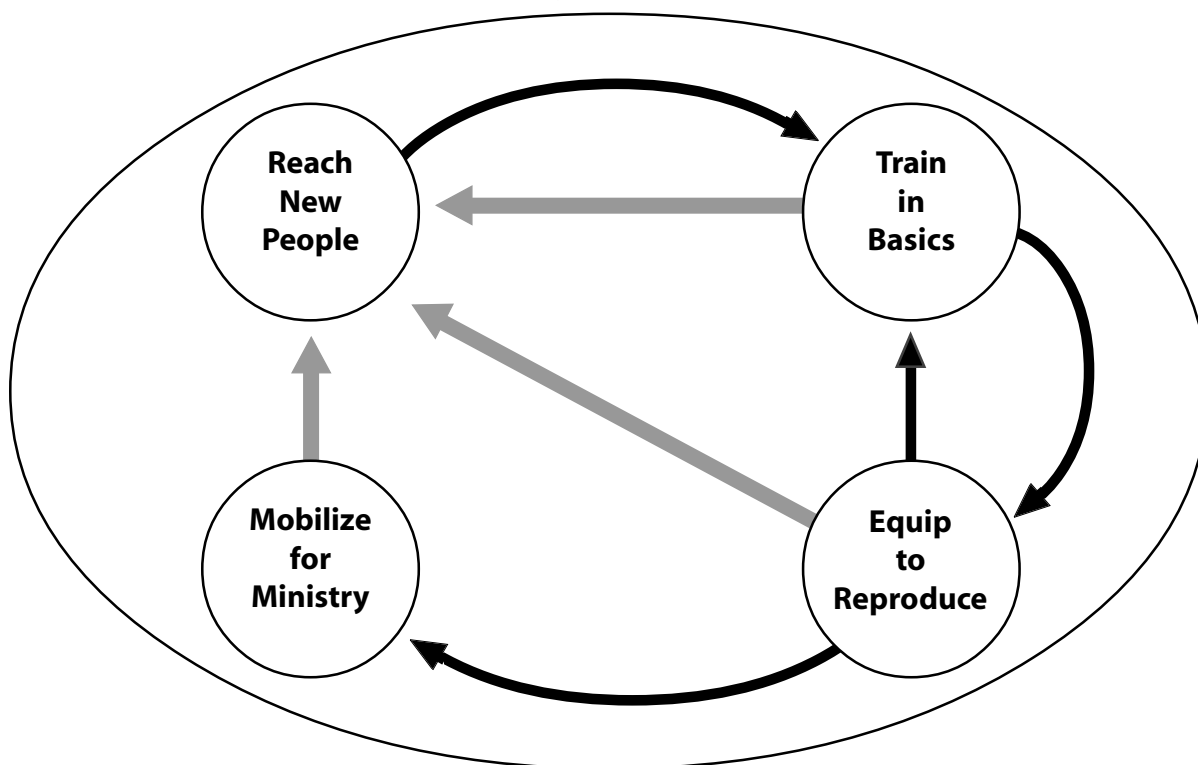
The first circle indicates that the primary goal of the church planter must be to reach people who will have the potential to be the Core Group leaders. This is a time for gathering teachable Christians whom you can train in ministry skills. Outreach steps in Phase One and Phase Two provide a variety of ways to reach people.

The second circle indicates that these new people must be trained in Christian basics such as prayer, Bible study, worship, witnessing, and follow-up (see Ministry Process #1 diagram under VP 3, Phase 1, p. 6).

The third circle indicates they should be equipped to reproduce. This means they will be equipped to train others in the basics just as they were trained (see Ministry Process #2 diagram under VP 3, Phase 1, p. 6).

Now your Core Group Leaders are ready to assist you in Birthing the Church. After the church is birthed, a strategy which includes the following four circles can be developed to accomplish the biblical principles required to have a growing church.

Birthing the Church



1. **REACH NEW PEOPLE** (outreach steps in Phase One and Phase Two provide a variety of ways to reach new people.) What will you do with the new people after you reach them? Introduce them to the second principle.
2. **TRAIN IN BASICS** (see Ministry Process #1 diagram under VP 3). After being trained in the basics, they are introduced to the next principle.
3. **EQUIP TO REPRODUCE** (see Ministry Process #2 diagram under VP3). This means they will become trainers of others, training them in the basics just as they were trained. This principle of REPRODUCTION is the key to developing leaders for ministry in your church.
4. **MOBILIZE FOR MINISTRY** This includes all of the ministries of the church, ministries that are led by leaders who have been equipped and can continually equip their ministry team members to REACH NEW PEOPLE, TRAIN THEM IN THE BASICS, and EQUIP THEM TO REPRODUCE. (The shaded arrows indicate that in executing the ministry of each circle your church will continue to reach new people for Christ.)

VP 3 Design a process of ministry to help people become fully devoted followers of Jesus.

In a process of ministry there is a beginning and a continuation. There is a plan for people to move toward spiritual maturity.

Imagine that you are following the spiritual progress of a man named Joe. Joe is completely worldly. He went to Sunday School a few times as a child. That was the total extent of his religious background. He never goes to church except to attend a wedding or a funeral. Lately Joe has been rocked by some difficult personal problems. He realizes that he doesn't have the answers. He is searching. It has occurred to him to attend a church.

What do you want for Joe? Your goal is to help him become a "fully devoted follower of Jesus Christ." That is the phrase used in the purpose statement adopted by Willow Creek Community Church, near Chicago, Illinois, USA.

How do you plan to help Joe get there? The steps that Joe takes as he progresses from "worldly person" to "fully devoted follower of Jesus Christ" determines your process of ministry.

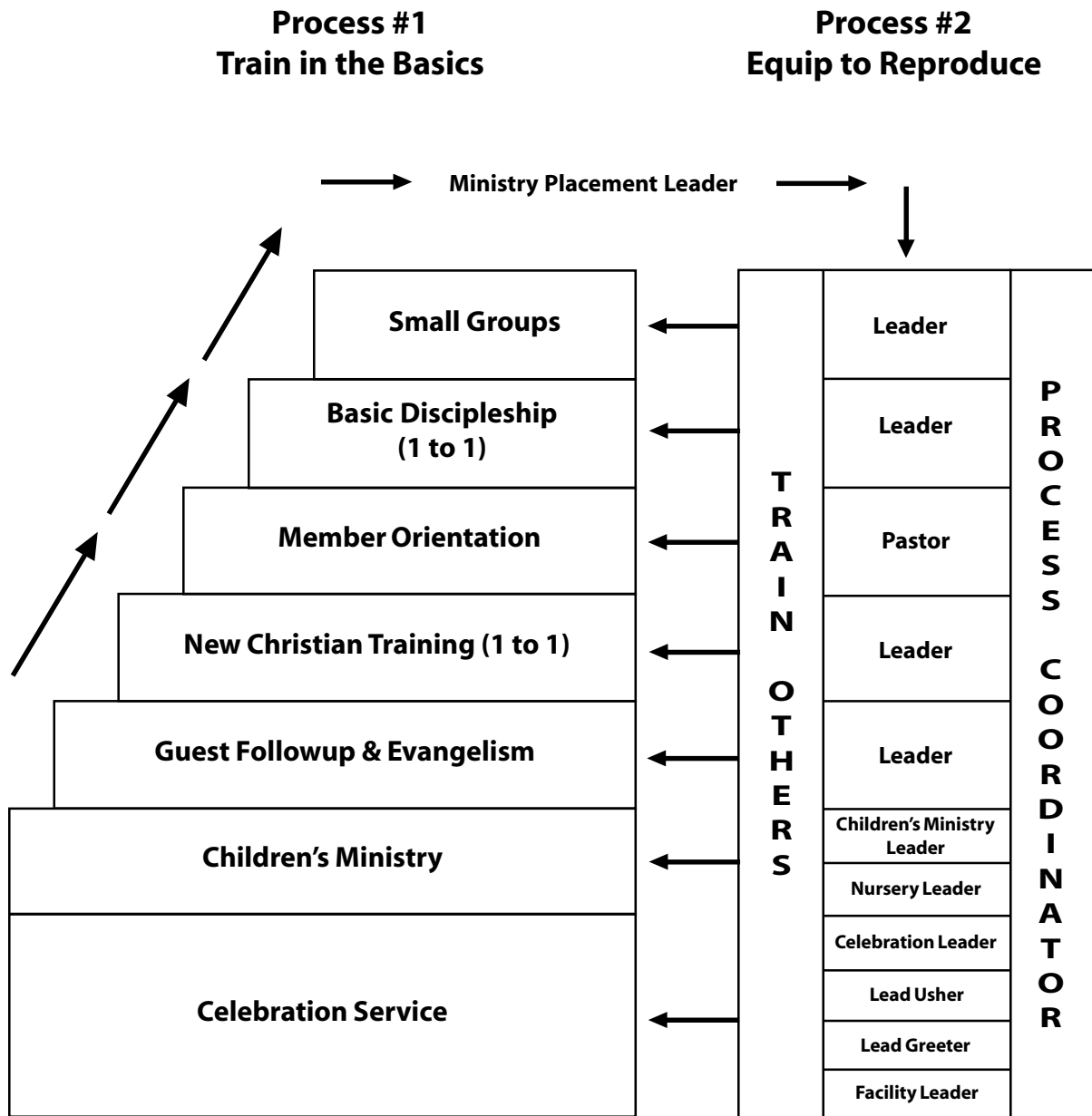
Joe is like a baby when it comes to spiritual growth. A baby needs to learn to crawl before he walks. It is important for Joe to take small, simple steps in his journey to becoming a strong disciple. He needs help from step to step. Joe needs to experience success if he's going to continue in his spiritual walk. And he needs to take those steps at his own speed.

Joe also needs to know how to take those "bite-size" steps in his Christian growth and then learn how to reproduce what he has learned into the life of someone else. In this way what he has learned will be reinforced and he will be "giving out" as well as "taking in." He will be learning to apply Scripture in his own life and to influence others toward Christ.

CDI offers a flexible process strategy (Process #, 1 Process #2, and Process #3) to aid in helping that worldly person become a strong disciple.

On the following page is a diagram of process ministry:

Ministry Process



Process #1 is Reach New People and Train them in the Basics.
 Process #2 is Equip them to Reproduce (by training others).

Think about your ministry from Joe's perspective. He comes in contact with your church through the invitation of a friend or one of your marketing strategies. What is it like for him to attend the Celebration service? Are his needs being met? Can he relate to the service? Do his children have a program to attend? Are they happy with their experience? Does Joe enjoy the Celebration or is it completely foreign to him? How does he want you to follow up on his visit? How can you share Christ with him in a sensitive, understandable way?

Joe becomes a Christian. What does he need to learn next as a new believer? What will you teach him? Will he gather with other new attenders? Joe now desires to be a member of the church. What is member orientation like? Does it fit in his schedule? Joe is ready for deeper discipleship. What method will you use to help him become a stronger disciple? Joe wants to serve. How will you help him discover his gifts and abilities? How will you help him become a leader? Joe wants to lead others to Christ. How will you equip him as a witness?

In order to build a solid foundation for your church, you need to answer these questions in a way that works for Joe. They must also be answered in a way that allows you to train new people in the basics, equip them to reproduce, and continue to serve effectively in the steps of your process of ministry.

VP 4 Set the date for the first public celebration. (NOTE: This task is based on the "Momentum Building" approach to church planting. See chapter 7.)

It may seem strange to determine the date of the first public celebration this early. The reason is that your planning hinges on knowing the date of Birth Sunday.

In the States, there is a "window of opportunity" for planting a new church. That "window" begins on the last Sunday of September and ends four Sundays before Easter. It has been a fatal mistake for some churches to "go public" during the late Spring and Summer. After Easter, people seem to be less consistent in their attendance. The kids are out of school. Families take vacations. Even in school districts that have year-round school, the population does not seem to be as committed to church attendance in the summer.

If you are going public in the Fall, plan your Birth Service for no earlier than the last Sunday in September. If you are going to go public in the early Spring, shoot for no later than four weeks before Easter.

Having your first public celebration service on Easter can be risky. It is your last guaranteed good Sunday before the Fall. My recommendation is to heavily market for a Birth in February or March. Then, immediately make another concerted outreach for Easter. This will probably give you two "big Sundays" and many prospective people before you have to make it through the Summer.

If you find you don't have quite enough time to properly plan for a Spring birth, then it is wise to continue building your core. Postpone going public until the Fall.

VP 5 Develop a TimeLine that extends from the present to three months past the first public celebration.

A TimeLine is the detailed plan and schedule for your church plant. It should include all the tasks that need to be accomplished in order to bring about a healthy birth for the new church.

You have a sample TimeLine in Chapter 32 that is filled out. There is also a blank TimeLine in the Appendix that is meant for your own church planting project.

When you have filled out your TimeLine, you will be able to look at each week and know what has to be done. If you work the plan, you will be able to keep your project on track and on time.

VP 6 Carefully set goals for the birth of the church.

As church planters, we must have faith, but we must not be foolish.

Now that you are building a solid foundation for the planting of a new church, the difference between faith and foolishness must be emphasized again.

“Even though we don’t have anyone yet and we really don’t have a plan, I believe that in three months God is going to bring us 500 people for our first service.” That is foolishness.

“We’re going to prepare thoroughly for the start of a dynamic church. Our goal is to encourage everyone in our community to come to the first service of a beautiful, baby church on our Birth Sunday. We will leave the numbers in the hands of God.” That is faith.

Yes, we should strive for the best and biggest possible start at the birth of a church. And, yes, we should saturate the community for Christ and the church. However, too many church planters have foolish expectations for the number of people that God is going to give them at the beginning. Often they expect something that God has never promised. Too often they are encouraged to expect the foolish in the name of faith. When that magic number doesn’t come, their faith and the faith of their people are shaken.

The planting of a healthy church is a miracle of God. Do your best and leave the rest to God. Be happy to work with the people that God gives you.

LEADERSHIP (LE)

LE 1 Find a church planting mentor.

A mentor is someone who has been where you want to go. If you want to be an effective church planting pastor, then find an effective church planting pastor and learn from him. Meet with your mentor at least once every two weeks. Be teachable. Ask questions.

LE 2 Gather a group of Pastor Advisors.

In addition to your church planting mentor, you may want to ask four or five other pastors or planters to be your advisors. It is not necessary that these Pastor Advisors be local; they must be just a phone call away. You will run up against many unexpected problems for which you will want objective wisdom. For example, what do you do with a divisive lay leader in the new church? If, in one afternoon, you can talk to five experienced pastors or planters, you may see a good solution to the problem. “For lack of guidance a nation falls, but many advisors make victory sure” (Proverbs 11:14).

LE 3 Recruit a Steering Committee.

A Steering Committee is usually composed of the church planting pastor, other pastors, tested lay leaders from the mother church, and the church planting consultant. For example, in one church plant the Steering Committee was made up of the church planter, the Pastor of the mother church, lay leaders from the mother church, and a director of church planting. The combined wisdom and experience of these leaders were great strengths in helping to guide the church.

Be very careful about whom you include on the Steering Committee. They must be leaders who meet the qualifications of I Timothy 3 and Titus 1. If you place the wrong people on the Steering Committee, you will pay for it. If you are not sure of a leader, it is better to watch a potential leader for at least six months before you place that person in a position of influential leadership. The wrong leader in a place of influence can split or splinter a church or cause a pastor to be fired. (DCPI publishes a helpful booklet entitled, “How to Develop a New Church Board.”)

OUTREACH (OT)

OT 1 Drive through and walk through your target community.

Get to know your community. Buy a good map or a Thomas Brothers Guide. Find out where the important places are: the post office, the shopping areas, the churches, the main intersections. Look and learn. Where do the people gather? How do they get there? How does this impact where you want the new church to be located?

Look at the people. What are they like? Stop and talk casually with people. Initiate relationships with those you meet. What do they like? What do they dislike? What are their values? Write down your impressions.

Pray before you go out: “Lord, give me the compassion of Christ today. Help me to get to know

this place and these people. Give me an understanding heart concerning their needs.”

OT 2 Survey the churches in your target community.

It is typical for a church planting pastor to drive through an area of residential growth and get very excited. He sees the hundreds of people in the community. He knows they need Christ. He knows they need a new church. But he may not know that there are four other new contemporary, evangelical churches that have been planted recently. If that is the case, the potential impact of his new church is very limited and it is likely that if he pursued planting in this area, his church would always be a small, struggling body.

In another scenario a pastor friend of mine considered a community that had a few existing new home developments. When he surveyed the churches, he discovered there were only six in town. Of the six only two were evangelical. Only one of the two was effectively reaching the community. At the Planning Commission he learned that there were more than 30 new home developments that were preparing to build in that community. That is potential!

Survey the churches in your target area. Call them all on the phone. Meet with the pastors.

Ask questions like:

How old is your church?

How many people attend on an average Sunday?

What kind of people does your church reach socio-economically?

What ages is your church most effectively reaching?

What are your most productive ministries?

Is your church growing?

How spiritually receptive is the community?

Try to be sensitive with these pastors. They may feel somewhat threatened and uncomfortable about answering these questions or about the planting of a new church in their community. You need the information and it would be good to build supportive relationships with these ministers.

OT 3 Study the demographics of the target community.

Demography is the study of human populations. The more you know about the people in your community the better your chances of planting a church that will reach them effectively. Knowing the demographics of a community is vital to wise decision making.

Demographic information for a specific community includes total population, number of households, ethnic breakdown, households by income, population trends of growth or decline, and age breakdown.

From demographic companies you can receive a description of lifestyles that are prevalent in your

community.

What impact does this information have on the kinds of programs offered? On young children's ministry, on sports teams, on young married groups....?

How are you going to tell the community about your new church? Through the radio, the sports section of the paper, direct mail....?

What kinds of message series are you going to offer? Series on marriage, parenting, financial planning....?

Obtain your demographics. Interpret the data. How do the demographics of your community impact your church plant? You may desire help from a commercial demographic company. (For demographics in North America, consult a variety of resources at <<http://www.mislinks.org/church/chplant.htm>>)

There are many local and regional sources for demographics: real estate companies, TV and radio stations, school districts, libraries, chambers of commerce, government planning agencies, telephone companies, gas and electric companies.

OT 4 Survey the community.

You can survey by yourself or with the help of a small or large group. One pastor of a 6000 member church began his church planting ministry by visiting 500 homes with a Community Needs Survey. He did this by himself. In my third church plant we had forty people visit 400 homes in one day.

Try to network groups from other churches that will work with you in surveying. High School, College, evangelistic and choir groups from churches in your region may be looking for this kind of front-line activity.

The purpose of the Community Needs Survey is to:

1. Determine the felt needs of the people in the community.
2. Begin relationships with these people.
3. Find out who is open to Christ and the new church for future follow-up.

Surveying for many contains an element of fear. The fear comes from the perception of invading the privacy of unknown people and possibly being rejected by those people. Satan can manipulate that feeling. Prayer, training, and laughter can go a long way toward dispelling that fear. The surveyors should pray and worship before going out in teams of two. If possible, each team should be composed of an experienced surveyor and a trainee. The teams should be trained in how to greet people and conduct a survey. Role playing can be a fun and effective strategy. The

attitude of the surveyors must be one marked by love, acceptance, and a willingness to listen. The surveys should be printed on card stock so they can be used for follow-up contacts. (Please see Appendix for a sample survey.)

OT 5 Describe the person you're trying to reach.

The Apostle Paul said, "To the Jews I became like a Jew, to win the Jews. To those under the law I became like one under the law (though I myself am not under the law) so as to win those under the law...I have become all things to all men so that by all possible means I might save some. I do this for the sake of the gospel..." (I Cor. 9:20, 22b, 23a). The Apostle understood the Jew and those under the law.

Pastor Richard Warren of Saddleback Community Church in Orange County, California has excelled in identifying the kind of person that he is targeting. "Saddleback Sam" is conservative politically, but he believes in abortion rights. He is a highly-educated, white-collar worker who likes where he lives. Sam is health-conscious and spends his limited free time in recreational activities. He wants a traditional marriage, and yet his wife works. There is a smug self-satisfaction about life in Saddleback Sam's attitude. He doesn't perceive a high need for God.

Now that you have done your demographics and community needs surveying, you should be able to describe the typical person you're hoping to reach. What does he like? What are his attitudes and convictions? What is his age range? What is his socioeconomic position? What are his ethnic background and traditions? What are his needs? What are his hurts?

Next, consider his needs, wants, likes and dislikes in determining your ministry and marketing strategies. There are times when you will have to lovingly challenge worldly attitudes. If you are going to be effective in reaching your target audience, you will have to tailor your ministry to meet their needs.

What kind of ministries will be effective? What kinds of message series will be received with the most interest? Will you need to have a tape ministry to reach those commuters? What can you affirm in their lives?

You may want to give the person you're describing a memorable name, like "Saddleback Sam" so that you can teach the people in your church how to reach him.

OT 6 Choose a name for the new Church.

Now you know something about the community and the people. You have sharpened your vision. You may have a sense of the geographic area that your church will be able to reach (usually no more than 20 minutes drive time from your future meeting place).

Get together with some creative people who know the area and your vision. Brainstorm some

names with them. Look for a name that is memorable, attractive, descriptive of the church, and culturally acceptable.

You may want to define your target area with a name such as Saddleback Valley Community Church. You may prefer using a word that denotes a quality, like “Faith” Church. In some areas a denominational identification is a positive. In other areas the denominational identification may keep people away. Some church planters prefer “Fellowship” to “Church.” Others believe that “Church” gives a more solid image. Some pastors feel strongly about including “Christian” or “Community” in the name. Others do not.

Generally it is unwise to name the church after a street. You may move and have to change the name. Try to eliminate anything with a connotation that keeps people away. While you are talking to people in your target group, ask them what they think about a particular name. Their input should be heavily weighed. They are the ones you are trying to attract.

Research the names of churches in your area. Make sure you aren’t choosing a name similar to the name of another church nearby. That may confuse people in the community. If you’re planting in the USA, you must apply to the state to reserve the name.

OT 7 Choose your church colors.

Consistent color helps people recognize your church. Carry the same colors through the printed materials, the signs, the visitors’ information, and your banners. Make sure these colors are up-to-date and fit the culture.

OT 8 Design a logo with a professional graphics artist if available and affordable in your culture.

You may have two or three ideas for a logo. Bring these ideas to a professional graphics artist. Try to express what you want in a logo. The goal is to create a symbol that will grab the beholder. The logo must accurately and attractively express the church to your target group. The symbol should bring to mind the name of your church. The name of the church may be designed into the logo.

OT 9 Create a memorable slogan.

Brainstorm a slogan with creative people. Be prepared for a surprisingly difficult task. Make sure your slogan is catchy, descriptive of what you have to offer, and speaks the language of your target community. It has to be understood and liked within a second or two by people in your target group. They should look at it, smile, and think “I like that!” Your slogan should be a maximum of eight words.

OT 10 Design and print letterheads, envelopes, and business cards.

Work with your graphic artist on the design. Consider three printers. Ask to see some of their work and evaluate each for quality. Ask them to give you bids for the work you want done. Choose the printer who will do the best work inexpensively.

Always pursue excellence in all your printed materials. Your new church has very little to represent itself. You don't have a building. But you do have written materials. Resolve to have real quality in your printed materials. That doesn't mean they have to be expensive. For letter-heads, envelopes, and business cards, one or two colors on a good quality paper will give a good look if well designed and printed.

OT 11 Design and print a church brochure.

Make sure the quality of your brochure will appeal to the people you're trying to reach. This brochure should answer the basic questions that people may have about your church. What kind of a church is it? What are its distinctives? Who is the pastor? What does he look like? What benefits are there for me and my family if we try this church? How can I get in touch with the pastor? What programs are available now? Do they meet my needs at times when I am available? Where is this church headed? What is the vision?

Somehow the cover of the brochure must grab the attention of the person who picks it up. Use a photo, a graphic, a cartoon, a question to accomplish this. The photo of the pastor should be included in the brochure with a brief personal note. Be sure to include phone number, address, logo, and slogan. Highlight the benefits of becoming a part of the church.

OT 12 "Farm" all the people who are interested in the new church.

"Farming" describes a process of continual, systematic visitation of people who have expressed some interest in your new church. For example, once a week the church planter might reach out to care for those interested in the new church through a phone call, a postcard, a newsletter, or a personal visit with cookies. The church planter may need to reach out many times in various ways before the interested person will attend a gathering.

OT 13 Lead people to Christ whenever and wherever possible.

The day we surveyed 400 homes a few people came to Christ at their front doors. As a church planter you are an evangelist. You are on the cutting edge of leading people to Christ. The Lord will lead many people to you who need to come to Him. She may be a waitress in the restaurant where you meet people for the church. He may be a worker in a copy shop. New Christians, though inexperienced, may become some of your healthiest and most effective church members.

Jesus said, “Go, and make disciples....” (Matthew 28:19). There is nothing that generates more excitement in a new church than someone coming to Christ.

OT 14 Host monthly gatherings for everyone interested in the new church.

The purpose of these gatherings is fun, friendship, and momentum building for the birth of the church. Examples of activities:

- Barbecue
- Beach Party
- Prayer Retreat
- Concert
- Dinner

Make sure you have name tags available since people from the different small groups in the nucleus of the church may not know one another. Reserve five or ten minutes to share vision concerning the birth of the church.

Get the names, addresses, and phone numbers of everyone who comes for the first time to one of these events.

OT 15 Send out an attractive weekly or monthly church newsletter to all the interested people in your community.

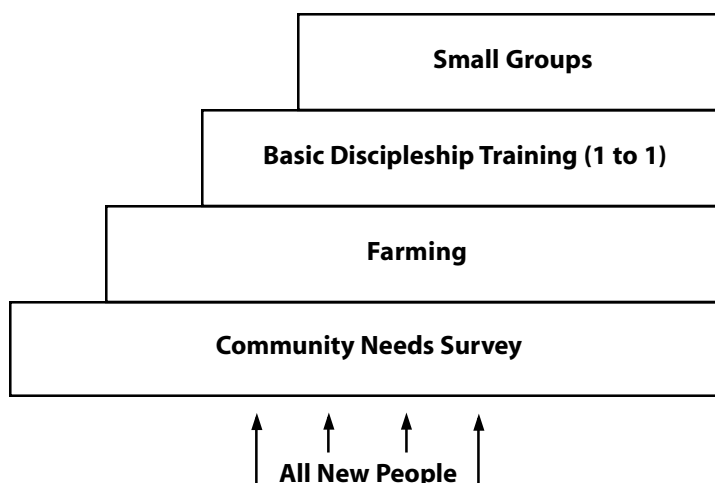
This can be an invaluable tool in communicating the momentum of the new church. It should always be encouraging and upbeat. The newsletter should include praises for answered prayer, new developments in the birth of the church, prayer needs for the church and people within the church, a short encouraging message from the pastor, praise results of any ministry, testimonies of people who have been saved, opportunities for ministry, the times and places of the small group meetings, an encouragement to attend the next all-church monthly activity, and humor.

Find volunteers to help you put together and mail a first-rate newsletter.

CORE DEVELOPMENT (CD)

The following is a diagram of Phase One, Process of Ministry #1 for developing your Core Group. It includes small groups and one-to-one basic discipleship.

PHASE ONE

MINISTRY PROCESS #1**CD 1 Start One-to-One Discipleship.**

Developing leaders is crucial for a new church. While small groups provide potential leadership, the best way to produce leaders is through one-to-one relationships. Choose two or three men and meet with them one-to-one using a reproductive discipleship tool. You might want to contact Multiplication Ministries, (<<http://www.multimin.com/>>) which offers personal discipleship course called One-to-One Discipling.

CD 2 Start a small group for vision building, Bible discussion, prayer, and worship.

Determine the time and day when most of your people are able to meet in a small group. Find an available home for this weekly meeting. Meet for no more than two hours. Begin by using questions to help new people get to know each other. Sow your vision for the church in brief, bite-sized chunks. Lead a simple discussion-oriented Bible study. (Consult Chapter 13 for suggestions for resources.) Encourage those who attend to bring their friends. Show them it is possible by bringing friends yourself. Lead this group personally at the beginning. Look for a person to be your assistant leader and then train that person to be a small group leader.

ADMINISTRATION (AD)**AD 1 Secure a church phone number.**

This may be your personal phone number. Be sure to talk this over with your wife. Some church planting couples prefer to have a separate number for the church. You can have a separate phone for the church at your home or at an office space. Or you can have the church phone patched into your own line. You may be able to arrange with the phone company to

purchase a memorable number like 555-HOPE.

AD 2 Get a Post Office box for the new church.

Go to the nearest Post Office and secure a Post Office box. This will give the church a mailing identity. If you decide to change the location of the church office, you will not have to keep changing your stationery and brochures. Be faithful and timely in collecting your mail so that people can communicate quickly and effectively with you.

AD 3 Compose a Statement of Faith.

As you reach out to your community for Christ, you will come in contact with many people who have different doctrinal positions. They may assume that your church reflects their doctrinal stance. If they discover that it doesn't, they may feel that it should. It is important for you to have your Statement of Faith in written form. You will need to Scripturally defend the position of your church from time to time. You should define your position on the charismatic gifts, speaking in tongues, baptism, church membership, and other potentially controversial issues.

AD 4 Develop preliminary Constitution and Bylaws.

You will need to satisfy the government requirements of your city, state, province, and country. You will want to make sure that your church is operating lawfully. It takes a great deal of time and thought for your leadership to develop a final Constitution and Bylaws. New churches that have attempted this during their first year have often brought their outreach to a standstill. (For planters in the USA, DCPI offers an interactive booklet you may want to consult: "Business Steps for Your New Church.")

FINANCE (FN)

FN 1 Recruit a financial secretary to handle church finances honestly and professionally.

The duties of the financial secretary are: to receive and deposit the offering, to sign checks, to make monthly financial reports to the pastor and steering committee, and to receipt donors. You are looking for a person who is trustworthy and competent.

FN 2 Recruit a bookkeeper.

A basic principle: the person who handles money doesn't keep the books; the person who does the bookkeeping doesn't handle money. In other words, the bookkeeper is not a check signer.

The job of the bookkeeper is simply to keep the books and to reconcile the checking account. This person protects the financial secretary and the financial integrity of the church.

FN 3 Open a church checking account.

Funds may be routed through a mother church or a regional denominational office. That office may even handle the accounting for your church project and personal support account. Eventually you will need a church checking account for the many purchases that need to be made.

Often the church planter is a signer on the checking account because he is the one making most of the purchases. It protects the pastor if someone else signs the checks. Christian organizations and churches are being scrutinized financially by the government and by the public because of abuse. It is wise to distance the pastor from the responsibility of handling the money.

CHILDREN (CH)

CH 1 Provide childcare during the small group meeting.

Caring for children while a small group meeting is taking place is always a challenge. There are a variety of options. They each have advantages and disadvantages. The children can use a room in the same home that the group uses. An advantage is that the parents are readily accessible. The disadvantage is that the parents are readily accessible. The small group leader should be prepared for interruptions. You may be fortunate enough to find an available home just down the block. Parents can get their young ones settled into child care and then really focus on their small group experience. Some small groups have members that rotate into childcare once or twice a month. This is always a struggle since people come to a small group for its benefits not to take care of children. You may want to pay a childcare worker. Make sure the childcare worker is consistently compensated well for the service or you will soon have to find another.

PASTOR (PA)

PA 1 Take care of yourself , your wife, and your children.

It is easy to become a hard-driver when you are absorbed in a church plant. Watch yourself. Maintain your time with the Lord in prayer and the Word. Cultivate a good attitude of love and encouragement. Your attitude will either attract or repel people, so take good care of it. It's hard to have a good attitude when you are exhausted, out of shape, and surviving on donuts.

Make sure you get your rest, good food, and exercise. How are your wife and children doing? Are you spending enough time together?

Notes

¹ We recommend you get a copy of “How to Experience an Effective Prayer Retreat,” by Paul Becker, published by DCPI. It outlines a series of very practical steps that can help you get away and wait on God for His vision and plan for your new church.

Chapter 29

Phase Two: Ephesus—You to the Team

The theme of Phase Two is “You to the Team.” This is the time in the history of the pre-natal church when it is crucial for you, the church planting leader, to begin focusing upon recruiting and equipping a team of other leaders and workers.

When Paul arrived in Ephesus, he brought Priscilla and Aquila, a husband and wife ministry team, with him to serve in this new church (Acts 18:19). For three months, Paul spoke boldly in the synagogue about the kingdom of God (Acts 19:8). Some people refused to believe and slandered the Way of Christ (Acts 19:9). “So Paul left them. He took the disciples with him and had discussions daily in the lecture hall of Tyrannus” (Acts 19:9b). Notice he took his team of disciples with him. For two years, Paul poured his life into these leaders and workers whom he had recruited and equipped for the new church in Ephesus. As a result, “all the Jews and Greeks who lived in the province of Asia heard the word of the Lord.” (Acts 19:10).

Paul did exactly what he encouraged the leaders of the Ephesians to do later in his letter to them. He wrote: “It was he [Jesus] who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God’s people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up (Eph. 4: 11, 12).”

The great news is that the Christian leader is not called to do the work of ministry alone. The church planting leader must recruit and equip a team of leaders and workers for the core group of the new church.

The LANDMARKS, or major tasks, that need to be completed during this period of time, best describe the basic work of Phase 2.

LANDMARKS

1. **Prayer Retreat.** Pray and fast for God’s Outreach Plan, for the key leadership positions in your new church, for your start-up facility, and for the right approach to your celebration services.
2. **Team of Ministry Leaders.** List the leaders and workers you’ll need to implement the ministry your new church will have beginning in Phase Three. Write job descriptions, and begin to recruit and train those leaders.
3. **Outreach Plan.** Summarize how God is leading your new church to reach out to the community. Describe the strategies God is leading you to use. TimeLine and begin to implement the Plan.

4. **Start-up Facility.** Secure your start-up facility. Make sure that your meeting place reflects the church's vision and values, and is inviting, appropriate and accessible for the people you want to come.
5. **Celebration Service.** Describe in detail the celebration services your new church will have when the church "goes public." Plan and TimeLine your Preview Services.
6. **Budget.** Prepare a budget for the church's first year of operation. Include start-up expenses. Continue raising needed funds.

SUGGESTED TASKLIST

PRAYER (PR)

PR 4 Pray and fast for wisdom for the Lord's Outreach Plan.

In prayer, seek the Lord's will for the strategies that He will use in reaching your target population for Christ and the new church plant. What is the Lord's plan? You will want to pray through the options that are presented in the Phase Two, Outreach category.

PR 5 Stay in close communication with your Prayer Team.

Through your Prayer Letter, let your intercessors know what God has accomplished through your ministry in Phase One. After reading Phase Two, send them your prayer needs for the next steps. Personalize your Prayer Letter with brief handwritten messages.

VISION AND PLANNING (VP)

VP 7 Let the Lord of the Harvest direct your outreach into the community.

The Lord wants to be the Lord of your outreach. "And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church" (Eph. 1:22). He has an outreach plan and strategies for each church planting situation. Productive outreach isn't just following a few strategies that worked for someone else in another situation.

God wants to direct your mission just as He directed the planting of New Testament churches. Consider the Lord's outreach plan for the planting of the first church in Jerusalem. Before the planting of the first church in Jerusalem, Jesus gave instructions to the Apostles: "...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" (Acts 1:8). Jesus didn't tell them to spread out through Jerusalem and canvass the community. He told them to pray and wait for power from the Holy Spirit.

Prayer was obviously one of their primary strategies for birthing the church and preparing the hearts of people in the community for Christ. “They all joined together constantly in prayer, along with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and his brothers” (Acts 1:14).

The Lord chose to birth this first church on a strategic day, the day of Pentecost. Jews from all over the then-known world were in Jerusalem on that day. The Lord is concerned about which day you choose to plant the new church. He is the Master Strategist.

Who would have guessed that God would use the sound of a violent wind as an attraction strategy, but He did! As the sound got the attention of people throughout the city, their curiosity drew them to the house where the disciples were. “When they heard this sound, a crowd came together in bewilderment, because each one heard them speaking in his own language” (Acts 2:6).

Then the Apostles, spiritually empowered to speak foreign languages, communicated the gospel of Jesus Christ. Miraculously the people heard them speaking in their own languages. Peter took the lead. “Therefore let all Israel be assured of this: God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ” (Acts 2:36)

“Peter replied, ‘Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ so that your sins may be forgiven. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off—for all whom the Lord our God will call’” (Acts 2:38,39).

Three thousand came to Christ that day as the Jerusalem Church was born. It is clear that the Lord of the Harvest directed the outreach into Jerusalem for the planting of the first church. He wants to be the Master Strategist for the church that you plant.

VP 8 Understand that the Lord may use a strategy productively in one church plant but not in another. (Read more about developing an outreach plan in Chapter 24.)

VP 9 Write the Outreach Plan in your TimeLine at least three months before the birth.

Make this very clear and understandable. You will need to communicate this Outreach Plan to many key people within the church and community. Review VP 5. Don’t allow yourself to fall behind your plan or you will risk crippling your outreach.

LEADERSHIP (LE)

LE 4 Recruit and train small group leaders and assistant leaders.

Small group leaders are major influencers within the church. It is important for you to

train the initial leaders.

A sequence of recruiting and training these leaders is as follows:

1. As you lead the Core Group, observe potential leaders.
2. Allow them to assist you in the Core Group.
3. Recruit and give special training (meeting one-to-one).
4. Meet weekly with these leaders for ongoing training as they lead their individual groups.
5. Direct these leaders to be looking for and training assistant leaders.
6. Leaders meet with their individual assistant leaders one-to-one each week, with the goal of assistant leaders becoming leaders.
7. Leaders and assistant leaders attend ongoing training each week led by you.

The purpose for leadership meetings (either group or one-to-one) is for vision building, training, prayer, biblical application, accountability, team building, character building, and encouragement. The goal is for everyone to grow in their relationship to God and to others.

As groups grow in number, the need for small group leaders becomes more acute. It is good to have a primary leader and an assistant leader for each small group. Pray for leaders. Watch people within the groups for potential leaders. Look for people who are f.a.t. (faithful, available, trainable.)

Be very careful about appointing assistants to become the primary leaders of small groups. That is the goal; however, the evil one often attacks these new leaders. If that new leader is not mature enough and well-prepared you may lose a leader and a group.

It is possible for the church planter to lead three or four small groups personally. Each group must use the same curriculum. Assistant leaders, as they are continuing to be trained, must help the planter pastor the people in their groups.

LE 5 Recruit and equip leaders for New Christian training.

Look for a man and woman to lead who have hearts for new Christians. These leaders must also be able to (1) train new believers with simple, reproducible curriculum, (2) catalyze a team of disciplers to work with them, (3) manage people well, and (4) respond with loyalty to the pastor and the church. They should be exemplary Christians. (See Core Development CD 4)

LE 6 Recruit and train a children's ministry leader.

Look for a leader for the children's ministry. This should be a person who (1) has a

heart for children, (2) can recruit, train and manage children's workers, (3) can select or create an appropriate curriculum, (4) can lovingly resolve problems, and (5) is loyal to the pastor and the church. Draw up a job description.

LE 7 Meet regularly with the leaders of ministries.

You are beginning to recruit and train leaders for major ministry categories like Children's Ministry and New Christian Training. It is wise to begin meeting with these leaders on a regular basis. The purpose of the meetings is encouragement, equipping, communication, brainstorming, vision casting, planning, and problem-solving.

OUTREACH (OT)

OT 16 Design the Outreach Plan to be a synergism.

A synergism according to Webster's New World Dictionary is "the simultaneous action of separate agencies, which together have greater total effect than the sum of their individual effects."

In other words, your prayerful strategies for reaching out to the community should be working together so that the effect on the day of the birth is a powerful attraction.

Your goal should be to let everybody in the community know that an exciting new church is starting. You should let them know repeatedly and through a variety of outreach strategies. (Please consult Chapter 24.)

OT 17 Encourage the core group to bring their friends.

Often the most consistently effective outreach strategy is "friend-bringing-friend." This method also increases the likelihood that new people will stay in the new church because it's based upon the relationships of friends. Train your people to (1) pray for their unchurched friends, (2) find ways to meet their needs, and (3) bring their friends to small groups and all-church gatherings.

Challenge your people to bring (not just invite, but bring) two friends to Birth Sunday. Provide time in the small groups to pray for unchurched people.

Be sensitive to the fact that some of your people are going to be much better at this than others. Don't criticize people if they fail to bring others. You are asking them to do something that is quite difficult in our society. Rejoice with those who are successful in bringing their friends.

OT 18 Continue to “farm” those from the Community Needs Survey who are “open.”

Many church planters will contact those interested in the church three or four times. If there is no response, the pastor will conclude that these people are really not interested. This becomes discouraging and the “farming” stops.

Usually the pastor and his team have just not done enough caring. Let me encourage you to “pay the price” by genuinely and repetitively caring for those who are most interested. If after ten or twelve contacts a family is still resistant, then go on to those more receptive.

OT 19 Sponsor special Outreach Events every two or three months prior to the Birth of the church.

There are a variety of outreach events that can be used as a gathering strategy for members of the core group prior to the birth: need-meeting seminars, Christmas parties, concerts, dinners, etc. It is best to space them out every two or three months. Use outreach options to market these events. Make sure you get the names, addresses, and phone numbers of those who attend.

OT 20 Build portable signs and have them professionally painted.

The signs are placed at busy intersections near the Celebration facility. Their purpose is to attract and direct people to the new church. They should be large, at least 6' by 3'. It is ridiculous to place a small sign with small lettering on a busy street. People driving by at 40 miles an hour won't even notice or be able to read what it says. Use your logo, your church name, the worship times, and possibly your slogan. Don't be too wordy.

Find a volunteer who will consistently put these signs out two hours prior to every Celebration service and collect them after the service is over.

OT 21 Create a large outside banner that is professionally done.

The banner should be at least 15' by 3'. It should include logo, church name, worship times, slogan, and appropriate phrases like “Children's Celebration” and “Quality Nursery.” It should be made of durable material that will last and look good for at least three years. This banner should be hung on or near the facility. It should be highly visible from the street contiguous to the facility that has the most traffic.

OT 22 Make some beautiful inside banners to communicate the purpose of the church.

For example, one church has four beautiful banners that illustrate its vision:

CELEBRATE the Life of God

CARE about One Another in Christ

COMMUNICATE Christ to Our World

CULTIVATE Personal Growth in Christ

OT 23 Design and print a “Welcome Card” for the Celebration service that helps you identify why visitors have come. (Consult Chapter 24 for more information.)

OT 24 Understand the impact of penetration and repetition in promoting the new church. (Both these principles are discussed at length in Chapter 24.)

OUTREACH OPTIONS:

The following (OT 25 through OT 32) are options to use for penetration and repetition. As you pray to the Master Strategist, you may choose to use two, three, or four of them in concert.

OT 25 Do a massive direct mail outreach into your community.

One new church began its Celebration Service on Palm Sunday. On the Monday prior to Palm Sunday, the church planter sent out 28,000 direct mail pieces. The following Monday, just prior to Easter, he sent out another 28,000 brochures. The church opened with 146 in attendance, many of whom came because they received the mailing. In fact, new visitors attended with brochure in hand during the weeks that followed. Twice the pastor covered the three zip codes closest to the Sunday morning facility.

OT 26 Use telemarketing with repetitive direct mail.

Norm Whan’s program “The Phone’s for You” covers this approach in great detail. Phil Spry’s computerized telephone calling program has been very effective. (See chapter 21 for more information.)

In some areas, this is a very effective approach. In other areas, either telemarketing is not well received or too many churches have already tried the approach. Obviously in some countries, this is not even an option.

OT 27 Place a display ad in the most effective newspaper.

You can achieve both repetition and penetration with a good display ad in the right newspaper.

OT 28 Saturate the community with flyers and posters.

Just a few volunteers are needed to put up posters concerning the birth of the church. Politely ask merchants if they will allow you to put a poster in their windows. Apartment meeting rooms and laundry areas also work. Make sure these posters are up at least a month before the First Sunday. Take them down soon after the event.

You may want to network with other pastors and churches to get manpower to blitz the community with invitation flyers. Challenge the people in the nucleus of the church to join in the blitz. Do this during the two weeks prior to the start-up. Saturdays, Sunday afternoons, and weekday evenings work well. Pray before you go out. Ask the Lord to help the people be receptive to the invitations. Divide the city into areas that small groups of people can completely cover. You may want to have your team actually knock on each door and give a personal invitation. Or you may want to maximize the number of households covered by just putting the invitation in the door handle.

Groups of thirty to fifty can cover thousands of residences during a Saturday afternoon if the blitz is well organized.

OT 29 Use the radio to reach your community.

Many pastors have done half-hour teaching segments on Christian radio. If you are aiming at the non-Christian and the unchurched, you probably will not reach them using Christian radio. You may reach some “Godfearers” with Christian radio. Godfearers are people who are open to Christ and the church but haven’t made a commitment.

Consider a 30 to 60 seconds ad on a secular radio station that is targeting and reaching the same kind of people that you want to reach. Repetition is important on the radio. Purchase at least 25 spots during drive times (6:30 to 9:00 a.m., 3:30 to 6:00 p.m.) during the two weeks prior to the Birth. See if the radio station will give you some free public service announcements.

OT 30 Try television to broadcast your message.

This strategy may be of limited use to the church planter because of its expense. Several large established churches have used television with success.

One pastor made a 30-second commercial. Half-hour dramas illustrating the need for Christ and the church was the approach of another church. Another pastor televised a one-hour Christmas celebration. Some cable TV stations offer free production and broadcast time for public service announcements.

OT 31 Combine telemarketing and videotape to project your image.

Two church planting pastors in different communities combined telemarketing and videotape to spread the good news. Telemarketing uncovered hundreds of prospects for their churches. Rather than sending repetitive direct mail, the caller would ask if he could send a videotape. The videotapes included messages from the pastor and his family, testimonies from people who had discovered Christ and had an appreciation for the church, and scenes of music and teaching. In about fifteen minutes the prospect could experience a taste of the church in the privacy of his own home using a VCR and television. CD-ROM disks can also be made inexpensively and sent out, if your target community has a large number of computer users.

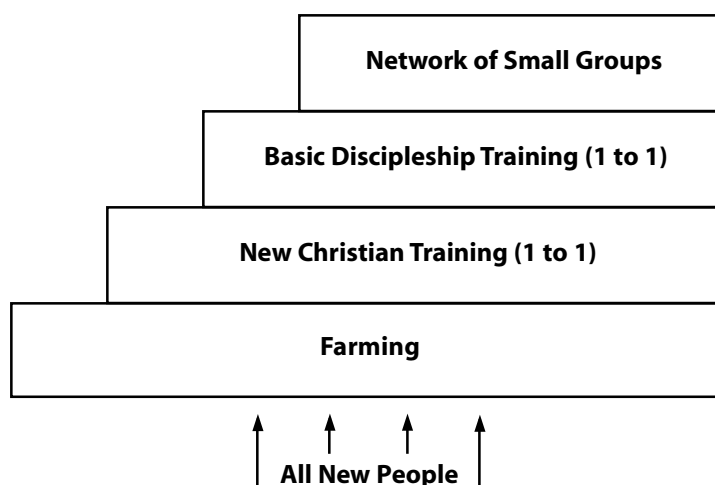
OT 32 Place a display ad in the Business Section of the telephone directory.

Often when a new family arrives in town, they find the services they need, including a church, by consulting the phone book. One pastor of a dynamic church reports that the most effective outreach strategy he used during the first year was a display ad in the Business Section of the phone directory. Though the ad was expensive, he said that it continued to guide a steady stream of visitors to the church.

CORE DEVELOPMENT (CD)

Now the Process of Ministry includes the expansion of small groups as more people become involved (CD 4) and includes New Christian Training (CD 5) as people come to Christ.

PHASE TWO MINISTRY PROCESS #1



CD 3 Expand the network of small groups.

When the first group is averaging 12 to 15, plan to plant another group. Your first group may see this as a threat to the wonderful fellowship that they are experiencing. Present the starting of a new group as part of the mission of planting the new church and reaching more people for Christ.

Determine the best day and time for your second group. Consider the days and times when your potential attenders are available. Arrange for childcare. Try to get a commitment from three couples to anchor this second small group. If these six people will promise to be at each meeting of the group for six weeks the group will start strong.

As the number of groups in the network grow, more people will become involved in the nucleus of the new church. Just like the cells of a child multiplying in the womb, the cells of the church will be multiplying. The church will be growing.

Encourage those in the groups to “invite their friends!” They will if they are experiencing the Lord meeting their needs.

CD 4 Train new Christians.

As people come to Christ in your new church, they will need special care. New Christians are impressionable and usually open to immediate training. They can become your most dynamic servant-leaders if given proper modeling. What is the next step for these new Christians?

Train new Christians in a one-to-one format, a man with a man and a woman with a woman. The training should be brief and reproducible. Multiplication Ministries (619-598-0909) offers curriculum for new Christian training. (See their website for ordering information: <<http://www.multimin.com>>.

FINANCE (FN)

FN 4 Estimate the cost for projected start-up needs.

List all your projected start-up needs like sound equipment, computer, laser printer, overhead projector, silk plants, bulletin covers, playpens, rocking chair, nursery cribs, children’s ministry curriculum, trailer, banners, etc. Try to be as comprehensive as possible.

Next to each item place an amount. Add up these amounts for the start-up budget. (See sample start-up list and budget in the Appendix)

FN 5 Make a budget for the new church for the first year.

Include in this budget all anticipated expenses. Estimate all the outreach expenses of the strategies that you have selected. Add the estimated cost for all start-up needs.

Avoid using credit. Pay as you go. It's easy to adopt the mindset that the people who come on Birth Sunday will pay for their own outreach expenses. It is also easy to get the new church so heavily in debt that it cannot get out.

FN 6 Raise the funds needed to meet the budget, especially the outreach and start-up expenses.

List individuals and organizations that may be excited about helping a new church toward birth. Jot down names of people, churches, foundations, denominational leaders, prayer teams, etc. which you need to contact. Make appointments. Share your vision. Share the need. Ask for decisions.

Teach your committed core people in one-to-one or in small group settings about the advantages of giving to God. They need to know what the needs of the church are so that they can be praying and giving.

FACILITIES (FA)

FA 1 Secure the Celebration meeting place. (You might want to order a resource from DCPI to help you through this process: "Finding Start-up Facilities for Your New Church.")

Consider your facility-needs for public worship. Write these down.

1. How large a seating capacity will be needed in the auditorium? (100, 150, 200)
2. How many additional rooms will you need? (Children's classrooms, nursery)
3. How much parking will you need? (One parking space for every one and one-half people)
4. What kind of visibility do you want the facility to have? (As much as possible)
5. How accessible is the facility? (Ideally on a major street or frontage road off a major highway)
6. Should the facility be attractive? (Yes. This is becoming more important to the unchurched attendee.)
7. What can the new church afford to spend in rent?

Add and answer any other pertinent questions so that you have in mind what you are looking for in a facility.

Now it's time to go exploring. Pray for God to provide you with just the right facility for the new church. Drive your community and check with every facility that could possibly meet some of your needs.

Check the school district for open schools. Check community centers, Boys and Girls Clubs, movie theaters, real estate schools, other local churches, parks and recreation buildings, commercial or industrial buildings, colleges and universities, Seventh Day Adventist churches, women's clubs, restaurants, hotels and lodges, performing arts centers, and any other potential building that looks like it has possibilities.

Do not advertise your use of the facility until you have secured an agreement in writing.

CELEBRATION (CE)

CE 1 Plan the main ingredients of the first public celebration.

Who will be your special music person for that Sunday? Ask local pastors for leads on special musicians. Never commit to special musicians until you have checked recommendations and heard them in person or on tape.

What about your message on that first Sunday? You might consider a starting a short series of messages on the Birth Sunday (or any other Big Day). Your Community Needs Survey will sensitize you to the major needs of your community. Focus your series on an area of high felt need in your community. Examples: How to Have a Successful Marriage and Family, or The Keys to Confident Living.

Will there be a special Children's Activity on that First Sunday? Can you promise a quality nursery? This is crucial for attracting and keeping young families. Church people may come if the children/nursery program is less than the best. The unchurched may come, but they will not stay unless their children's needs are met with quality.

Now you should have available to you all the ingredients that you need in order to market Birth Sunday.

CHILDREN (CH)

CH 2 The children's ministry leader plans and prepares for children's ministry.

The children's ministry leader needs to work with two scenarios. The first is the church in the home. The second is the church in a rented facility.

The first scenario is the immediate need. How does this leader envision children's ministry in the home? As the small groups grow and expand, the need for a children's ministry grows. The leader must plan for the care of children while the parents are in small groups. It may be desirable to plan small groups for the children concurrent with the small groups for their parents. Backyard Bible clubs are another option for children's ministry in the home.

The children's ministry leader must also begin to prepare for the time when the church will begin meeting in a rented facility. Consult with local, successful children's ministers. Consider the needs of your target population and nucleus. What kind of curriculum will be needed? It is much easier if you are able to find and purchase children's curriculum rather than creating your own. Will the children's program take place concurrently with the celebration service? Will it take place at another time? or on another day? How many classes will there be? How many teachers will be needed? Plan to have at least two teachers for each class.

Chapter 30

Phase Three: Jerusalem—The Team to the Church

In Acts chapter 1, Jesus spoke to the disciples that He prepared during his earthly ministry. He says, “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” (Acts 1:8). Our Lord Jesus was preparing the team to plant the very first church. The location was to be Jerusalem.

The believers responded to our Lord by persevering in prayer. They looked to Him for their empowering. “They all joined together constantly in prayer” (1:14a). They continued to recruit and empower leadership for the team. “Therefore it is necessary to choose one of the men who have been with us the whole time the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, beginning from John’s baptism to the time when Jesus was taken up from us. For one of these must become a witness with us of his resurrection” (1:21, 22). They added Matthias.

Then the time came for the new church to be launched.

When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them. Now there were staying in Jerusalem God-fearing Jews from every nation under heaven. When they heard this sound, a crowd came together in bewilderment, because each one heard them speaking in his own language (2:1-6).

For the launch of this church, God chose a strategic day when the Jewish Pentecost was being celebrated. Jews from all over the known world were present in Jerusalem.

The Lord made sure that the entire city knew about the start of this church. He began with the sound of a violent wind in the house where the believers were gathered. Then came the sight of “tongues of fire” that seemed to rest on the band of Christians. And then, miraculously, the believers began to speak in the diverse languages of those who were visiting Jerusalem.

The supernatural sound brought a bewildered crowd together.

Certainly, the planting of the first church in Jerusalem at Pentecost was the result of holy planning on God’s part. The start-up was on a strategic day during Pentecost. The Lord used the sound of the wind and the tongues of fire as ways to attract and focus the attention of the crowd. He empowered the believers to communicate effectively with Jews who spoke different languages.

Then Peter stood up with the Eleven, raised his voice and addressed the crowd: “Fellow Jews and all of you who live in Jerusalem, let me explain this to you; listen carefully to what I say . . .

therefore let all Israel be assured of this: God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ.” When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, “Brothers, what shall we do?” Peter replied, “Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off—for all whom the Lord our God will call.” (Act 2:14, 36-39).

The result was that the good news of Jesus Christ was preached.

Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day. They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Everyone was filled with awe, and many wonders and miraculous signs were done by the apostles. All the believers were together and had everything in common. Selling their possessions and goods, they gave to anyone as he had need. Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved (Act 2:41-47).

The believers numbered about 120 before Pentecost. After Pentecost, this new Christian church numbered more than three thousand.

Those who had been with Jesus evangelized and disciplined the new people so that all of them were devoted to the Word, the church, the sacraments, and prayer. God worked in mighty ways. The new believers met one another’s needs. And the Lord continued to grow the church.

In Phase Three, the Team to the Church, it is vital to plan well and execute the plan to launch in power.

Here are some of the LANDMARKS, the major tasks, which you must accomplish during Phase Three.

LANDMARKS

1. **Prayer Retreat.** Fast and pray for God’s favor as you move toward Birth Sunday. Ask for His blessing to complete your Team of Ministry Leaders and Workers.
2. **Outreach Plan.** Make sure the Outreach Plan from Phase 2 is on schedule. Make adjustments as needed.
3. **Completed Team of Ministry Leaders and Workers.** Make sure you have “filled” all the positions you need to begin public ministry at Birth Sunday.
4. **Follow-up & Evangelism.** Recruit and train leaders to follow-up, evangelize and disciple new people who will be coming to your new church. Get ready now so that you can meet these needs of new people as soon as the new church is launched.

5. **Pre-View Services.** Implement at least two “Pre-View Services” in advance of the church’s Birth Sunday. Ask for your mentor’s attendance and evaluation on at least one of these Sundays.
6. **Facility Preparation.** Prepare for Birth Sunday by making sure your “start-up facility” is ready to support the style of ministry the Lord has given you.

SUGGESTED TASKLIST

PRAYER (PR)

PR 6 Communicate all prayer needs for Phase Three to your Core Group and Prayer Team.

Read through the Phase Three Suggested TaskList. Determine prayer needs for the new church. Communicate these prayer needs and answered prayers to the core group and your prayer team.

VISION AND PLANNING (VP)

VP 10 Create a Strategy Board to communicate vision and your ministry plan.

A Strategy Board is a bulletin board display that helps you communicate the vision and ministry plan of the new church to leaders and committed members.

You can create your strategy board using colored card stock on a 4' x 8' tack board. The board should include the church’s purpose, biblical principles, and process of ministry. Print in large clear letters or use a computer that contains large point fonts. Make your Board simple and graphic. Print the vision statement. Graphically design your overall strategy. Display your process of ministry to include the leadership positions. Use this as a training tool for all new people.

LEADERSHIP (LE)

LE 8 Look for leaders.

As you are considering all the work that goes into developing a strong, disciple-making church, you are becoming aware of the critical importance of identifying leadership. The future of the church will depend upon identifying and equipping strong Christian leaders.

Look for potential leaders who are f.a.t. (faithful, available, trainable). Potential leaders must be faithful to Christ and the church. Loyalty to the existing leadership and to the purpose of the

church is a must. Of course, leaders must be available to serve. Flexibility and a willingness to be trained are important characteristics. Leaders should be evaluated Scripturally.

LE 9 Do not place potential leaders into positions of influential leadership too quickly.

Because of the crying need for leaders within the new church, the pastor's tendency is to place people into positions of influential leadership too quickly. Influential leaders are able to alter the attitudes of people within the fellowship.

As you pray for good potential leaders, you will find them emerging in the baby church. Discontented leaders, usually with a church background, will also be attracted to the new church. It will take time for the pastor to discern the difference between leaders with good potential and those who are discontented.

The Apostle Paul writes, "Guard yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds of the church of God which he bought with his own blood. I know that after I leave, savage wolves will come in among you and will not spare the flock. Even from your own number men will arise and distort the truth in order to draw away disciples after them. So be on your guard!" (Acts 20:28-31a).

The Apostle Paul was right then and he is right now. Be on your guard. If you place the wrong leader into a position of influence, he can lead those he is influencing right out of the church.

Another reason to avoid rushing a potential leader into a place of influence is to protect that leader. The evil one attacks church leaders. If they are not mature enough to stand in the battle, then the church may lose a valuable future leader and those he is influencing.

LE 10 Discern the relationship a potential leader had with previous churches and pastors.

If a potential leader speaks positively about his previous church experiences and pastors, that is a good sign. However, when a potential leader speaks negatively about his past churches or pastors that is cause for concern. This person will initially often speak in glowing terms about the new church and pastor. It may not be long, however, before he is speaking negatively about the new situation as well. If a person speaks badly about a prior church or pastor, you may want to give that former pastor a call and get his perspective. Reconciliation may need to take place. Try to prevent the new church from being hurt by having the wrong leader in an influential position.

LE 11 Recruit and train a Celebration Leader.

Pray and search for this key person. Your celebration leader must be effective in leading the style of music needed to reach your target audience. Valuable characteristics in a celebration leader: good voice, excellent musician, trainer of other musicians. He must

really help the people worship the Living God. Doctrinally, he must be sound. The celebration leader must be a mature Christian who will be submissive to the direction of the pastor.

It may work to have your celebration leader directly oversee a drama and media ministry. If it isn't, then you should consider recruiting a leader for the purpose of producing creative drama and media experiences for the celebration service.

LE 12 Recruit and train a Process Coordinator.

The process coordinator's job is to meet regularly with the ministry leaders and to provide (1) special training for newly assigned leaders and (2) ongoing training for the purpose of vision building, encouragement, prayer, accountability, personal development, and additional equipping.

He is to coordinate the ministries of Process #1 and #2 by being responsible (1) for a system of tracking people (Multiplication Ministries has a computer tracking program) and (2) for training ministry leaders in moving people from one ministry step to the next.

The Process Coordinator needs to be a good administrator and people-person. Other ministry leaders are accountable to him and he is accountable to the pastor. Delegating to the process coordinator will free up time and energy for the pastor.

A diagram of a process of ministry and the needed leadership roles is included in the next category (CORE DEVELOPMENT, p. 41).

LE 13 Recruit and train a Lead Usher.

Look for a person who is reliable and likes meeting people. This person must be able to recruit and train other ushers. This is an ongoing ministry and the lead usher should enjoy keeping it well-organized.

LE 14 Recruit and train a Lead Greeter.

The Lead Greeter should be gregarious, reliable, and able to recruit and train others to serve in the Greeter Ministry. This person will oversee the ministries of greeting, information table, refreshments, and parking. The overall goal of each of these ministries is to create a friendly and helpful atmosphere for new attenders so that they will feel welcome.

LE 15 Recruit and train the Facilities Leader.

This leader must be reliable and present at the celebration facility well before and after each

service. Often this person has the gift of helps, service, and leadership. This person must be able to work hard and manage others well. Prior to the service, the facilities leader is responsible for motivating his team to completely prepare the facility for the celebration and the children's ministry. Common tasks for the facilities team include: transporting equipment, placing all signs, setting up tables, chairs, banners, sound equipment, decorations, children's supplies, nursery needs, etc. After the service, the facilities leader is in charge of storing all equipment and supplies, restoring the facility to its condition prior to set-up, thoroughly checking the rooms and grounds, and securing the facility. The facilities leader should communicate well with the pastor, the custodian, and the manager of the facility.

Rented facilities are often lost by new churches that do not take care of them well or communicate responsibly with the owners.

LE 16 The children's ministry leader recruits and trains the nursery leader.

Look for a leader who loves babies and can lovingly manage people. Search the new church nucleus and neighboring churches for possible nursery leaders. In some circumstances, you may need to hire a responsible, loving person and pay them an hourly wage. It is essential that you check references for anyone in such a position! The nursery leader will be accountable to the children's ministry leader.

LE 17 Recruit and train a follow-up and evangelism leader.

It is critical that you have your follow-up and evangelism ministry ready when the church is launched. The leader must be a person who has demonstrated a heart for the lost. This person should be (1) fruitful in leading people to Christ, and (2) able to recruit and train others in follow-up and evangelism. In Phase Four, the follow-up and evangelism ministry is covered comprehensively.

CORE DEVELOPMENT (CD)

CD 5 Aim for a "critical mass" of at least 40 to 60 adults in your core group before the first public Celebration.

While this is written in a North American context, don't dismiss the goal of a core group this size, even if your setting is different. If you have a higher goal, you'll work harder to meet it. The point is that you must have good sense of the number of trained leaders and workers you will need to conduct the kind of ministry God has called you to. Pray to the Lord for workers and train them before the birth celebration.

"The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field" (Mt. 9:37). Communicate this need to your church people.

Motivate them to pray and bring people into the nucleus.

CD 6 Put everyone to work who will work.

One older church planter asked me once, “What is church planting?” And then he answered his own question, “It’s work—hard work.” If you have gotten to this point in the manual you are probably convinced of this truth. The pastor needs help. Help from leaders. Help from workers. Be open to receiving help. Don’t try to do it all yourself. You can’t. Learn to delegate. Learn to lovingly manage your leaders so that they can lovingly manage their workers.

As the pastor, you should be free to minister to people, especially during and after the Celebration. You need to be free to meet people, to pray with them, to lead them to Christ, to counsel them. In these functions, too, you must have help.

It will be frustrating to discover that not everyone wants to work in the new church. Don’t allow yourself to be discouraged by those who will not help. Work with the workable. Teach the teachable. Take joy in those who are willing to serve.

FINANCE (FN)

FN 7 Carefully select two reliable ushers to count the offering.

A basic principle is that uncounted money is never held by one person alone. After the offering is taken, two ushers should count the offering. You may want to use an envelope supplied by a bank to hold the offering. On both the envelope and a slip of paper, the ushers should record the amount and the date. Both ushers should sign the slip of paper and the envelope that contains the offering. One usher should keep the slip of paper and report the offering to the pastor. The other should deliver the offering to the financial secretary as soon as possible.

FACILITIES (FA)

FA 2 Help establish and maintain good communication between the administrator of the facility and the Facilities leader.

This is crucial. Inevitably, problems arise that need to be solved.

For example, a church meets in a high school. The School Administrator in charge of the facility decides that the church should not have access to the best entrance to the school’s multi-purpose room, which serves as the Celebration facility. This leaves just one poor access to that room. The pastor and his facilities leader meet with the administrator. The better entrance is made available.

The use of the facility often hinges on the relationship between the administrator of the facility and the facilities leader for the church. It is best to have all concerns worked out through good communication between these two.

FA 3 The facilities leader thoroughly inspects the rented facility and grounds after each celebration.

If you want to keep the facility the Lord has provided, make sure that there are as few problems as possible. Usually other people are using the facility during the week. Keep them happy. If they start complaining to the administrators of the facility, the church could lose its meeting place quickly.

For example, if the church meets in a school it is probably using rooms for its children's ministry that are teacher's classrooms during the week. Imagine that the nursery worker leaves a used diaper in a classroom. The teacher discovers it the next day (which will not be difficult to do). Someone is going to hear about this situation. It will probably be the person who decides whether the new church stays or goes.

That is why it is mandatory that the facilities leader thoroughly inspect the rented facility and grounds after each Celebration. Some church planters take snapshots of each room of the facility so that the church facilities team can return it to its exact condition after use. It's important to have some record: whether photos, or a detailed diagram of each room, with instructions as to how "set up" and "tear down" the room for the church's use.

Say "thank you" with flowers or cards on a regular basis to the people who are usually using the facility that you rent.

FA 4 The facilities team sets up chairs correctly.

Do you enjoy sitting down in church and being scrunched between two people on either side? There isn't any room for your shoulders. Why? Because an usher thought all the chairs needed to touch. Provide a good comfort zone for people side-to-side and front-to-back.

Ask your ushers not to set up too many chairs. The downside of putting up too many chairs is that the people that do come are wondering where the rest of the people are. Just set up enough chairs for the people you really think are going to be there. When more come, you and all your people can rejoice as you put out more chairs. That's a momentum builder!

FA 5 Everything used on Sunday mornings must be portable.

As you consider the equipment you need for the celebration ministries, remember that

except in rare circumstances everything has to be set up and taken down for every service. For some people, setting up all the equipment for each service and storing it afterwards becomes very tiring. For others, it is not a problem. Everything must be portable.

FA 6 Find a storage alternative that is safe and secure.

Here are some alternatives: (1) a storage room at the celebration facility, (2) a trailer that is stored at the home of a church member, (3) a church member's garage, or (4) a rented storage area.

Be very careful about the security of the storage alternative, especially if you have expensive equipment.

FA 7 Make sure all needed equipment and supplies are on hand before the practice celebration.

You have already listed projected start-up needs like a lectern, silk plants, overhead projector, etc. Look at your list again or refer to the list in the Appendix. Insure that the church will have what is needed by the time of the practice celebration.

CELEBRATION (CE)

CE 2 Choose a style of music that is culturally appropriate to your target audience.

Choruses can be as holy as hymns. But it is likely that the people you're trying to reach will enjoy one style and dislike another. It is also very difficult to "teach" your people to enjoy another style. It may be best to go with the style that is well received by your target audience. One way of determining this up-front would be to ask as part of your Community Needs Survey: "What radio station do you listen to?" Then as you and your worship people listen to that station, you may be able to find Christian music that matches.

CE 3 The Celebration leader should find musicians appropriate to your worship style.

Work with your celebration leader in building a team of musicians who can work well, play well, and worship well together. This is not an easy task. It is often difficult to find musicians and singers who play and sing with excellence. Many people involved in this ministry are humble servants of God. However, the worship ministry does seem to attract some prideful types who are involved more for self-glorification than to glorify Christ.

CE 4 Recruit and train a worship team.

The team is composed of the worship leader, musicians, the singers, and the sound person. The team should meet weekly for prayer and practice. Prior to the celebration services the team should practice so that they are sharp for the service. The practice should end at least a half hour before the celebration service begins. In one church the team met to worship before the celebration began.

CE 5 Acquire a good sound system.

Most people in the West have excellent sound systems at home and in their cars. They expect it when they come to church. Do not skimp on the sound system. Make sure at least two people in the church can operate the sound system skillfully.

CE 6 Prepare to project on a screen or a wall the words of all the songs that are sung.

Computer projectors are more and more reasonable in price, so the best option may be computer-generated projection. You could also transfer the words to transparencies and use an overhead projector, or put the words on slides and use a slide projector. A less desirable option is to print the lyrics in the bulletin. Remember: if you really want to make your unchurched visitors feel uncomfortable ask them to sing songs they don't know without the words.

CE 7 Acquire a good tape player.

With a quality tape player tied into your sound system you can make use of the many excellent Christian tapes available. Special musicians often bring accompaniment tapes. You can use a tape player to play music before and after the service. They are also handy to record the message for duplication. You may need to invest in a high-speed tape duplicator. This is a necessity for new churches in commuter communities.

CE 8 Create an "Order of Service" for the Birth Celebration and every celebration.

An "order of service" is your plan for the service. It includes what is going to happen, in what order, and by whom.

Some of the elements: taped music or prelude, opening prayer, welcome, ushers deliver visitor brochures, worship singing, people greeting one another, media, drama, testimony, communion, special music, preaching, offering, announcements, gathering of welcome cards, prayer, taped music or postlude.

The pastor and the celebration leader should be very involved in praying through and planning the “order of service” for each celebration. All the other leaders that contribute to the service should give their input.

Communicate the order of service just to those people who have a need to know, such as the Celebration leader, ushers, special musicians, sound person, media or drama leaders.

See the Appendix for a Celebration Planning Sheet.

CE 9 Attach approximate times to each aspect of the “Order of Service.”

The appropriate length for a worship service is probably rooted in the culture in which you’re planting. In the West, for many church planters a service is too long if it goes over an hour and fifteen minutes. The important thing is for you to know the people you’re trying to reach, and structure your service accordingly.

CE 10 Use special music, drama, or other media during every Celebration.

Many contemporary churches are reaching people through special music, drama, and other media in their celebration services. These must be planned and practiced well in advance to insure excellence. One church opened its service with a worship band featuring a jazz sax soloist. During its missions Sunday, a church screened a video of their team constructing a building for a Mexican church. Another church tied a funny and dramatic skit into the theme for the morning. Special music, drama, or media will often be the most memorable part of a celebration service.

CE 11 Recruit and train ushers.

Help your lead usher to recruit and train his team. The church will need at least four ushers for each celebration. It’s best to recruit eight ushers, dividing them into two teams of four.

The job of ushers is to greet, meet, seat, and help people as they come to the Celebration service. They should pray in order to be spiritually prepared for ministry. They must smile and demonstrate a spirit of love in greeting people. Ushers are in charge of distributing bulletins, seating people, and maintaining comfort in the facility. They distribute guest brochures at the proper time. Ushers receive the offering and distribute communion quietly and quickly. They should be ready to help the pastor when needed, correct any distraction to the service, and step in to help during emergencies. Grooming and appropriate dress are important for this ministry.

CE 12 Ushers collect Welcome Cards at each service.

The welcome card should be filled out by each attender during every celebration. The reality is that people will only fill out this card if that is their desire. This card helps you care for people. It allows people to communicate with the pastoral staff in a non-threatening way. They can add prayer requests, needs, or praises on the card. The follow-up ministry depends upon getting the addresses and phone numbers of visitors from these cards.

At some point in each Sunday service, the people should be asked to fill out the cards and pass them to the center aisle for the ushers to pick up quickly. The cards should be given to the pastor at the close of the service.

CE 13 Ushers give new people a “Visitors Brochure” during the celebration.

This “visitors brochure” should contain significant information about the church and its ministries. The brochure should be written from a benefit orientation. In other words, ministries and programs should be presented in such a way that the reader can easily see how they meet his or her needs.

CE 14 Give people an opportunity to give.

People do not want to be harangued for money. Be very careful not to pressure people for money. Don't beg for the offering or lay a guilt trip on your people. Do, however, offer people an opportunity to give.

Many new churches have suffered financially because they haven't offered their people an opportunity to give. It is a blessing for the individual to give to God. “Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work” (2 Cor. 9:7, 8). Give your people a blessing by providing them with an opportunity to invest in God's Kingdom. This approach will also bless your church income.

One pastor was apprehensive about teaching on investing in God's Kingdom to his one-year-old church. In a sensitive way he taught his people about the benefits of giving to God in four messages. The month after the series the average offering doubled.

It is wise when introducing the offering to give special instruction to the guests. But there is no need to absolve them from giving if that is their desire. You may be teaching people not to give.

A sample instruction to guests: “The offering is a way that we can express our gratitude to God for all that He gives to us. If you are a guest of our church please do not feel an obligation to

give. It is our privilege to have you here. If it is your desire to give, please feel free.”

“Giving” can be presented during the service in a positive manner. It is good to sing your most upbeat chorus during the offering. It should be a time of rejoicing.

CE 15 Ushers pass offering trays or bags during the celebration.

My encouragement is to pass the offering trays or bags rather than use an offering box. Passing the trays or bags provides an opportunity to give that is sometimes absent with an offering box. It is easy to forget to place an offering in a box after the service. People are busy meeting and greeting one another.

Offering bags can be made by a talented seamstress. You can purchase trays or bags through a church bookstore or supply house. Another church may donate them. Small wicker baskets offer another option.

CE 16 Recruit and train greeters.

Greeters are the first people church attenders meet. Greeters are responsible for (1) helping visitors park, (2) warmly greeting people before they reach the door, (3) printing name tags for all attenders (not just the visitors), (4) directing parents and children to the nursery and children’s rooms, (5) taking care of the information table, and (6) providing for the refreshments at the close of the service.

Choose warm relational people for greeters. This is a great ministry for people with the gift of hospitality. Consider selecting people who are like the target population you are trying to reach.

Greeters welcome people in the parking lot and near the entrance to the celebration. The welcome should be loving but brief. Guests should be able to find a highly visible information table where they can get their questions answered. Greeters are in charge of providing refreshments for the time after the celebration service.

CE 17 Greeters staff the Information Table and Welcome Table.

The information table is for flyers, booklets, maps of the facilities, any information about your church and any other helpful printed material. The person stationed at this table should be knowledgeable about the church in order to help people.

The welcome table is for refreshments during the gathering time after church. Make sure the food and drink options are attractive and appropriate for the people you’re trying to reach. The refreshment time is a great opportunity for people to get to know one another and become friends. Do whatever it takes to facilitate this gathering time.

CE 18 Print a bulletin for each celebration service.

The bulletin should include an attractive cover, church name, address and phone number of the church, names of the pastor and staff, an order of service (optional), upcoming activities and ministry opportunities. Add a “welcome to guests” and also the vision statement of the church. Song lyrics should be included in the bulletin if they are not being projected on a screen. Make sure that the bulletin is an attractive, high-quality brochure that represents the church well.

The ushers should hand out bulletins as people enter the service.

CE 19 Arrange for a professional photographer at the birth celebration.

As Christians, we are “born again.” A new church is only born once. Make sure you get a good record of the birth by an excellent photographer. You may want a video of the entire service. Have the photographer take many candid shots of people throughout the morning. It is great to get a shot of everybody together in one group. You will find many ways to use these photographs in future publications and celebrations. Some pastors show the video of the Birth Celebration on the anniversaries of the church. Consider finding a “church historian” to keep a scrapbook for the church.

CE 20 Two weeks before the first public celebration, have a practice celebration.

The purpose of this celebration is the same as that of a dress rehearsal. A practice celebration helps the church to eliminate problem areas. This will help you to make sure everything goes smoothly for the birth celebration. Practice everything you intend to do as though it was happening on the big day.

More and more new churches are adopting a “preview service” approach, which includes multiple “pre-launch” worship gatherings—perhaps once a month for three or four months. The advantage of preview services is that they allow you to build momentum, worship together, and become prepared for the “crowd” you plan for on launch Sunday.

Ask a person who is experienced in church planting to be an evaluator during the practice service. The evaluator should attend the new service with the mindset that he or she is an unchurched person who decided to attend the first celebration. The evaluator should take notes in two categories: “Good job” and “Needs work.” Questions the evaluator should answer:

1. Are there large, readable signs at the main intersections close to the facility?
2. Does a banner identify the location of the church?
3. Is the parking lot easy to find?

4. Is there enough parking? Where is additional parking?
5. Are the grounds attractive and clean?
6. Am I greeted in the parking lot?
7. Are there directional signs pointing to the church facility?
8. Am I greeted before I reach the auditorium?
9. Is it clear where the children's classes and nursery are? Am I helped to find them or taken to them?
10. Am I given a map to the grounds?
11. Are there signs to the restrooms?
12. Is there an information table with someone to answer my questions?
13. Am I given a bulletin by an usher?
14. Does the usher give me options concerning where to sit?
15. Is the auditorium attractive and clean?
16. Is my seat comfortable and do I have enough room to stretch?
17. Is there enjoyable background music?
18. Am I comfortable—warm, cool, or in a draft?
19. How is the lighting? Is the stage well lit?
20. How is the music? Does it sound consistently good?
21. How is the singing? Does it sound consistently good?
22. How much am I expected to sing? Am I helped to sing?
23. Can I relate to the celebration leader?
24. Are the words projected up front for all the lyrics of all the songs? Are the lyrics in the bulletin?
25. Is the drama well done? Did it speak to the theme? Did it make me laugh, cry, think?
26. How was the media? Did it cause me to think?
27. Were there any testimonies? Did I relate to those who gave testimonies?
28. Did the message speak to my needs? Can I relate to the pastor?
29. Am I encouraged to briefly meet those sitting around me?
30. Is the service too long, too short, or just right?
31. Are the transitions between songs and other elements of the service smooth and natural?
32. Is the sound system well adjusted?
33. Do the people up front smile and seem genuinely glad to be in the celebration?
34. Am I greeted after the celebration?
35. Are there refreshments after the service?
36. Is it easy for me to find my children?
37. Did they have fun in their classes?
38. Did they learn anything about Jesus?
39. Do the children want to return?
40. Do my spouse and I want to return?

At the close of the practice celebration, pray fervently, as a core group, for the Birth of the new church. Then, the evaluator should take the key ministry leaders (pastor,

celebration leader, lead usher, lead greeter, facilities leader, children's ministry leader, process coordinator) on a tour of the facility. Begin with the entrance to the parking lot. Try to help them imagine what the unchurched person would experience, from the "sandwich signs" on through the service and then the refreshment time. Spend more time affirming the "good job" column. However, be clear about what "needs work" before the actual birth celebration. Make sure every leader receives clear instructions concerning what needs to be done before the birth celebration.

CHILDREN (CH)

CH 3 Give your children's ministry a fun name.

One church named their children's classes the Sonshine Club, Kid's Club and Adventure Club. Another church located on the coast named their children's classes the Guppies, Starfish, Seals, Dolphins, and Sharks. Kid's Konnection was another selection. Create names that are fun and attractive to children and their parents.

CH 4 Recruit workers for your children's ministry.

Try to find two workers for each group of children. Team teaching will help your workers to cope with burnout. Everyone needs a break. Children's workers rarely get a break especially when the children's ministry is concurrent with the worship service.

It is crucial that your teacher and works have regular opportunity to participate in the worship services or they will feel isolated and disconnected from the church body.

Good children's workers are precious. Take good care of them. One church decided to have an early service just for those serving in the children's ministry. Look for possible teachers and workers in your core group and also in friendly churches that want to help.

CH 5 Establish simple written policies for nursery workers and parents.

A church nursery can become a place to get sick unless precautions are taken. Establish nursery policies, especially a well-baby policy. (See Appendix.) A well-baby policy states that, out of concern for all the babies, your nursery cannot accept sick infants. Express this carefully and sensitively to parents or they might be offended.

CH 6 Adopt a practice by which all babies and their belongings are signed in and out by the same person.

Sadly, even an estranged mother or father can be a kidnapper. Have a sign-in sheet. Release a

baby only to the person who signs the baby in. You may want to safety pin names on the baby and belongings.

CH 7 Nursery Leader recruits and trains nursery workers.

Look for workers who love babies and are experienced in caring for them. These workers should be trained according to nursery policies and procedures. They are accountable to the nursery leader. It is an unfortunate commentary on our world, but new churches must find ways to avoid child abusers in the nursery or among the children's workers. The use of an application form and references may help.

CH 8 Select the appropriate room for the nursery.

The nursery should be comfortable and pleasant for babies. It should be close to the bathrooms while maintaining enough distance from the celebration so that parents and other adults will not be distracted by the children. Nursery workers should be trained to get a parent if a child develops a real problem.

CH 9 Obtain all the necessities to outfit an excellent nursery.

Rocking chairs, play pens, portable cribs, washable toys, diapers, sanitary wipes, a changing table, blankets, and a swing are among the kinds of equipment and supplies that will be needed. Parents in the core or friends from nearby churches will often donate these items.

CH 10 Help children to have fun and learn about Jesus.

Parents will often ask their children two questions after church: (1) Did you have fun? (2) What did you learn? Make sure that the kids in the new church can respond positively and enthusiastically. Kids are powerful influencers. Children bring their parents to church as often as parents bring their children. Get these children on your team. Meet their needs. Help them to have fun and to learn something about Jesus during each children's program.

CH 11 Make sure that nursery and children's workers are in their rooms at least fifteen minutes before the service.

If a guest family arrives at church and discover that the rooms for their children are unprepared and unmanned, they will likely never come back.

It is very important that all of the children's and nursery workers be available in their rooms to receive children at least fifteen minutes before the service begins. Classes must be ready. The worker should be prepared to lovingly care for children.

CH 12 Make signs for the nursery and the children's ministry.

These signs identify the location of the rooms for new people. If these rooms are not readily apparent from the auditorium, you will need more signs to direct people. The greeters and ushers must be sensitive to directing and bringing parents and children to these rooms also.

PASTOR (PA)

PA 2 Pastor, be encouraged during the Birth Celebration!

The Lord knows how critical it is for the leader of leaders to be encouraged. As Joshua was about to lead his people into the Promised Land, the Lord spoke to him, "...As I was with Moses, so I will be with you; ...Be strong and courageous, because you will lead these people to inherit the land I swore to their forefathers to give them. Be strong and very courageous.... Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be terrified; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go" (Joshua 1:5-9).

Anticipating the birth celebration is both thrilling and frightening. You are looking forward to a great day. You may be fearful that few will show up. Still, it is crucial that you be encouraged during the birth celebration, no matter how many or how few the Lord brings on that day. Your leaders, your workers, and all the new people will be looking to you to model encouragement.

PA 3 Do what you can.

In the first months after the church is born, the pastor will wear many hats. This is true even if he is a good delegator. Usually the pastor and a small core of committed people are surrounded by a large crowd of visitors. Helping the crowd become a church is not a simple task. It requires a multi-faceted strategy.

How much of this ministry you can accomplish and how soon it can be initiated depends on a number of factors: the number of committed workers available, the pastor's ability to recruit and delegate, money, administrative help, and facilities. Most of all, this ministry depends upon the Lord, His plan and His timing. When you get overwhelmed, pray. Do what you can, and leave it all in God's hands.

Chapter 31

Antioch: Phase Four—The Church to the World

In Phase Four your new church begins to fulfill its destiny—obeying the commission Jesus gave the first new church in Jerusalem. He promised that church, “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 (Acts 1:8).”

The Lord outlined an outreach plan that touched four spheres:

1. Jerusalem was their home town.
2. Judea was their home state/province.
3. Samaria was a people group geographically near, but culturally somewhat distant.
4. And “the ends of the earth” meant just that.

Like many congregations in the centuries since, the Jerusalem church did not immediately obey Jesus’ commission. It was actually the persecution of Christians (cf. Acts 8:1) that forced the believers to disperse and then to take the good news of Christ’s gospel into the four spheres Jesus outlined.

In Phase Four, your new church takes seriously what Jesus said about all four of those spheres. Yes, you are to reach your own people in your home town, but you must also reach out to your state or province, to those different from you culturally (even though they may live close by), and to the ends of the earth.

The church in Antioch of Syria is the model for this phase. Born out of the Jerusalem persecution (cf. Acts 11:19-20), the new congregation was only a few years old when the Lord commissioned it to begin an extraordinary chapter in the history of church planting.

In the church at Antioch there were prophets and teachers: Barnabas, Simeon called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen (who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch) and Saul. While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, “Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.” So after they had fasted and prayed, they placed their hands on them and sent them off (Acts 13:1-3).

Thus began the first intentional daughter church planting efforts recorded in the Bible. This is what Christ intended when He gave His Great Commission. This is His model for churches today—raising up and sending out leaders for all four spheres of church planting.

When Barnabas and Saul went out from Antioch they started a church planting movement that reached west into Europe and eventually from there into the New World. Much of Christendom can look to the church in Antioch for their spiritual roots.

The Lord’s intentions are the same for churches today—reproducing for kingdom

growth. Healthy churches give birth!

If churches do not reproduce, eventually the light of the gospel is diminished. That's exactly what happened in Turkey, where most of the church planting in New Testament times took place. Today Turkey is over 99% Muslim.

When churches have a vision to give birth to other churches in all four spheres, the light of the gospel shines brighter and brighter. More churches mean more people won to Christ. Church planting is "the most effective evangelistic methodology under heaven." Typically, 60-80% of the members in new churches are previously unsaved. The very best way to reach the world for Christ is to plant churches.

It is virtually impossible to find a place on earth that has too many churches. It is not just a nice way to spread the Gospel. It is the most Biblical method of evangelism.

The pattern of Acts 1:8 is what Phase Four is all about—bringing the good news from your church to the world. Evangelism begins at home (our Jerusalem), but also should reach out to our own state/province (our Judea), to other cultures (our Samaria), and to "the ends of the earth."

When should this mindset begin? It must begin when the new church is conceived. It must be part of the new church's DNA. Trying to add a global vision later is so much harder. Even the Jerusalem church had apparently become ingrown to the point that it took persecution to send Christians out of Jerusalem! May it not take persecution, or internal conflict or the chastisement of God to get us to take the Good News from our new church to the world.

The following section provides suggested Landmarks to help you plan well for Phase Four.

LANDMARKS

1. **Prayer Retreat.** Pray and fast for the Lord's ongoing vision for the new church in the four spheres of Acts 1:8.
2. **Leadership Retreat.** Take your key leaders with you for a time of prayer, thanksgiving, re-envisioning, goal-setting and planning with the following Landmarks in mind.
3. **Process of Ministry Review.** Study how God is bringing people to your church, and review the Process of Ministry originally envisioned in Phase 1. Readjust to make sure people are being effectively evangelized, followed-up, folded into the church and disciplined.
4. **Jerusalem Outreach Plan.** Plan the next 12 months to make sure you're continuing to penetrate your community with the gospel.
5. **Judea Outreach Plan.** Begin to plan for giving birth to a daughter congregation in your "Judea."
6. **Samaria Outreach Plan.** Look at your area from a cross-cultural perspective. Are you reaching out to other cultures? Plan steps to reach your Samaria, including the possibility of helping to plant a church of another culture nearby.

7. Worldwide Missions Outreach Plan. Make sure your church has a global impact by investing in church planting around the world. Begin a plan to highlight worldwide missions in your church and raise up missionaries from within your congregation (Acts 13:1-3).

SUGGESTED TASKLIST

PRAYER (PR)

PR 7 Get away to personally pray and fast concerning God's ongoing vision for the baby church.

Take two or three days at your favorite place for a personal retreat. Bring your Bible and a notebook. Read the Word. Read through this chapter again. Pray. Fast. Consider the various ministries of the baby church. Inquire of the Lord concerning His ongoing vision for the new church. What does He want you to do? What does He want the new church to become? What are the next steps? Write down your observations.

There are two problems many visionary church planters encounter at this point: (1) they shoot for goals that are unrealistically high and (2) they envision too many different things to do. Don't try to do too much, too soon. In your ministries, build from strength to strength.

One pastor who led the same church he planted for forty-five years said, "I tried to lead my church into small victories...to give them confidence."

PR 8 Communicate all prayer needs for Phase Four to the Leadership, the Church, and the Prayer Team.

This step should take place after your personal retreat and the leadership retreat described in VP 12. Don't bypass your leadership by having the church pray about future direction before the leaders are unified concerning the continued vision.

PR 9 Encourage people to pray before and/or during the celebration service.

The pastor may want to meet with a few people who are serious about prayer to lift up the celebration services. You will want to pray for issues like these:

1. People would come to Christ
2. The Word would be practically applied to the lives of people
3. God would be glorified and Christ lifted up
4. The Holy Spirit would be present during the service

5. Care would be extended toward the children and their workers
6. The attenders would be encouraged and strengthened
7. The worship service would have impact
8. The financial needs of the church would be met

VISION AND PLANNING (VP)

VP 11 Measure the size and financial strength of the baby church during the first two months after the first public celebration.

If you are using a “launch” model, Birth Sunday is usually uncharacteristic of the size and strength of the new church. It is common for the church to experience an attendance drop of 30% to 50% on the second Sunday after birth.

During the first two months after the church has been born, the pastor will have a good sense of how many people the Lord has brought to the baby church. He may begin to see a pattern in the weekly offerings that indicate the church’s degree of financial strength.

VP 12 Have a leadership retreat to pray and plan for the continued growth of the baby church.

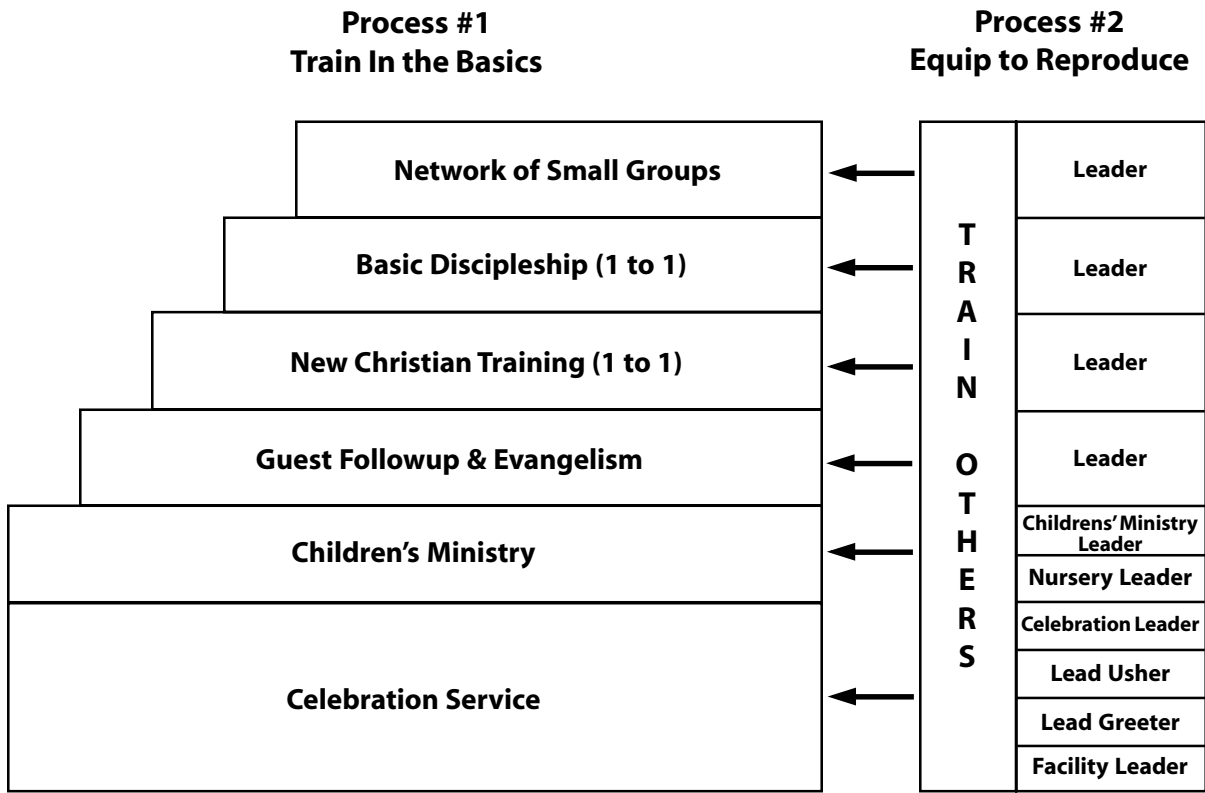
Find an enjoyable place for all of your key leaders to retreat. This is a time to pray, play, enjoy one another, sow vision gained from your personal retreat, brainstorm, and continue planning for the future of the church.

VP 13 Work to get Process #1 and Process #2 functioning effectively.

Process #1 is for the purpose of building relationships with New People and helping them to grow spiritually as they are Trained in the Basics. It is in a logical sequence, a process, which will begin to meet the needs of New People.

The bottom two spaces of the following diagram are foundational ministries that should attract New People to the church and to Christ.

Ministry Process



As new people are trained in the basics they are then equipped to reproduce in the basics in which they were trained. This is Process #2. Most people can reproduce a one-to-one ministry, but not everyone can lead a group. The people now learn to “give out” as well as “take in.” They now can build relationships with new people and influence them for Christ.

VP 14 Evaluate one principle of the new church's Climate for Growth each month with the Steering Committee and key leaders.

A sapling needs the right amount of rainfall, sunlight, and temperature range to grow into a tall, strong tree. If it doesn't have the right climate, it will be stunted or die. A church, too, requires the right climate in order to grow strong and healthy.

One church growth expert has identified nine principles that contribute to a healthy climate for growth in a church. Those principles are:

Principle

Strategy

1. Prayer

2. Purpose

3. Simple Organization
4. Communication Strategy
5. Willingness to Change
6. Unity of Leadership
7. Leadership Trained and Ministering
8. Functional Goals and Objectives
9. Operate by Faith

VP 15 Continue to present the vision for the church.

You and your leaders should do this in a variety of settings: one-to-one, small groups, and in the celebration service. Creatively share the vision in a variety of ways: personal testimony, drama, video, music, brochures, letters, bulletins, audio tapes, interviews, etc. Be careful in presenting the vision. In order for this to motivate the people, they must see the vision beginning to unfold or they may lose faith in the vision and the leadership.

VP 16 Plan your preaching schedule at least three months in advance.

Many pastors wake up on Monday morning wondering, “Well, what am I going to preach next Sunday?” This approach puts unnecessary pressure on the pastor. It wastes time and may mean your overall teaching may lack continuity. Pray for direction concerning the messages the Lord wants to impress upon your people. It will help you and your people if you can plan ahead. Try to think in terms of short series of messages (four to six weeks maximum). Remember, for the sake of guests and sporadic attenders, each message must be able to stand on its own.

LEADERSHIP (LE)

LE 17 Look for potential leaders in One-to-One Discipleship.

This may be one of your finest “fishing pools” for leaders. Talk to one-to-one discipleship trainers about the spiritual growth of the people they are discipling. Who has potential for leadership? A greater percentage of leadership will emerge from one-to-one ministries than from larger group ministries.

LE 18 Look for potential leaders in the small group ministry.

The small group can be a dynamic incubator for potential leaders. The small group leader should be modeling how to discuss the Bible and apply it to life, how to pray for people's needs, how to lead a group, and many other skills that the potential leader will need to learn. Some potential leaders will be energized in this environment.

LE 19 Recruit and train Ministry Placement Leaders.

The responsibilities of the ministry placement leaders are (1) to help Christians within the church discover their gifts and abilities, (2) to encourage and guide people into a reproducing ministry with others, and (3) to help key leaders in ministry areas find and train workers.

For example, a ministry placement leader (MPL) may teach a membership class during a session on "How to Serve in your Gifts." The MPL has personal interviews with all who desire to become members. A man (MPL) meets with a man and a woman (MPL) meets with a woman.

Let's imagine the path a new person might take in coming into a new church. First she is trained in the basics through Process #1. It becomes obvious that she loves children and has a background in teaching. She also likes to encourage other women. The Ministry Placement Leader recommends that she pray about being trained as either a children's ministry worker or a discipler in one-to-one discipleship with other women. Sue prays and decides that she would like to work with children. The MPL calls, hears her decision, and then connects her to the right training and the right class for her. After two weeks the MPL calls to follow up and make sure she is doing well.

The ministry placement leaders are accountable to the process coordinator and need to attend the monthly meeting of other ministry leaders.

OUTREACH (OT)**OT 33 Determine what outreach strategies were most productive in reaching people for the Birth Celebration.**

In Phase Two we covered the importance of including this question on the "Welcome Card":

How did you find out about our church?

As you evaluated the data, what did you learn? How many individuals (or families) came because of friends? direct mail? door-to-door? newspaper? telephone? radio? TV? yellow pages? This information should reveal to you what methods the Lord used to draw people to your

church on Birth Sunday. Just because the Lord used a certain method once does not necessarily mean that he is going to use it again in the same church. Still, knowing what God used for the Birth Celebration should help you as you plan ongoing outreach.

OT 34 Proceed with ongoing outreach.

As much as any pastor would like to completely close the “back door” so that no one will leave the church, people will continue to do so to some degree.

You will want to continue to use the media to reach out for Christ and the church, so that people are flowing in while others are trickling out. It is recommended that you reserve 10% of your budget for outreach media and events.

OT 35 Plan at least two more “Big Day” Outreach events in the next twelve months.

Consider Easter, Back-to-School, Christmas, and the Anniversary of the Church as times when you can hold an outreach event. Plan these events at least three months (and preferably six months) in advance.

Read through Phase Two, Outreach for ideas. “Big Days” will provide you with “fishing pools” of unchurched people to bring to Christ and assimilate into the church.

OT 36 Get to know local funeral directors.

My mentor said, “I’d rather preach a funeral than a wedding anytime.” I asked him, “Why?” He said, “At a funeral people are really thinking about what happens after death.” A funeral is a great time to share Christ and the comfort of the Holy Spirit. Funeral directors are always looking for preachers to lead funerals for people who do not have a church home. You can meet people at a funeral who will never darken the doors of the church. The Lord may touch them to come to Christ or to visit the new church.

OT 37 Update the church brochure.

Now that the church is born, you may need to change some copy in your church brochure.

ADMINISTRATION (AD)

AD 5 Get secretarial help.

As you are reading this, you may find yourself thinking, “There is so much to do. I need help!”

You're right. You do need help. You may be able to afford a part-time or full-time secretary. What if you can't afford a part-time secretary? See if you can find a volunteer secretary or secretaries. In my first church plant, an older lady who had been an executive secretary came to my rescue. She didn't want any pay. She just wanted to serve the Lord with her gifts. What a blessing she was to me as she freed me from all kinds of administrative details.

Be careful, however, of the person you select as secretary. Look for these qualities: (1) a mature Christian person, (2) competent in secretarial skills, (3) able to keep confidences, (4) not a gossip, (5) able to lovingly care for people's needs, (6) loyal to the pastor, and (7) competent on the telephone.

Many are the stories of the pastor running away with the church secretary. The pastor should avoid working with a secretary to whom he is attracted. That is asking for trouble. The pastor's wife will appreciate his wisdom.

FINANCE (FN)

FN 8 Adjust your first year budget.

Is a giving pattern emerging since Birth Sunday? If so, you may have information that will help you adjust your first year budget. This may be a time for expansion or cut-backs. Remember to pay as you go. Avoid getting into debt. If you have unavoidable expenses that exceed the church income, you may have to raise money from other organizations and individuals.

FN 9 Receipt donors to the church.

The financial secretary should receipt donors to the church. (This assumes you are planting in a country that gives tax credit for charitable donations.) Prepare an official receipt form with the name of the church, address, and phone number. Also include the name and address of the donor and the amount of the donation. Express the gratitude of the church. Receipting should be done at least annually. Donors should receive their receipts just after the first of the year so that they will be prepared for their tax return.

FN 10 Carefully administrate a Benevolence Fund.

If you choose to establish a benevolence fund make sure it is administrated properly. Sadly, these funds are often mismanaged.

In the USA benevolence funds are a "red flag" for the IRS. Though some confidentiality needs to be maintained in regard to the giving of gifts to those in need, proper record keeping should be maintained. Privately record authorized disbursements. The one category of people who are never to receive money from this fund are paid employees of

the church. The IRS will presume that this is tax avoidance. It is better to pay bills for people than to give them money. Make the check payable to the creditor. The money should be spent for the purpose for which it is given. Periodic accounting should be provided to the church leadership. Never have people work for a benevolent gift. My appreciation to Rev. Van Elliott for this information.

FN 11 Do an internal audit.

After the first year you may want to have the church books audited. It will probably be too expensive to have an outside audit by an accounting firm. If possible, choose a competent person from within the body who has had no contact with the finances of the church.

FACILITIES (FA)

FA 8 Show your appreciation to those who administrate and regularly use the rented facility.

A church rented a high school for its Celebration facility. They used a multi-purpose room and four classrooms. During the weeks prior to Christmas and Easter, the church delivered flowers to the administrator of the facility and the teachers who usually use the classrooms.

CELEBRATION (CE)

CE 21 Strive for a high-quality music ministry.

Especially for the unchurched baby boomer or baby buster, quality music is a high value. Many people continue attending a new church because of the music, not the teaching. Pastors who want to reach people for Christ in a dynamic church must make the developing of a quality worship experience a top priority.

The celebration leader and his team must strive for excellence in the service. Do not use a song unless the team knows it well. The songs should be carefully selected so that they are understandable to the churched as well as the unchurched. The transitions between songs should be smooth and quick. The Celebration leader should repetitively teach simple songs and choruses to the new church. Don't assume that unchurched people have heard these songs before. They probably have not. The length of the song service should be congruent with your church's values and appropriate for the people to whom you are ministering.

CE 22 Teach so that you communicate well to the unchurched and the churched.

It is not easy to prepare messages that meet the needs of the unchurched and the churched. It is

easy to skimp on sermon preparation when you have so many other things to do. The danger is that you will not feed your people the Word of God in such a way that they can digest and apply the principles to their lives. Make your study and communication of God's Word a priority. Invest the time to do your best job in preparing messages.

One way to keep your communication of God's Word sharp is to listen to other gifted biblical communicators. If you have a tape player in your car, home, or office, you can enjoy their teaching and learn good communication skills. Invest in the tape ministries of a few of your favorite communicators.

CE 23 Work on smooth transitions in the Celebration service.

This seems to be a constant concern. Smooth transitions require practice and good communication between the Pastor, the Celebration leader, the musicians, and anyone else who has a part in the service.

CE 24 Celebrate the Lord's Supper regularly.

For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you: The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, 'This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me.' In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying, 'This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me' (1 Cor. 11:23-25).

Churches practice the Lord's Supper weekly, monthly, or quarterly. You may wish to celebrate communion during the celebration service, a special service, or in small groups.

CE 25 Present the announcements during the Celebration as opportunities.

A lot of new church leaders recommend minimizing announcements in the worship service. Present the opportunities and choices, but avoid being pushy. There are more effective ways to motivate your people to become involved in most activities or ministries than by announcing them during the celebration service. Small group and one-to-one communication of activities and ministries will give you a better response.

CE 26 Plan special music, drama, and other media at least three months in advance.

You may want to use your preaching schedule to set the theme for the Sunday services for the next three months. Add appropriate special music/drama/media to reinforce the theme. If you want quality people to contribute in these areas, especially if they are from outside the church, you will have to book them well in advance. I believe it is best to have some form of special

music/drama/media for every Celebration. It is beneficial to have people in the church who can contribute with very little notice if you have a cancellation.

CE 27 Plan special testimonies well in advance.

If you are planning to have a well-known person give a personal testimony, arrange for this many months in advance.

CHILDREN (CH)

CH 13 Care for the children's ministry workers.

Be aware of their needs and potential burnout. This is especially true if the Children's ministry is concurrent with the Celebration service. Children's ministry workers may not be able to attend the Celebration for many weeks. Team teach all classes if possible. You may want to have two teams that alternate regularly for each other.

CH 14 Start additional classes as you train more leadership in the children's ministry.

It is not uncommon in brand-new churches to have just two or three children's classes. Each class may span a wide age range. For example: Nursery (0-2 years), 3 years-2nd grade, 3rd grade-6th grade. When you consider how diverse these children are developmentally, you can imagine how difficult it is for a teacher to keep everybody interested. Three-year-olds can't read. Many 2nd graders are reading well. If you can gather and train the staff to create more classes and break these age groups down into children who are more alike developmentally, they will be easier to teach. Your workers will be happier and so will the children. You may need to arrange for more space at the celebration facility for additional classes. Add additional classes only after you trained adequate additional leadership.

FOLLOW-UP AND EVANGELISM (FE)

FE 1 Take the initiative in follow-up and evangelism.

Sadly evangelism is often the weakest ministry in the average church. There is a controversy in evangelical circles about how to conduct follow-up and evangelism. Some believe that we must let the unchurched person take the initiative so we don't frighten them away. They think we should create a "safe place" in our churches so that an unsaved person might attend for many weeks without being asked about a commitment to Christ. The other side of the debate insists we must confront people quickly, and tell them the good news, since we may not get another chance.

It's probably wise to think about simply taking the initiative in a loving way to share Christ. We should follow up each visitor, but in a considerate and sensitive way. Some will come to Christ immediately, and others will take more time. But we should take the initiative to follow them up.

FE 2 Determine the style and method of follow-up and evangelism.

Choose the style and method on the basis of what will most effectively evangelize your target population. Talk with other pastors who are being effective in follow-up and evangelism. Look for pastors in your geographic area or for those who are working with your target population in another area.

Pray for God to lead you in developing the most productive style and method. Think about the people that you want to reach. What appeals to them? What are their needs? What turns them off? Find a style and method that allows you and your church people to take the initiative in sharing Christ and the church.

FE 3 Set a follow-up and evangelism goal with your core leadership and communicate this goal.

For example, here is a sample goal: Everyone in contact with our church will have the opportunity to receive Christ, be discipled and be encouraged to serve.

Communicate your goal often to your leaders and the church. Use a variety of settings: one-to-one, small group, large group. Be creative in how you communicate the goal: stories, testimonies, songs, drama, multi-media, interviews, brochures, letters.

FE 4 Send all first-time visitors a note during the first week following their visit.

This letter should thank them for their visit, share some benefits of the church and encourage them to return. You can use the same letter format for each visitor. Make sure that it is personally addressed to the visitor.

Though the letter itself should be on your letterhead in type, you may want to add a brief, hand-written comment that personalizes the letter. More people will appreciate the hand-written comments than the letter. You may also want to send letters to second and third-time visitors.

FE 5 Add all visitors' names, addresses, and phone numbers to your contact lists.

The "welcome cards" received during the celebration service will provide you with this information. The kinds of lists that you will need to update weekly are: your own rolodex, the mailing list, and the follow-up list. The key leaders of the church will also need this information.

FE 6 Start a pre-evangelism ministry.

Following the birth service of Sun Valley Community Church, near Phoenix, Arizona, USA, Pastor John Snyder and his core people delivered a gift to all first-time visitors. They stopped by the homes of more than sixty families with coffee mugs filled with candy. The coffee mugs were imprinted with the name and logo of the church.

Other churches have a Cookie Brigade—a group of people who deliver cookies to first-time visitors.

The purpose of this kind of ministry is to thank guests for their visit, initiate a loving touch, and facilitate future evangelism.

FE 7 Host a monthly Pastor's Dessert.

Some pastors and their wives host a dessert at their home each month for anyone new to the church. This gathering creates friendship between the pastor's family and new people. It gives the pastor an opportunity to sow vision concerning the church. He can also discern the needs of these new people and help them take the next step in their spiritual development.

FE 8 Recruit a small team of follow-up callers.

Follow-up calling is a powerful tool that God has used in many churches. For example, we know of a large church in America whose pastor many years ago realized he needed help in evangelism. He learned a simple method of sharing the gospel, and then began to disciple others in his church in that method. He selected just one person to train in follow-up and evangelism and taught that person how to share Christ. He and that trainee began to make appointments with people who had visited the church. The two of them trained more follow-up workers. Over the years, the results have been hundreds of trained witnesses, thousands of salvations, and many new church members.

If you, the pastor, are not proficient at sharing the good news of Jesus Christ, then find a church that is doing a good job in this area and get trained. When you begin to recruit and train others, start small. Pick just one f.a.t. person (faithful, available, trainable) who has a heart for evangelism. Train that person and take him with you on follow-up/evangelistic calls at the same time each week. Then he can do the same. (Multiplication Ministries has a good, simple program for one-to-one evangelism: <www.multimin.org>.)

FE 9 Train follow-up teams to effectively follow-up visitors and lead them to Christ.

Here is a sample schedule for the evening:

6:30 p.m.	Praise and prayer
6:40	Trainee presents previous week's lesson to trainer
7:00	Trainer presents new lesson
7:30	Assignment of visitors; review background; review lessons; prayer
7:40	Leave for home visit
8:00	Building relationship and making presentation
8:45	Leave the home
9:00	Reporting

All follow-up and evangelism team members will need to be trained to use a simple, reproductive evangelism tool. There are many good evangelism tools that have been used to lead many to Christ. You may want to create your own.

Team members need to be proficient in (1) how to introduce the team and build a relationship, (2) how to share their personal testimony, (3) how to share the gospel, (4) how to bring people to commitment, and (5) how to handle excuses and objections.

Send out team members two-by-two. There should be a trainer and a trainee. At times it is necessary for three people to go on a call. However, this can be intimidating to those you visit. Jesus was the master of the “show and tell” method. He would tell his disciples how to do ministry. Then he would demonstrate that ministry for them. Then he would supervise and evaluate them. Finally, he released them to serve. This should be a trainer's method in equipping his trainee to follow-up visitors and share the good news of Jesus Christ.

FE 10 Make appointments by telephone with receptive visitors.

Either the pastor or a lay person who is gifted in communicating over the phone should call all visitors and ask for appointments for follow-up teams. The church is taking the initiative. Welcome cards from the celebration services will provide you with phone numbers. Again, be considerate of the visitors. If possible, make these calls several days before the evening of the appointment. For example, if you are visiting on Thursday evenings, call for the appointment the previous Sunday or Monday. Be willing to meet your guests where they will feel most comfortable. If their home is preferable, then meet them at their home. They may want to meet at a restaurant or even the church office. If a visitor is resistant to having a follow-up team call, do not force the issue. Do try to follow up in a less formal way if possible.

Try to send postcards reminding visitors of your appointment. If you cannot get enough appointments for your teams, you have a choice: (1) only send callers to homes if you have an appointment, or (2) send callers to homes even if you don't have an appointment. Let the Lord lead you.

FE 11 Pray for the visitors before you leave for appointments.

Before they received power from the Holy Spirit to witness in Jerusalem, the first Christians prayed fervently. Their prayers were answered dramatically. The Holy Spirit did indeed empower them to go and share their faith fruitfully during “heavenly appointments.”

It is crucial to pray before your team leaves to make their appointments. Ask the Lord to prepare the hearts of those you are calling on to receive Christ and to become solid disciples in the church. Ask the Holy Spirit to testify about Christ to the visitors even as you testify. “When the Counselor comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who goes out from the Father, he will testify about me; but you also must testify...” (Jn.15:26,27).

FE 12 During appointments, follow-up teams listen and discern the visitors' needs.

Someone said, “People don't care how much we know, until they know how much we care.” Another said, “It is in listening that we earn the right to be heard.”

The best evangelists are not the loud and aggressive ones. They are the listeners and the lovers. From the time the doorbell rings, the follow-up team should be looking, listening, and learning. At the beginning of every appointment it is the visitor's turn to talk and to share his or her life. The follow-up team trainer should politely ask questions about background, family, work, and relationship with Christ and the church. The goal should be to make friends, communicate a real concern for the visitor and family, and discern where that person is in relation to Christ and the church.

I believe in silently praying during this time: “Lord, show me the key to this person's heart.” The “key” may be a broken marriage, a sense of loneliness, a need for meaning, a child who is hurting, an addiction, etc. When you find the key and apply the good news of Jesus Christ to that need, you may well see that person come to Christ.

Your visitor may have a church home or already be a Christian. He may be ready to receive Christ immediately. He may need more time to consider the truths of the gospel. These are questions you can answer through listening. Again, be considerate and sensitive. If you need to complete the gospel presentation at another time, set an appointment.

FE 13 Follow-up team members gather at the close of the evening to report the results of their appointments.

This reporting time is very important for the morale of the follow-up team. One team may report with joy that someone has come to Christ. Another team may report frustration at finding no one home. This time provides an opportunity for mutual encouragement.

FE 14 Follow-up team members help to integrate visitors into the church.

Often the friendships that are made between follow-up team members and visitors are the first friendships that visitors make within the church. Forming new relationships helps visitors stay involved in the fellowship. Follow-up team members should help visitors meet other people and take part in ministries of the church.

FE 15 Follow-up team members are available after the celebration service to talk with people about Christ.

In one church a nursery worker said, “How do you have a relationship with Jesus?” A Follow-up team member overheard her question. They sat down at the picnic table on the school grounds and he led her to Christ.

Often people are ready to give themselves to Jesus after the celebration. The pastor may want to give an invitation to receive Christ at the close of the message and have a follow-up team member talk with those who respond. Another approach is for the pastor to say something like this: “If anyone here would like to talk with me or another leader after the service, we will be in front.”

FE 16 The Pastor continues to get to know new people.

Try to meet three to six new people every week. Make sure you visit with new people before and after the celebration. You may want to personally phone visitors on Sunday afternoon to thank them for attending. It is recommended that you lead the follow-up and evangelism ministry.

DISCIPLING AND ASSIMILATION (DA)

DA 1 Continue expanding the network of small groups.

As the number of healthy groups expands within the church, the number of strong disciples will increase. The church will grow.

In this phase, new people need to be assimilated quickly. Plan to start new groups soon after the birth celebration. To provide enough relational space for new people, you will need one group for every 10 to 15 people in the church.

It's possible to increase the number of small groups too quickly, however. A church that was developmentally in Phase One is a good example. The church had one healthy group. The pastor felt that since the church had three leaders they could start three groups. Shortly after the three groups were initiated, two of the groups died, including the one the pastor was leading. There were not enough people in each group committed to attendance. As a result of losing these groups, this church lost momentum. It would have been wiser to expand from one to two groups with strong leaders and committed people in each group.

Before you plant a group try to have a trained leader and an assistant leader. Ask three couples or six individuals to commit to being faithful attenders for at least six weeks before launching a new group. An existing small group should have 12 to 14 people attending regularly before planting a second group.

After beginning couple's or mixed groupos, consider starting women's, men's, and children's groups.

DA 2 Keep your objectives in balance in the small groups.

Here are some sample objectives: (1) discuss and apply the Word of God, (2) pray for one another and encourage the discipline of daily prayer, (3) worship God in singing, (4) sow the vision of the church, (5) equip and motivate people to reach others for Christ, (6) develop a caring and sharing fellowship, (7) develop leaders who will teach and train others. Sometimes small groups fall into this trap: (1) opening prayer (one minute), (2) heavy Bible study taught by someone who never stops talking (two hours), (3) closing prayer (one minute). Do you know anyone who wants to go to this group?

Balance is the key. Gather and start on time. Have everybody respond to an "icebreaker" question to develop relationships. Example: What has been your favorite vacation? Have a simple Bible discussion. The leader's role is to be a leader more than a teacher, helping those in the group to think and respond and apply what was learned. Praise God for answered prayers. Pray for the needs of people in the group. Pray for the needs of the baby church. Pray for new people to come to Christ and the church. Have refreshments. Close the meeting on time (two hours maximum).

DA 3 Create an atmosphere in each group that is characterized by love, acceptance and forgiveness.

The group must feel "open" to the unchurched person. The small group leader determines to a great degree the atmosphere of the group. That means that the pastor is looking for leaders who model love, acceptance, and forgiveness.

DA 4 Meet with the small group leaders regularly.

The pastor should lead this group for the first few months, and the group should meet weekly or bi-weekly. The objectives of meeting are (1) training in small group dynamics, (2) Bible teaching on the curriculum, (3) prayer for one another and the small groups, (4) care for the small group leaders and their families, (5) accountability, (6) reporting, and (7) mutual support.

DA 5 Continue to reproduce disciples through One-to-One Discipleship.

This ministry begins in Phase One. It may take months before many people in the church have gone through one-to-one discipling. The strength of this ministry is that it is designed to make strong disciples who make strong disciples.

Encourage one-to-one discipling and give it time. Relationships in the church will be strengthened. Key trainers should meet once a month.

DA 6 Start a member orientation class.

Speaking to the church in Corinth, the Apostle Paul says “God has combined the members of the body...” I Corinthians 12:24. Paul is teaching about different gifts that individual church members can use to strengthen the body of Christ.

The purpose of this class is to help people have a vision for serving Christ and to show them how they can serve Him by growing spiritually and being active in ministry. A sample of possible topics:

How to be Happy in Your Church

How to Discover Your Gifts

How to Invest in the Kingdom of God

How to Become a Member of the Church

Structure the group in such a way that busy people can attend and complete the class. You may want to hold this class at the celebration facility before or after services. Or you may want to teach the entire class on one Saturday in a seminar style.

DA 7 Repetitively communicate that the church must be “open” to new people.

It is amazing how quickly a church can become “closed” to new people. One way to determine if the church is becoming “closed” is to watch people after the celebration service. Are the

members talking just to one another? Are the new people standing by themselves?

Encourage openness to new people in one-to-one, small group, and celebration settings. Greeting times in the service and good ushering can help keep a church “open” to new people. Ultimately, however, a church atmosphere that communicates warmth and friendliness while allowing the visitor to maintain his space is the key.

CHURCH REPRODUCTION (CR)

CR 1 Begin giving to another mission.

What do you believe about giving to God? Do you teach your people that if they give to God through your baby church they will be blessed?

Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously. Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work (2 Cor. 9:6 – 8).

What do you believe about your new church’s giving to another mission? Will your church be blessed by God if you give? Or do you need to keep everything that comes in for your church? Of course that is the rationale that many people use for not giving to God in the first place. They feel they only have enough for themselves. Support a mission that is in line with your missionary vision and objectives. God will bless you as a church and provide for your needs.

PASTOR (PA)

PA 4 Refer your counseling after three sessions.

New churches tend to attract some people with deep problems. We need to meet these people with the love and healing of Jesus Christ. Often, however, these people become V.D.P.’s (very draining people) who want continual time and attention from week to week. It is not uncommon for a church planting pastor to spend so much time with the deep problems of a few that he has little time to reach the community for Christ.

If the counseling need requires more than three sessions, refer people with ongoing problems to a quality Christian counseling service.

PA 5 Never counsel alone with a woman.

It is all too common to hear about a pastor who falls into sexual sin through a counseling rela-

tionship. His motives were pure to begin, but the evil one used it to trap him and compromise his ministry. Never counsel alone with a woman. Make sure your wife, secretary, or an associate minister is close at hand. A better solution is to have a gifted female counselor meet with women.

It is said that the Rev. Billy Graham will not ride alone with a woman in an elevator. He is that concerned about any potential compromise of his ministry.

Chapter 32

TimeLine

A TimeLine is a useful tool for planning and managing your church planting project.¹ The TimeLine helps you to see and accomplish what needs to be done at the right time. This enhances the potential for planting a healthy, dynamic new church.

Church planting can be exhausting work. There are many different kinds of tasks to complete. Many church planters find themselves trying to get everything done at the last minute. Important details are neglected or forgotten. These details may determine the quality and growth potential of the church. Just when you need the most energy and enthusiasm, you can find yourself thoroughly spent on the day of the first public celebration.

How can you avoid these common problems? Pray for God's plan. Plan God's work. Fill out your TimeLine. Then work God's plan.

At the end of this chapter we're including a sample TimeLine sheet, representing one quarter's planning. This is just to give you an idea of how to complete this tool. We've also included a blank TimeLine, which you may duplicate for your own planning. You'll need to make at least one copy for each quarter you'll be timelining. Be sure to use pencil, since you'll be erasing often.

The TimeLine is basically a grid, or table, that is used to schedule tasks so they will be accomplished at a planned time and order. One of the key ideas about timelining is the selecting of a date from which to plan, and then working backwards to schedule tasks that must be accomplished before that date. The key date might be called the "Anchor Date."

For example, let's say the Lord leads you to envision the birth (launch) of your new church on the third Sunday of May, 12 months from now. That date would then "anchor" the rest of your planning.

In order for your church to launch on 15 May (a hypothetical Sunday), what will have to happen between now and then? All the Landmarks we talked about in the last few chapters will need to be planned and accomplished. All the tasks you envisioned in each phase will need to be scheduled and executed.

The TimeLine is a way of taking care of these details.

Here are the simple steps necessary for using the TimeLine.

1. **Write the dates at the top of your TimeLine sheets.** You'll notice that each sheet has thirteen vertical columns, representing thirteen weeks. To plan for a year, you'll need four pages, one for each quarter. Begin with an "Anchor Date" in the 13th vertical column (of your fourth page) and then write in all the other dates on the horizontal axis, working backwards. You should also add a fifth sheet so you can plan a quarter *after* your Anchor Date. This is crucial for follow-up and assimilation.

Let's assume, for example, that your "Anchor Date" is the Sunday you envision your church will launch, a year or more from now. (You could also develop a TimeLine to plan the start of new cell groups, or a big outreach event, or the hiring of a staff person. In each case, though, choose an "anchor date" and work backwards from it.)

Then work backwards to fill in the other dates week by week. Each day is a Sunday, and represents a seven-day week...

Write your "Anchor Date" first...



	20 Feb.	27 Feb.	6 Mar.	13 Mar.	20 Mar.	27 Mar.	3 April	10 April	17 April	24 April	1 May	8 May	15 May

2. Write all the tasks you need to accomplish on the horizontal lines. The blank lines at the left side of the page are for this purpose. Write all the tasks you think need accomplishing in a given quarter. Fill out four sheets for an entire year leading up to your church's launch, and the fifth sheet to plan for the 13 weeks after your launch.

You may use the suggested TaskLists given in each phase. A summary of all those tasks is included at the end of this chapter.

But you'll probably need to develop your own task list. To do that, review this entire section of the Handbook, all four phases. Ask the Lord for His plan and the steps needed to carry it out. Write everything down in the categories we've suggested, or create your own categories.

Let's choose just three of the tasks from the suggested TaskList in Phase Three.

- CE 15 Ushers pass offering trays or bags during the Celebration.
- CE 16 Recruit and train greeters.
- CE 17 Greeters staff the Information Table and Welcome Table

We'll simply write these into our TimeLine.

	20 Feb.	27 Feb.	6 Mar.	13 Mar.	20 Mar.	27 Mar.	3 April	10 April	17 April	24 April	1 May	8 May	15 May
CE 15 Ushers pass offering trays or bags during the Celebration.													
CE 16 Recruit and train greeters													
CE 17 Greeters staff the Informational Table and Welcome Table													

3. Choose the week you want to complete each task and mark it on the grid. Simply estimate when you'll need to have that task done, considering the other tasks that depend upon it. For example, in the sample below, CE 16, Recruit and train greeters, must precede CE 17, Greeters staff the Info and Welcome Tables.

Notice also we've put the X for CE 15 for Sunday, 24 April. We're hoping to have a "Practice Service" that day, and the ushers have to be ready by then. The same applies for the greeters, CE 17.

Notice also that CE 16 is begun in one week, but carried it on for the next two weeks with an arrow. This means we begin the recruitment process, but will allow three weeks to complete it.

Generally, you should place the tasks in the order in which they should be accomplished. For example, a logo and slogan need to be created before you print letterhead and business cards. In other instances it doesn't matter when a task is performed. It just needs to be done. Fit it in during a slow week.

	20 Feb.	27 Feb.	6 Mar.	13 Mar.	20 Mar.	27 Mar.	3 April	10 April	17 April	24 April	1 May	8 May	15 May
CE 15 Ushers pass offering trays or bags during the Celebration.										X			
CE 16 Recruit and train greets		X →											
CE 17 Greeters staff the Informational Table and Welcome Table										X			

Let's consider how to estimate the time to plan a project. For another example, let's consider planning for a direct mail piece to communicate the first public service of the new church.

The Birth Celebration is Sunday, 15 May. You want your direct mail piece in 20,000 homes no later than Monday, 9 May. That means you will need to get the mailing to your local post office no later than Monday, 2 May, to give the mail up to six days to deliver. You will plan to pick up the completed mailing from the direct mail company on Friday, 29 April.

The direct mail company needs five working days to process your mailing, so you will need to get it to them no later than Monday, 25 April. You will arrange to pick it up from the printer on Friday, 22 April.

Since the printer needs ten working days, you will need to get him the copy-ready material on Monday, 11 April. You will arrange to receive the brochure copy-ready from the graphic artist on the previous Monday, 4 April. She needs two weeks to do the graphics and typesetting, so you will deliver the copy to her on Monday, 21 March.

You want at least two weeks to write the copy and come up with ideas for the graphics. That means you have to start writing on Monday, 7 March. Before you write, you want to survey what other church planters are using. That will take a couple of weeks at least. You have worked your plan back to 21 February.

See how you must think in order to plan backwards from your anchor date?

4. Monitor your TimeLine at least once each week, and completely review it each quarter. At the end of each quarter, as you look to see if you have accomplished all your tasks for the three months, you have three choices:

- Check the task off as complete (✓).
- Arrow it forward as still undone, but needing to be rescheduled (→). This means you'll need to move it to the next quarter's planning sheet.
- "X" it out because you've decided not to complete the task after all. (In some cases, you may decide that a given task was not needed after all.)

If you work your plan, you will be able to take care of the most important steps toward your goal in the best and most logical order. You'll also have more energy and enthusiasm to spend with people, since you have the confidence that you've already taken the time to care for the details. Bless you as you pray, plan, and complete your TimeLine!

Phase One

God to You

Date _____
Completed _____

PRAYER (PR)

- | | | |
|-------|-------|---|
| _____ | PR 1 | Pray and fast for God's vision for the new church (p. 190). |
| _____ | PR 2 | Find a place in your target community to pray for the new church (p. 191). |
| _____ | PR 3 | Covenant with others to pray and fast for God to create this new church (p. 191). |
| _____ | _____ | _____ |

VISION AND PLANNING (VP)

- | | | |
|-------|-------|--|
| _____ | VP 1 | Work out the vision for this new church (p. 191). |
| _____ | VP 2 | Develop an overall strategy for planting the church (p. 192). |
| _____ | VP 3 | Design a process of ministry to help people become fully devoted followers of Jesus (p. 194). |
| _____ | VP 4 | Set the date for the first public celebration (p. 196). |
| _____ | VP 5 | Develop a TimeLine that extends from the present to three months past the first public celebration (p. 197). |
| _____ | VP 6 | Carefully set goals for the birth of the church (p. 197). |
| _____ | _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ | _____ |

Date _____
Completed _____

LEADERSHIP (LE)

- | | | |
|-------|-------|---|
| _____ | LE 1 | Find a church planting mentor (p. 197). |
| _____ | LE 2 | Gather a group of Pastor Advisors (p. 198). |
| _____ | LE 3 | Recruit a Steering Committee (p. 198). |
| _____ | _____ | _____ |

OUTREACH (OT)

- | | | |
|-------|-------|---|
| _____ | OT 1 | Drive through and walk through your target community (p. 198). |
| _____ | OT 2 | Survey the churches in your target community (p. 199). |
| _____ | OT 3 | Study the demographics of the target community (p. 199). |
| _____ | OT 4 | Survey the community (p. 200). |
| _____ | OT 5 | Describe the person you're trying to reach (p. 201). |
| _____ | OT 6 | Choose a name for the new Church (p. 201). |
| _____ | OT 7 | Choose your church colors (p. 202). |
| _____ | OT 8 | Design a logo with a professional graphics artist if available and affordable in your culture (p. 202). |
| _____ | OT 9 | Create a memorable slogan (p. 202). |
| _____ | OT 10 | Design and print letterheads, envelopes, and business cards (p. 203). |
| _____ | OT 11 | Design and print a church brochure (p. 203). |
| _____ | OT 12 | “Farm” all the people who are interested in the new church (p. 203). |
| _____ | OT 13 | Lead people to Christ whenever and wherever possible (p.203). |

Date
Completed

- | | | |
|-------|-------|---|
| _____ | OT 14 | Host monthly gatherings for everyone interested in the new church (p. 204). |
| _____ | OT 15 | Send out an attractive weekly or monthly church newsletter to all the interested people in your community (p. 204). |
| _____ | _____ | _____ |

CORE DEVELOPMENT (CD)

- | | | |
|-------|-------|--|
| _____ | CD 1 | Start One-to-One Discipleship (p. 205). |
| _____ | CD 2 | Start a small group for vision building, Bible discussion, prayer, and worship (p. 205). |
| _____ | _____ | _____ |

ADMINISTRATION (AD)

- | | | |
|-------|-------|---|
| _____ | AD 1 | Secure a church phone number (p. 205). |
| _____ | AD 2 | Get a Post Office box for the new church (p. 206). |
| _____ | AD 3 | Compose a Statement of Faith (p. 206). |
| _____ | AD 4 | Develop preliminary Constitution and Bylaws (p. 206). |
| _____ | _____ | _____ |

FINANCE (FN)

- | | | |
|-------|------|---|
| _____ | FN 1 | Recruit a financial secretary to handle church finances honestly and professionally (p. 206). |
| _____ | FN 2 | Recruit a bookkeeper (p. 206). |

Sec V - 270

Date _____
Completed _____

_____	FN 3	Open a church checking account (p. 207).
_____	_____	_____

CHILDREN (CH)

_____	CH 1	Provide childcare during the small group meeting (p. 207).
_____	_____	_____

PASTOR (PA)

_____	PA 1	Watch yourself , your wife, and your children (p. 207).
_____	_____	_____

End of Phase One

Phase Two

You to the Team

Date _____
Completed _____

PRAYER (PR)

_____ PR 4 Pray and fast for wisdom for the Lord's Outreach Plan (p. 210).

_____ PR 5 Stay in close communication with your Prayer Team (p. 210).

_____ _____

VISION AND PLANNING (VP)

_____ VP 7 Let the Lord of the Harvest direct your outreach into the community (p. 210).

_____ VP 8 Understand that the Lord may use a strategy productively in one church plant but not in another (p. 211).

_____ VP 9 Write the Outreach Plan in your TimeLine at least three months before the birth (p. 211).

_____ _____

LEADERSHIP (LE)

_____ LE 4 Recruit and train small group leaders and assistant leaders (p. 211).

_____ LE 5 Recruit and equip leaders for New Christian training (p. 212).

_____ LE 6 Recruit and train a children's ministry leader (p.212).

_____ LE 7 Meet regularly with the leaders of ministries (p. 213).

_____ _____

Date _____
Completed _____

OUTREACH (OT)

- _____ OT 16 Design the Outreach Plan to be a synergism (p. 213).
- _____ OT 17 Encourage the core group to bring their friends (p. 213).
- _____ OT 18 Continue to “farm” those from the Community Needs Survey who are “open” (p. 214).
- _____ OT 19 Sponsor special Outreach Events every two or three months prior to the Birth of the church (p. 214).
- _____ OT 20 Build portable signs and have them professionally painted (p. 214).
- _____ OT 21 Create a large outside banner that is professionally done (p. 214).
- _____ OT 22 Make some beautiful inside banners to communicate the purpose of the church (p. 214).
- _____ OT 23 Design and print a “Welcome Card” for the Celebration service that helps you identify why visitors have come (p. 215).
- _____ OT 24 Understand the impact of penetration and repetition in marketing the new church (p. 214).

OUTREACH OPTIONS:

The following (OT 25 through OT 32) are options to use for penetration and repetition. As you pray to the Master Strategist, you may choose to use two, three, or four of them in concert.

- _____ OT 25 Do a massive direct mail outreach into your community (p. 215).
- _____ OT 26 Use telemarketing with repetitive direct mail (p. 215).
- _____ OT 27 Place a display ad in the most effective newspaper (p. 215).
- _____ OT 28 Saturate the community with flyers and posters (p.216).
- _____ OT 29 Use the radio to reach your community (p. 216).
- _____ OT 30 Try television to broadcast your message (p. 216).

Date
Completed

_____ OT 31 Combine telemarketing and videotape to project your image (p. 216).

_____ OT 32 Place a display ad in the Business Section of the telephone directory (p. 217).

_____ _____

_____ _____

CORE DEVELOPMENT (CD)

_____ CD 3 Expand the network of small groups (p. 218).

_____ CD 4 Train new Christians (p. 218).

_____ _____

_____ _____

FINANCE (FN)

_____ FN 4 Estimate the cost for projected start-up needs (p. 218).

_____ FN 5 Make a budget for the new church for the first year (p. 218).

_____ FN 6 Raise the funds needed to meet the budget, especially the outreach and start-up expenses (p. 219).

_____ _____

FACILITIES (FA)

_____ FA 1 Secure the Celebration meeting place (p. 219).

_____ _____

Date _____
Completed _____

CELEBRATION (CE)

_____ CE 1 Plan the main ingredients of the first public celebration (p. 220).

_____ _____

CHILDREN (CH)

_____ CH 2 The Children's ministry leader plans and prepares the children's ministry (p. 220).

_____ _____

End of Phase Two

Phase Three

The Team to the Church

Date _____
Completed _____

PRAYER (PR)

_____ PR 6 Communicate all prayer needs for Phase Three to your Core Group and Prayer Team (p. 225).

VISION AND PLANNING (VP)

_____ VP 10 Create a Strategy Board to communicate vision and your ministry plan (p. 225).

LEADERSHIP (LE)

_____ LE 8 Look for leaders (p. 225).

_____ LE 9 Do not place potential leaders into positions of influential leadership too quickly (p. 226).

_____ LE 10 Discern the relationship a potential leader had with previous churches and pastors (p. 226).

_____ LE 11 Recruit and train a Celebration Leader (p. 226).

_____ LE 12 Recruit and train a Process Coordinator (p. 227).

_____ LE 13 Recruit and train a Lead Usher (p. 227).

_____ LE 14 Recruit and train a Lead Greeter (p. 227).

Date
Completed

- | | | |
|-------|-------|---|
| _____ | LE 15 | Recruit and train the Facilities Leader (p. 227). |
| _____ | LE 16 | The children's ministry leader recruits and trains the nursery leader (p. 228). |
| _____ | LE 17 | Recruit and train a Follow-up and Evangelism leader (p. 228). |
| _____ | _____ | _____ |

CORE DEVELOPMENT (CD)

- | | | |
|-------|-------|--|
| _____ | CD 5 | Aim for a "critical mass" of at least 40 to 60 adults in your core before the first public Celebration (p. 228). |
| _____ | CD 6 | Put everyone to work who will work (p. 229). |
| _____ | _____ | _____ |

FINANCE (FN)

- | | | |
|-------|-------|--|
| _____ | FN 7 | Carefully select two reliable ushers to count the offering (p. 229). |
| _____ | _____ | _____ |

FACILITIES (FA)

- | | | |
|-------|------|--|
| _____ | FA 2 | Help establish and maintain good communication between the administrator of the facility and the facilities leader (p. 229). |
| _____ | FA 3 | The facilities leader thoroughly inspects the rented facility and grounds after each Celebration (p. 230). |
| _____ | FA 4 | The facilities team sets up chairs correctly (p. 230). |
| _____ | FA 5 | Everything used on Sunday mornings must be portable (p. 230). |

Date
Completed

- _____ FA 6 Find a storage alternative that is safe and secure (p. 231).
- _____ FA 7 Make sure all needed equipment and supplies are on hand before the practice celebration (p. 231).
- _____ _____

CELEBRATION (CE)

- _____ CE 2 Choose a style of music that is culturally appropriate to your target audience (p. 231).
- _____ CE 3 The Celebration leader should find musicians appropriate to your worship style (p. 231).
- _____ CE 4 Recruit and train a worship team (p. 231)
- _____ CE 5 Acquire a good sound system (p. 232).
- _____ CE 6 Prepare to project, on a screen or a wall, the words of all the songs that are sung (p. 232).
- _____ CE 7 Acquire a good tape player (p. 232).
- _____ CE 8 Create an “Order of Service” for the Birth Celebration and every celebration (p. 232).
- _____ CE 9 Attach approximate times to each aspect of the “Order of Service” (p. 233).
- _____ CE 10 Use special music, drama, or other media during every Celebration (p. 233).
- _____ CE 11 Recruit and train ushers (p. 233).
- _____ CE 12 Ushers collect Welcome Cards at each service (p. 233).
- _____ CE 13 Ushers give new people a “Visitors Brochure” during the Celebration (p. 234).
- _____ CE 14 Give people an opportunity to give (p. 234).

Date
Completed

_____	CE 15	Ushers pass offering trays or bags during the Celebration (p. 235).
_____	CE 16	Recruit and train greeters (p. 235).
_____	CE 17	Greeters staff the Information Table and Welcome Table (p. 235).
_____	CE 18	Print a bulletin for each Celebration Service (p. 235).
_____	CE 19	Arrange for a professional photographer at the Birth Celebration (p. 236).
_____	CE 20	Two weeks before the first public Celebration, have a Practice Celebration (p. 236).
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

CHILDREN (CH)

_____	CH 3	Give your children's ministry a fun name (p. 238).
_____	CH 4	Recruit workers for your children's ministry (p. 238).
_____	CH 5	Establish simple written policies for nursery workers and parents (p. 238).
_____	CH 6	Adopt a practice by which all babies and their belongings are signed in and out by the same person (p. 238).
_____	CH 7	Nursery Leader recruits and trains nursery workers (p. 239).
_____	CH 8	Select the appropriate room for the nursery (p. 239).
_____	CH 9	Obtain all the necessities to outfit an excellent nursery (p. 239).
_____	CH 10	Help children to have fun and learn about Jesus (p. 239).
_____	CH 11	Make sure that nursery and children's workers are in their rooms at least fifteen minutes before the service (p. 239).

Date
Completed

_____ CH 12 Make signs for the nursery and the children's ministry (p. 240).

_____ _____ _____

PASTOR (PA)

_____ PA 2 Pastor, be encouraged during the Birth Celebration (p. 240)!

_____ PA 3 Do what you can (p. 240).

_____ _____ _____

End of Phase Three

Phase Four

The Church to the World

(Implementing Phase Four may take up to one year following the Birth Celebration.)

Date
Completed

PRAYER (PR)

- | | | |
|-------|-------|--|
| _____ | PR 7 | Get away to personally pray and fast concerning God's ongoing vision for the baby church (p. 243). |
| _____ | PR 8 | Communicate all prayer needs for Phase Four to the Leadership, the Church, and the Prayer Team (p. 243). |
| _____ | PR 9 | Encourage people to pray before and/or during the celebration service (p. 243). |
| _____ | _____ | _____ |

VISION AND PLANNING (VP)

- | | | |
|-------|-------|---|
| _____ | VP 11 | Measure the size and financial strength of the baby church during the first two months after the first public Celebration (p. 244). |
| _____ | VP 12 | Have a leadership retreat to pray and plan for the continued growth of the baby church (p. 244). |
| _____ | VP 13 | Work to get Process #1 and Process #2 functioning effectively (p. 244). |
| _____ | VP 14 | Evaluate one principle of the new church's Climate for Growth each month with the Steering Committee and key leaders (p. 244). |
| _____ | VP 15 | Continue to present the vision for the church (p. 245). |

Date
Completed

_____ VP 16 Plan your preaching schedule at least three months in advance (p. 245).

LEADERSHIP (LE)

_____ LE 17 Look for potential leaders in One-to-One Discipleship (p. 246).

_____ LE 18 Look for potential leaders in the small group ministry (p. 246).

_____ LE 19 Recruit and train Ministry Placement Leaders (p. 246).

OUTREACH (OT)

_____ OT 33 Determine what outreach strategies were most productive in reaching people for the Birth Celebration (p. 247).

_____ OT 34 Proceed with ongoing outreach (p. 247).

_____ OT 35 Plan at least two more “Big Day” Outreach events in the next twelve months (p. 247).

_____ OT 36 Get to know local funeral directors (p. 247).

_____ OT 37 Update the church brochure (p. 248).

ADMINISTRATION (AD)

_____ AD 5 Get secretarial help (p. 248).

Date _____
Completed _____

FINANCE (FN)

- _____ FN 8 Adjust your first year budget (p. 248).
- _____ FN 9 Receipt donors to the church (p. 248).
- _____ FN 10 Carefully administrate a Benevolence Fund (p. 249).
- _____ FN 11 Do an internal audit (p. 249).
- _____ _____ _____

FACILITIES (FA)

- _____ FA 8 Show your appreciation to those who administrate and regularly use the rented facility (p. 249).
- _____ _____ _____

CELEBRATION (CE)

- _____ CE 21 Strive for a high-quality music ministry (p. 249).
- _____ CE 22 Teach so that you communicate well to the unchurched and the churched (p. 250).
- _____ CE 23 Work on smooth transitions in the Celebration service (p. 250).
- _____ CE 24 Celebrate the Lord's Supper regularly (p. 250).
- _____ CE 25 Present the announcements during the Celebration as opportunities (p. 250).
- _____ CE 26 Plan special music/drama/media at least three months in advance (p. 251).
- _____ CE 27 Plan special testimonies well in advance (p. 251).
- _____ _____ _____

Date _____
Completed _____

CHILDREN (CH)

- _____ CH 13 Care for the children's ministry workers (p. 251).
- _____ CH 14 Start additional classes as you train more leadership in the children's ministry (p. 251).
- _____ _____

FOLLOW-UP AND EVANGELISM (FE)

- _____ FE 1 Take the initiative in follow-up and evangelism (p. 251).
- _____ FE 2 Determine the style and method of follow-up and evangelism (p. 252).
- _____ FE 3 Set a follow-up and evangelism goal with your core leadership and communicate this goal (p. 252).
- _____ FE 4 Send all first-time visitors a note during the first week following their visit (p. 252).
- _____ FE 5 Add all visitors' names, addresses, and phone numbers to your contact lists (p. 253).
- _____ FE 6 Start a pre-evangelism ministry (p. 253).
- _____ FE 7 Host a monthly Pastor's Dessert (p. 253).
- _____ FE 8 Recruit a small team of follow-up callers (p. 253).
- _____ FE 9 Train the follow-up team to effectively follow-up visitors and lead them to Christ (p. 254).
- _____ FE 10 Make appointments by telephone with receptive visitors (p. 255).
- _____ FE 11 Pray for the visitors before you leave for appointments (p. 255).
- _____ FE 12 During appointments, follow-up teams listen and discern the visitors' needs (p. 255).

Date
Completed

_____	FE 13	Follow-up team members gather at the close of the evening to report the results of their appointments (p. 256).
_____	FE 14	Follow-up team members help to integrate visitors into the church (p. 256).
_____	FE 15	Follow-up team members are available after the Celebration service to talk with people about Christ (p. 256).
_____	FE 16	The Pastor continues to get to know new people (p. 256).
_____	_____	_____

DISCIPLING AND ASSIMILATION (DA)

_____	DA 1	Continue expanding the network of small groups (p. 257).
_____	DA 2	Keep your objectives in balance in the small groups (p. 257).
_____	DA 3	Create an atmosphere in each group that is characterized by love, acceptance and forgiveness (p. 258).
_____	DA 4	Meet with the small group leaders regularly (p. 258).
_____	DA 5	Continue to reproduce disciples through One-to-One Discipleship (p. 258).
_____	DA 6	Start a member orientation class (p. 258).
_____	DA 7	Repetitively communicate that the church must be “open” to new people (p. 259).
_____	_____	_____

Date _____
Completed _____

CHURCH REPRODUCTION (CR)

_____ CR 1 Begin giving to another mission (p. 259).

PASTOR (PA)

_____ PA 4 Refer your counseling after three sessions (p. 260).

_____ PA 5 Never counsel alone with a woman (p. 260).

End of Phase Four

Notes

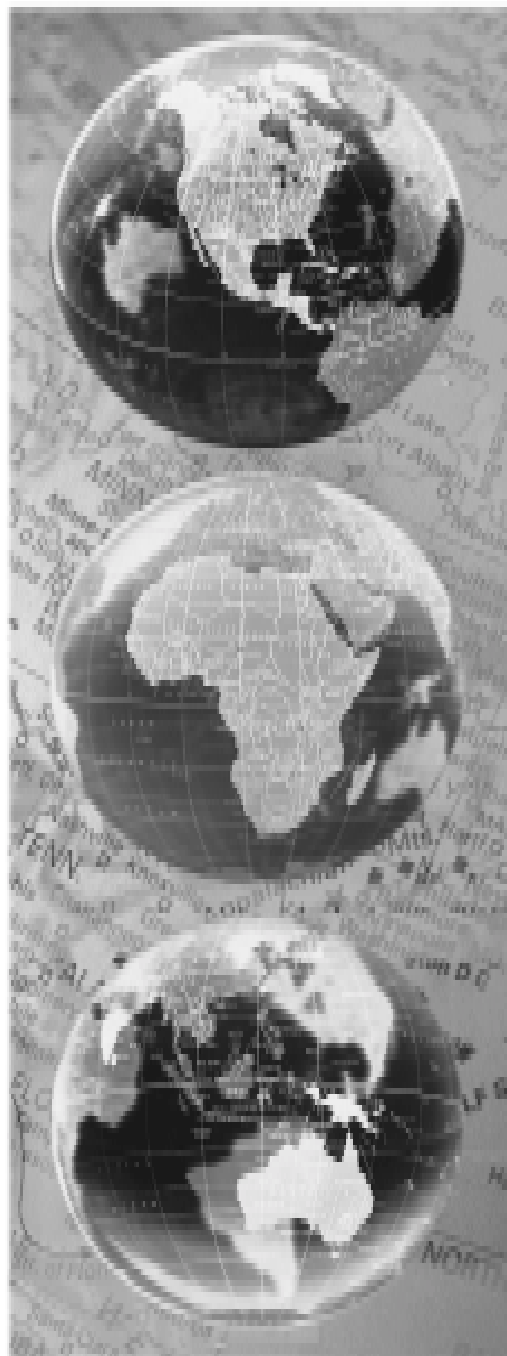
¹ Some of our readers may be using sophisticated planning tools already. If you do, that's great! Keep working with what works for you. But if, like a lot of church planters, you really don't have a lot of experience with timelining, the simple plan we present in this chapter can help.

Quarterly Timeline

[illegible]

[illegible]

Appendix



Intercessor's Prayer List

Thank you for committing to intercede in prayer for our new church. The establishment of a new church is a work of prayer. Only God can plant a new church. We are entrusting you with the great responsibility of bringing this churchplant to the throne of our Lord on a daily/weekly basis.

Pray:

- for the provision of God for all the needs of the new church.
- for the protection of God from the evil one for all those involved in the planting.
- for the encouragement of the pastor, leaders and congregation of this new body.

Please be in close communication with the pastor. Here are some specific needs:

[illegible]

“So I say to you: Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you.” Luke 11:9

Community Needs Survey

Date _____
 Area _____
 Caller(s) _____

1. Are you an active member of a nearby church?

☐ No

- Why do you think most people around here don't attend church? _____

☐ Yes

- May I ask which one? _____

- What are some of the things you like most about your church? _____

**Thank you very much for your time.
 God bless you!**

2. If you were looking for a church, what kinds of things would you be looking for? _____

Below is a list of various programs a new church might develop to serve this community. Please check any that might be of interest to you and/or your family. Thank you!

Support Groups

- ☐ divorce recovery
- ☐ unemployment
- ☐ victimization
- ☐ alcohol/drugs
- ☐ singles
- ☐ weight control
- ☐ other _____

Children

- ☐ high quality nursery
- ☐ Sunday school classes
- ☐ children's church during adult worship
- ☐ neighborhood Bible clubs
- ☐ Christian school
- ☐ full-time preschool

Youth

- ☐ junior high group
- ☐ high school group

Adults

- ☐ "What is a Christian?" class
- ☐ home Bible studies
- ☐ social events
- ☐ making new friends
- ☐ teaching tapes

Family

- ☐ marriage enrichment
- ☐ parenting
- ☐ financial planning

Women

- ☐ Bible study
- ☐ exercise
- ☐ crafts
- ☐ friendship

Men

- ☐ Bible study
- ☐ service projects
- ☐ friendship

Worship

- ☐ Sunday, 8 a.m.
- ☐ Sunday, 10:30 a.m.
- ☐ Saturday evening

Music

- ☐ contemporary
- ☐ traditional
- ☐ concerts
- ☐ choirs

Sports

- ☐ softball
- ☐ basketball
- ☐ volleyball
- ☐ soccer
- ☐ other _____

Other

- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____

Survey - 2

Last Name _____	Mr. _____	Mrs. _____	Ms. _____
Street Address _____			
City _____	Zip _____	Phone _____	
Marital Status _____			
Children: number _____ ages _____			

3. How long have you lived here (in years)?
☐ 0 - 1 ☐ 2 - 3 ☐ 4 - 5 ☐ 6 - 10 ☐ More than 10
4. How many miles do you drive roundtrip to work?
☐ 0 - 25 ☐ 26 - 50 ☐ 51 - 100 ☐ Over 100
5. Which newspaper do you take? _____
6. How would you rate your knowledge of the Bible?
☐ Good ☐ Satisfied ☐ Would like to know more
7. Would you like to study the Bible and make friends if you could do so comfortably in a home?
☐ Yes ☐ No (please skip to question 8)
- a. What would be your three best times for a home Bible study?
- | Day | Morning | Afternoon | Evening |
|-------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
- b. Would you be willing to host a home Bible study?
☐ Yes ☐ No
8. What advice would you give us in starting a new church in this community? _____

9. Would you like to learn more about Jesus and the church?
☐ Yes ☐ No
10. May we keep you informed about our progress as we begin the new church?
☐ Yes (confirm name and address above) ☐ No

Thank you very much for your time. God bless you!

Comments: _____ _____ _____ _____

Follow-up: _____ _____ _____ _____
--

Work Week Chart

We each have 168 hours allotted to us every week.

	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
6 - 7 AM			PERSONAL WORSHIP, PRAYER AND BIBLE STUDY				
7 - 8	GROOMING BREAKFAST		EXERCISE GROOMING BREAKFAST				
8 - 9	C	F					MARRIAGE MEETING
9 - 10	H U	A M					
10 - 11	R C	I L					
11 - 12	H	Y					
12 - 1 PM		D A Y					
1 - 2			LUNCH — MINISTRY OR FAMILY —				F A R M I N G
2 - 3			ADMINISTRATION				
3 - 4			PLANNING				
4 - 5			& DISCIPLINE				
5 - 6			DINNER AT HOME				DINNER AT HOME
6 - 7						DATE	
7 - 8	LEADERSHIP MEETING		MEETING	SMALL GROUP	EVAN- GELISM	NIGHT	
8 - 9							
9 - 10							
10 - 11			S L	E	E P		

Work Week - 2

Work Week Chart

We each have 168 hours allotted to us every week.

	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
6 - 7 AM							
7 - 8							
8 - 9							
9 - 10							
10 - 11							
11 - 12							
12 - 1 PM							
1 - 2							
2 - 3							
3 - 4							
4 - 5							
5 - 6							
6 - 7							
7 - 8							
8 - 9							
9 - 10							
10 - 11							

Church Planting Start-Up Needs and First Year Budget

Year _____

All of these needs will not be required in every churchplanting project. This is meant to help you create your own start-up needs and first year budget. You may want to use all or part of the start-up needs as a “baby shower” list to challenge helpful churches, core group members and potential supporters to donate an item to cover the cost.

1. Staff

\$ _____	1.1	Salaries
_____	1.2	Housing Allowance
_____	1.3	Expenses
_____	1.4	Retreats
_____	1.5	_____

2. Celebration

\$ _____	2.1	Banners
_____	2.2	Stage materials (foliage, backdrop, etc.)
_____	2.3	Tables and chairs
_____	2.4	Video projector
_____	2.5	Projector Screen
_____	2.6	Computer and software for projection
_____	2.7	Band and sound equipment
_____	2.8	Honoraria (speakers, special music)
_____	2.9	Drama and media
_____	2.10	Lord's Supper supplies
_____	2.11	Offering bags
_____	2.12	Refreshment (food, drink, coffee pot)
_____	2.13	Directional signs
_____	2.14	Lighting
_____	2.15	Tape duplicator
_____	2.16	_____
_____	2.17	_____

3. Children

\$ _____	3.1	Portable cribs
_____	3.2	Playpens
_____	3.3	Swings
_____	3.4	Rocking chair
_____	3.5	Sheets, blankets, area rugs
_____	3.6	Cd player and cds
_____	3.7	Changing tables
_____	3.8	Children's tables and chairs
_____	3.9	Curriculum and materials
_____	3.10	Nursery supplies
_____	3.11	Storage containers
_____	3.12	Whiteboards and markers
_____	3.13	Toys and books
_____	3.14	TV, VCR and cart
_____	3.15	_____
_____	3.16	_____

4. Outreach

\$ _____	4.1	Events
_____	4.2	Outside banners and street signs
_____	4.3	Logo design
_____	4.4	Newsletters
_____	4.5	Brochure
_____	4.6	Printing (letterhead, bulletin, etc.)
_____	4.7	Postage
_____	4.8	Community Needs Survey
_____	4.9	"Farming" materials
_____	4.10	Direct Mail
_____	4.11	Telemarketing
_____	4.12	Newspaper display ads
_____	4.13	Flyers and posters
_____	4.14	Radio and television
_____	4.15	Videotapes
_____	4.16	Yellow pages
_____	4.17	_____
_____	4.18	_____
_____	4.19	_____

5. Facilities

\$ _____	5.1	Auditorium and classroom rental
_____	5.2	Custodial
_____	5.3	Appreciation
_____	5.4	Office Rental
_____	5.5	Utilities
_____	5.6	Liability insurance
_____	5.7	Storage unit and/or trailer
_____	5.8	Storage containers
_____	5.9	_____
_____	5.10	_____

6. Evangelism and Discipling

\$ _____	6.1	Materials
_____	6.2	Information Table
_____	6.3	Bibles and tracts
_____	6.4	_____
_____	6.5	_____

7. Administration

\$ _____	7.1	Secretarial Compensation
_____	7.2	Office supplies
_____	7.3	Telephone
_____	7.4	Copier and copying
_____	7.5	Computer
_____	7.6	Software
_____	7.7	Laser Printer
_____	7.8	Answering machine
_____	7.9	_____
_____	7.10	_____

8. Church Reproduction

\$ _____	8.1	Churchplanting
_____	8.2	Missions
_____	8.3	_____
_____	8.4	_____

Leadership and Ministry Positions

Pastor _____

Associate Pastors _____

Process Coordinator _____

Ministry Placement Leaders _____

Steering Committee _____

Financial Secretary _____

Bookkeepers _____

L & M Positions - 2

Small Group Leaders

One-to-One Discipleship Leaders

New Christian Training Leaders

Children's Ministry Leader

Children's Ministry workers

Nursery Leader

Nursery works

Celebration Leader

Singers

Musicians

Sound Board

Lead Usher

Ushers

L & M Positions - 4

Lead Greeter

Greeters

Facilities Leader

Facilities Team

Follow-up and Evangelism Leader

FE Teams

Celebration Planning Worksheet

*May the peoples praise you, O God;
may all the peoples praise you.
Psalm 67:3*

Date_____

Theme _____

Scripture_____

Message_____

Application_____

Elements:

Taped music, special music, drama, media, choruses, prayers, announcements, greeting, welcome cards, offering, baptism, sharing by the church, dedication, testimonies, interviews, Lord's Supper, etc.

Planning:

Pray for and plan the Celebration with involved leaders. Aim at 60 to 75 minutes in total length. Attach minutes and/or seconds to each element. Keep the transitions quick and smooth between elements.

Communication:

Pastors, Celebration Leader, Band and Singers, Drama Leader, Media Leader, Sound Technician, Computer Technician, Lighting Technician, all who have direct involvement in the service including those doing testimonies, prayers and interviews. All those participating know when they are involved and for exactly how long.

(See worksheet on other side)

Celebration Planning Worksheet

Element	Leader	Time	Production

Permission to copy

the connect! flap



We're glad you're here!

We want to know who we're connecting with so that we can serve you better. Please complete the front and back and drop it in the offering bag. If you've filled one out before, simply write your name and any new information!

Date _____
 Name _____
 Address _____
 City _____
 State _____ Zip _____
 Home Phone _____
 Work Phone _____
 Email _____

- ☐ Check if this is an updated address from the one we already have.

If applicable, children's names and ages:

Are you:

- ☐ Married? ☐ Widowed?
☐ Single? ☐ Single Again?

Is this your:

- ☐ 1st time? ☐ 2nd time?
☐ 3rd time? ☐ Regular Attender?

Age group:

- ☐ Jr High ☐ Sr High ☐ College
☐ 20's ☐ 30's ☐ 40's ☐ 50's ☐ 60+

How did you hear about Harbor of Hope?

My Decision Today:

- ☐ I'd like to talk with someone about being a follower of Jesus
☐ I'd like to learn more about Harbor of Hope
☐ I'd like to become a member
☐ I'd like to join a small group
☐ I will act on what I heard today by doing the following: _____

I would consider helping in the following area(s):

- ☐ Set-up/Tear Down
☐ Tech (sound, lights, video, graphics)
☐ Children's Activities
☐ Harbor Kids Greeter
☐ Administrative Support
☐ Greeter/Usher
☐ Music or Drama
☐ Graphic Design
☐ Anything I can do
☐ Other: _____

- ☐ Please send me Harbor of Hope's newsletter

Comments, prayer requests, message to the staff:

Nursery and Well-Baby Guidelines

Dear Parent,

We are delighted that you brought your baby to our Nursery. We will do our best to provide good care while your baby is with us.

Here are several important things to remember that will make your baby's time at church enjoyable and worthwhile:

1. To protect the health of all our babies, we cannot accept a baby who is ill with a cold or fever in our nursery.
2. Please put your child's name on the diaper bag and its contents: plastic bottle (with enough food to see him/her through the session), diapers, pacifier, etc. We are happy to warm a bottle, but we cannot feed your baby food other than what you bring in a bottle. Our toddlers (ages 14-24 months) receive a small snack, usually crackers. Please notify us if your toddler has any food allergies.
3. Please check your child's Information Card at least once a month to mark any changes in schedule, preferences, or other information that will help us care for your child. Information Cards are kept near the entry in a file box.
4. Your child may cry when left with us. This reaction is a normal healthy show of preferences for parents. The fussing usually stops within a few minutes and becomes less common with regular attendance.

We hope you feel confident that your little one will receive loving care and understanding. Ask us about any of our policies and procedures. We are happy to answer your questions.

Signed,

(Name of Church)

New Church Task Force Guidelines

Purpose:

1. To help maintain the most effective possible growth path for the new church from inception to self governance.
2. To care for, support and hold accountable the church planter and staff of the new church.
3. To provide resources for the new church.
4. To provide wisdom in major decision making for the new church.

Composition:

The New Church Task Force should be composed of the church planting pastor, other pastors (especially those who have had church planting experience), tested leaders from the mother church or the core of the new church and the church planting mentor.

The size of the Task Force should be 5 to 7. “Insiders” are those from within the core of the church. The New Church Task Force should be composed of more “outsiders” than “insiders” when it is initially formed.

Frequency of Meeting:

The New Church Task Force should meet once a month or when the need arises.

Selection of Members:

Candidates for the New Church Task Force should be “elder-quality”. They and their spouses should meet the qualifications of 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1.

The attitude of the candidates should have these characteristics: a. a desire to do what is best for the new church, b. a desire to be supportive of the church planter and his staff, c. a commitment to the unity of the New Church Task Force and the church, d. a commitment to mutual submission.

Length of Service:

About two years depending upon the maturity of potential leaders for the Executive Task Force.

Relationship with the Church Planter:

The Church Planter will be supported by and accountable to the New Church Task Force for his ministry. The Church Planter must be allowed to lead and make decisions. The New Church Task Force members must be on his team. The church planting pastor will submit to the New Church Task Force on all major decisions.

Agenda, Minutes and Reports:

An agenda sheet should be prepared for each meeting of the New Church Task Force by the Chairman with input from the Church Planter and the other members of the Task Force.

Written minutes shall be taken at each meeting by the Secretary or a designate. The most convenient way to take minutes is by notebook computer. These minutes should be sent to each member of the Task Force no later than one week following the meeting for which the minutes were taken.

The Church Planter and each member of his staff should make a written report of their activities and the health of the church. These reports should be in the hands of the Task Force members no later than a week prior to the next New Church Task Force meeting.

A Financial Report should be prepared by the Financial Secretary (or a designate) of the new church for each meeting. This Financial Report should be in the hands of the Task Force members no later than one week prior to the next New Church Task Force meeting. The church planters and staff should also make written reports on their support raising activities available to member of the Task Force one week prior to the next New Church Task Force meeting.

Transition:

As mature leaders emerge within the body of the new church, the New Church Task Force as a whole should carefully consider inviting them to join the Task Force. It is best to watch how a potential leader serves in the new church for 6 months to 1 year before he is invited to join the Task Force.

When there are enough (5 - 7) leaders from within the body of the new church to lead it effectively, then the “outsiders” should transition out.

This new body may be called an Executive Task Force. It functions in the same way as the New Church Task Force except all who serve are “insiders,” staff and lay leaders from within the body of the new church.

After operating as an Executive Task Force for a year or two, the Task Force will want to transition to a Church Board or a Board of Elders. This provides more time to observe and train the leaders of the Executive Task Force as effective elders.

Constitution and By-Laws

The Constitution and By-Laws of the new Church should reflect a clear understanding of the transition from New Church Task Force, to Executive Task Force, to Church Board. The State wants assurances that churches are operating as they have stated that they will operate.

Officers of the New Church Task Force:

Chairman. The Chairman leads the meetings of the New Church Task Force.

Vice-Chairman. The Vice Chairman leads the meetings of the New Church Task Force in the event that the Chairman is unable to do so.

Secretary/ Treasurer. The Secretary/Treasurer takes the minutes of each meeting and is responsible for getting the minutes and the financial report into the hands of the Task Force members one week prior to the next meeting.

Another Resource:

Boardroom Confidence by Bobb Biehl and Ted Engstrom (Questar Publishers, Sisters, Oregon)

Questions:

Election of Officers:

Sample New Church Task Force Agenda (First Meeting)

1. Introductions and Icebreaker Discussion

2. Opening Prayer

3. New Church Task Force Guidelines

4. Election of Officers

(Note: items may be numbered by year)

02.1 Chairman

02.2 Vice Chairman

02.3 Secretary/Treasurer

5. Pastor's Report

6. New Business

02.4

02.5

02.6

7. Action Items

(Note who is to accomplish a specific action by a specific date)

8. Next Meeting:

9. Prayer: