

Essential Vision

Fulfilling the Great Commission through
Saturation Church Planting



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Chicago, IL 60625 USA.
Tel: 1-866-825-4636
E-mail: info@BibleLeague.org

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United World Mission, ATTN: Jay Weaver/Omega,
6401-B Southern Pines Blvd., Charlotte, NC 28273-5596
or
Omega_Course@AllianceSCP.org

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Foreword

For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea. (Hab 2:14)

Dream with us for a moment. Look ahead 25 years into the future. If saturation church planting is successful, by the year 2025 there should be hundreds and thousands of new churches planted throughout Central and Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union.

In 2025, there should be thousands of church planting teams mobilized to evangelize and plant hundreds of local churches, which will train and equip new church planting teams. There should be hundreds of church planter training sites, meeting informally in homes, in churches—even in local cafes. There should be thousands upon thousands who are praying and fasting, and thousands of informal, cross-denominational prayer gatherings, effectively uniting and linking prayer to new churches planted.

In 2025, hundreds of research teams from local churches will map out their cities or their counties or parts of regions in order to understand where new initiatives of prayer and evangelism and church planting need to take place. And, in 2025, hundreds of cross-cultural missionaries will continue to go out from newly established, indigenous mission cooperatives. Their focus will be directed as much as possible at the Islamic and Buddhist worlds.

We must remember that someday, in the year 2025, people yet unborn will rejoice in a relationship with the Lord in newly planted churches in places where, today, there are no Evangelical churches.

Let us exalt and glorify our Great God, looking forward to all that He will do in us and through us for the sake of those thousands who will then meet Him for the first time in 2025.

What a vision!

We believe that God's primary instrument for worldwide evangelism is the local church, and church planting, based on the principles of multiplication, is the most effective method for fulfilling the Great

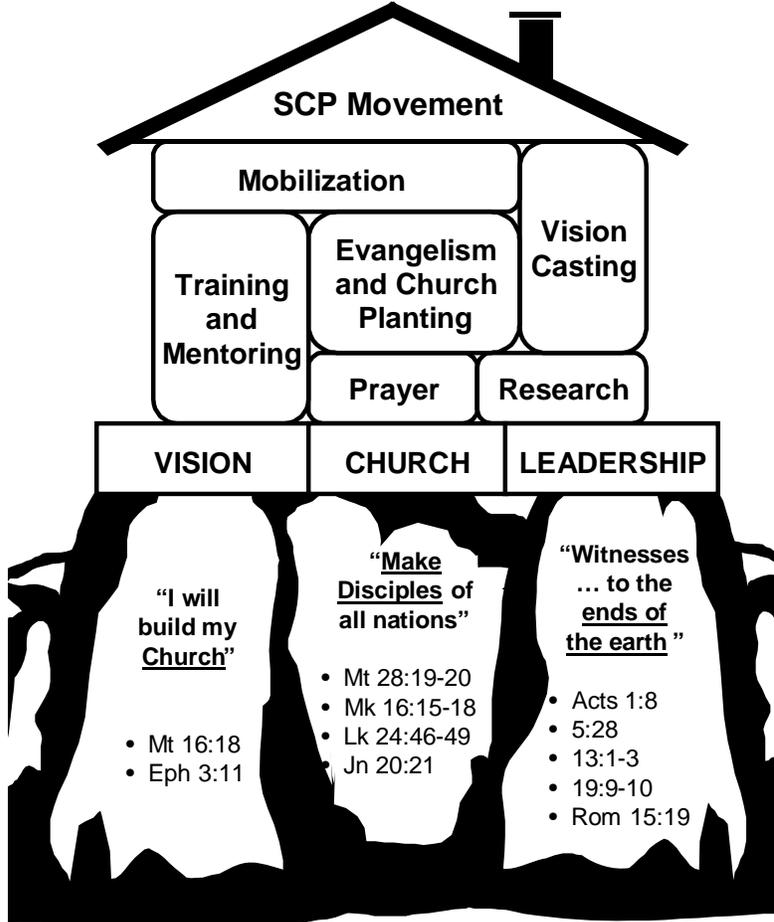
Commission. New churches must have a vision for multiplication from the very beginning, and must have the ability to start new congregations. When this happens, you have the beginning of a movement of new churches which are able to reach an entire country and change the lives of many people in that country. This process of widespread church planting is called “saturation church planting” (SCP).

The primary purpose of this book is to help pastors, church leaders and church planters develop an understanding of the necessity to fill their country with the glory of God through the planting of new churches. It is comprised of four parts. The first section examines God's glory and how the Great Commission relates to church planting. The second section contains the components of God's vision. In order to achieve success, we must explore “the role of leadership,” “the purpose of the Church” and “God's vision.” The third section contains the more practical steps necessary in order for saturation church planting to happen, that is, what needs to happen for the development of a movement of new churches in your country. The last section contains a few examples and next steps for fulfilling this vision in your region.

The other purpose of this book is to give you a resource which you can use to do vision casting yourself. May God bless you and help you as you glorify Him through your life and ministry!

The Big Picture

Hab 2:14 "The earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the sea."



Ps 127:1 "Unless the Lord builds the house, its builders labor in vain."

1

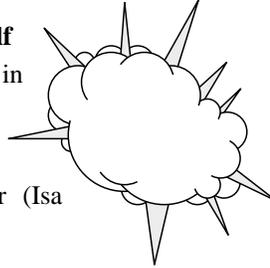
BIBLICAL BEDROCK

The Glory of God

God's Ultimate Purpose Is To Glorify Himself

When God reveals His glory, He manifests it in the following ways in the following Scriptures:

- God created us for His glory (Isa 43:6-7).
- He will not yield His glory to another (Isa 48:11).
- God called Israel for His glory (Isa 49:3).
- God rescues Israel from Egypt for His glory (Ps 106:7-8).
- God restores Israel from exile for His glory (Eze 36:22-23).
- Jesus sought the glory of His Father in all things (Jn 17:4).
- Jesus answers prayer for God's glory (Jn 14:13).
- Jesus suffers for God's glory (Jn 17:1, 13:31-32).
- The ministry of the Holy Spirit is to glorify the Son of God (Jn 16:13-14).
- God tells us to serve to glorify Him (1Pe 4: 11).
- Jesus is coming again for the glory of God (Mt 16:27, 24:30).
- In the New Jerusalem the glory of God replaces the sun (Rev 21:23).



God's Glory Is Shown In His Creation

It is shown in the physical world. Psalm 19 details many ways that the glory of God is shown, not only in the stars and planets, but also in His commands and laws, that is, the Bible. Even our bodies show the glory of God (Ps 139:13-16).

Jesus Reveals the Glory of God to Us

John chapter 1 talks of God being the Word (verse 1) and that the Word became a man who lived among us and revealed God's glory to us (verse 14). Matthew, Mark and Luke tell of Jesus' glory revealed, to some extent, at the Transfiguration (Mt 17:1-8, Mk 9:2-8, Lk 9:28-36). The author of Hebrews talks of Jesus as being "the radiance of God's glory" (Heb 1:3).

The Acts Of God Give Him Glory

The Bible talks of many things that God has done so that He might be glorified. Israel was created for the glory of God (Isa 43:6-7). He brought Israel out of Egypt for His glory (Ex 14:15-18, Ps 106:7-8). He saved us for His own sake (Isa 43:25, Ps 25:11).

Jesus sought to glorify God in all things. Jesus even endured the crucifixion in order to bring glory to God (Jn 12:28, 13:31-32, 17:1-4).

Biblical Truth #1: God's Ultimate Purpose Is To Glorify Himself In All Things And That His Glory Would Cover Or Fill All The Earth

There are many places that talk of the glory of God filling the Earth (Nu 14:21, Ps 108:5, Hab 2:14). These passages are not saying that God's glory does not reach into all the Earth now, but that God's glory will be acknowledged throughout all the earth, and by all people (Ps 102:15, Isa 66:18, Rev 15:4).

Biblical Truth #2: God Has A Plan To Accomplish His Purpose

God Blesses Us as Part of His Plan to Cover the Earth with His Glory

God blesses His people to show His graciousness and to draw the attention of the nations to Himself. In some cases, all the nations share in the blessing that is given (Ge 12:1-3, Isa 49:6, Acts 3:25-26). In some cases God blesses His people to show the nations the difference between His people and them (Ps 67:6-7). In Exodus we read of the plagues that God sent on the Egyptians, but how God did not let the plagues touch the Hebrews (Ex 9:4-7, 25-26, 10:23).

God Uses Us to Tell Others of His Glory

God uses the people He has chosen to fulfill His purpose of making His glory known throughout all the earth. This glory is revealed as people of all nations are reconciled to God in Christ (Eph 1:9-10).

Biblical Truth #3: God Will Use His Church

God Has Given the Church the Authority and Power to Fulfill His Purpose

In Matthew 28:18-20, we read how Jesus referred to His own authority when He sent His disciples out to make more disciples. Jesus also promised to build His Church and that not even the gates of Hell would prevail against it (Mt 16:18-19).

God Loves His Church

The Church is called the bride of Christ (Isa 62:5, Eph 5:25-27) and "the body of Christ" (1Co 12:27) and was bought with the blood of Christ (1Pe 1:19).

God Is Pleased to Use His Church

God has given us a commission (Mt 28:18-20) and has promised rewards to those who are faithful (2Ti 4:8, Rev 2:10).

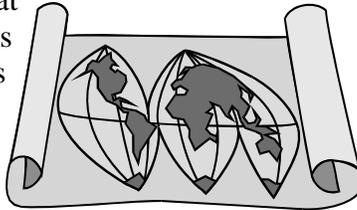
God's Purpose Will Be Accomplished, Despite His People

Samson was chosen by God to deliver Israel from the Philistines. Samson had no interest in God's purpose, but he accomplished it in his death (Jdg 13-16). The 12 spies went into the land. Ten of them said that the people could not take the land. Two believed God and said that it could be done, with God's help (Nu 13-14). God will accomplish His purpose—will you work with Him?

2

THE GREAT COMMISSION IN THE BIBLE

In The Great
Commission, Jesus
Makes Clear His
Purpose For His
Church Until His
Return.



1. The Assignment: Make Disciples

The main emphasis of the Great Commission is on the central command to "make disciples." The main task of the Church, then, is to make disciples, not just converts.

What does making disciples involve?

1. *Baptizing = "Turning to Christ"*

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

2. *Teaching = "Becoming like Christ"*

Upon conversion, new disciples must be trained concerning whom they have determined to follow. Conversion involves beginning a relationship with a personal God. We are commanded to train converts to be "followers," or "imitators" of Jesus, by teaching them to obey His commandments (1Co 11:1). Thus the process is continuous, because as these disciples follow Jesus more and more, they are able to teach newer disciples.

2. The Target of the Command Is "All the Nations."

We are called to take the Gospel to all the nations because Jesus purchased, with His blood, men "from every tribe and language and people and nation" (Rev 5:9). The apostle John had the privilege of seeing this command fulfilled in his vision of heaven, which included people from every nation worshipping the Lord (Rev. 7:9).

What is a nation? The Greek word for nations in this text is the word "ethnos." An ethnic group is a people group united by their language, culture, and customs. A country may contain several ethnic groups within its borders, every one of which must be reached in their own language, and according to their own culture and customs, if we are to obey the Great Commission by taking the Gospel to "all the nations."

How many "ethne" are in your region?

3. The Duration of the Command Is "To the End of the Age."

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

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|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>All Authority</i>• <i>All Nations</i>• <i>All Things</i>• <i>All The Days</i> |
|---|

4. The Promise

We can go with confidence! We are not alone. Our authority and assurance are in Christ Himself, who promises to be with us until the task is completed.

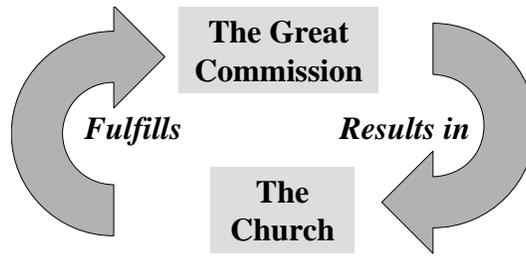
The Great Commission and Saturation Church Planting

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

The Great Commission and the Purpose of the Church

Fulfilling the Great Commission is the task of the Church. The Church does not exist to serve itself, or perpetuate its own programs, but to take the Gospel to "all the nations." The outreach of the church is not just one of many ministries; it is the church's reason for being.

The Church should grow through evangelism and multiply itself through church planting so that more and more people will become disciples of Jesus. Programs and ministries of the church should be evaluated and developed according to how well they serve this purpose. Do your programs and ministries result in the kind of disciple making that Jesus intended when He gave the Great Commission?



The Great Commission and Church Planting

A new church plant fulfills the command to "make disciples" through evangelism that is followed by training of the new believers and ongoing discipleship. This will result in the raising up of new leaders for new churches. Churches which understand their purpose and reason for existence will start new churches that have this same reason for being, and in doing so will provide the means to eventually reach "all the nations" with the Gospel.

Church planters and all who are involved in starting new churches are in a very unique and strategic ministry, since it so completely embodies the principles taught in the Great Commission. To put it simply, church planting is the best method for fulfilling the Great Commission.

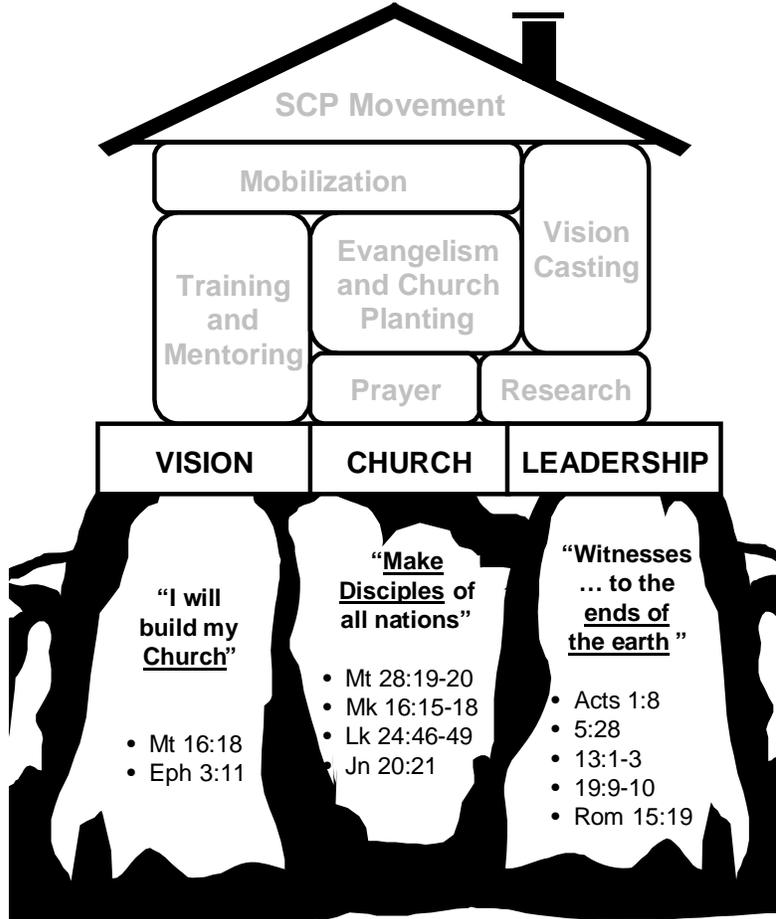
The Great Commission and "Discipled Nations"

Unlike the Temple of the Old Testament, the Church was created to go to the nations to reveal the glory of God. While going, her mandate is to make disciples of all peoples or ethnic groups i.e. "of all the nations." In effect, the Church must disciple the nations.

What is a “discipled nation?” *A discipled nation is one in which every person in every ethnic group has had an opportunity to hear and understand the Gospel of Jesus Christ, so that each person may either receive or reject Jesus as Savior.* Leading people to repentance and faith in Christ—spiritual birth—and training them to become mature followers of Christ—spiritual growth—are objectives best fulfilled in the context of the local church. Therefore, a “discipled nation” has witnessing communities of believers—local church fellowships—within geographical, cultural, and linguistic reach of each and every inhabitant. A sufficient number of churches planted and thriving in any given area—a town, city, county, or region—insures *all* people in that area truly have the opportunity to hear and respond to the Gospel. A sufficient number of churches saturating an area is the best means for bringing a redeeming influence on the society of that area.

Foundations for Saturation Church Planting

Hab 2:14 "The earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the sea."

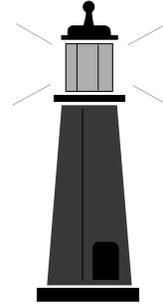


Ps 127:1 "Unless the Lord builds the house, its builders labor in vain."

3

VISION: “Z” THINKING

Why is vision so important for the Church of the 21st century? Because vision gives ministry direction. It answers the question, "Where is this ministry going?" It brings the future into sharp focus for both the leaders and members of local churches. Vision is crucial to the Church. Without it, individual churches will either plateau in growth, or maybe even die. "If God's people are to accomplish great things for him, they must know what it is they are setting out to accomplish" (Aubrey Malphurs). The Father of Modern Missions, William Carey, said, "Expect great things from God; attempt great things for God." How do we know what to expect or attempt without vision? "Z" thinking is an attempt to provide that vision.



What Does "Z" Thinking Mean?

“Z” is the final letter of the Latin alphabet. Simply stated, "Z" thinking is thinking that begins with the end in mind. What, ultimately, does God want? He wants to bring glory to Himself through the reconciliation of mankind to Himself through Christ (1Ti 2:3-4, 2Pe 3:9). God's desire is that every man, woman and child hear and understand the Gospel. How can everyone have the opportunity to hear and understand? Peter Wagner says it this way: "The single most effective evangelistic methodology under heaven is the planting of new churches." (Peter Wagner, *Church Planting for a Greater Harvest*, p. 11)

There are things we must do in ministry so that "Z" may happen. If we think about the end result, "Z," and work backwards towards "A" (where we are today), the intermediate steps become more clear. We need to outline, from the last step to the first step, each of the things that needs to happen to take us from where we are now to where we will be when "Z" is reached.

By "Z," we do not mean a personal goal, such as the building of your church building, or the growth of your ministry. We are talking about a goal that is bigger than any one of us or any group. We are talking about a goal that can only be completed by God. In this context, "Z" is the planting of so many churches that every person in your country will have a local church near enough to not only hear the Gospel, but see it in the lives of the people of God.

All that we do in ministry should contribute and lead toward the realization of what God desires: that the Earth be full of His glory. Once we have the steps toward "Z" roughly outlined, we need to continually ask ourselves, "Is my ministry directly leading toward the completion of "Z," the end goal?"

*For "Z" to happen,
the Church must be
everywhere, on
display to everyone.*

The saturation, or filling, of nations with churches works toward the goal of all people seeing and hearing the Gospel. Therefore saturation church planting is the product of "Z" thinking because it is through the Church that disciples are made, and that the tasks of worship, praying, loving, giving, evangelism, preaching, teaching, unity and vision can be best encouraged.

For "Z" to happen, the Church must be everywhere, on display to everyone. Our cities, regions and nations must be saturated with God's glory in and through His Church. This is what God desires—this must be our vision!

4

THE ROLE OF LEADERSHIP

If there is one ingredient that is essential to the success of any movement, it is leadership. Leadership is basically influence. Leaders know where they are going, and have the ability to inspire others to go there with them. Those who lead others with the best success are the ones able to inspire others toward cooperation, hard work, and, when necessary, personal sacrifice. This does not mean that there is only one style of leadership. But there is one key ingredient that all leaders must have, the ability to get along with others. A leader will not be successful unless he can learn to deal with people.

Leadership is basically influence. Leaders know where they are going, and have the ability to inspire others to go there with them.

According to God's sovereign will, He raises up leaders to initiate and advance movements of church planting. Church planting movements include a variety of leaders, influencing many different levels of church life. National leaders motivate denominations and nations for Kingdom expansion. Other more numerous leaders, including pastors and evangelists, directly influence congregations for regional impact. The more common "grass roots" local leaders play no less important of a role. These are usually lay people who may be employed as engineers, school teachers or sales clerks, but who invest their efforts in Kingdom expansion as cell group leaders, tent-making pastors and church planters, evangelists, disciplers, and prayer mobilizers.

A church planting movement requires many such leaders. Though they operate in different ways and at different levels, they will all have the same common goal, and feed the same common stream—the completion of the Great Commission through the planting of a sufficient number of healthy, reproducing churches in their nation, in their lifetime!

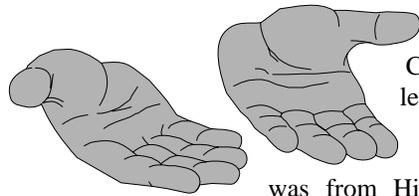
Christian Leaders are people with

- Character
- Influence
- Vision



Character - *Servanthood*

Christian leadership is to be distinguished from secular leadership in that it is not primarily based on power and status. Rather, it is based on servanthood. Jesus was the greatest servant who ever came to earth. He clearly taught against self-serving leadership (Mt 20:20-28, Jn 13:1-16) and exemplified this teaching in His ministry to others (Php 2:3-11). Like a servant, He humbly did the will of his Father (Lk 22:42; Jn 6:38; Php 2:3-8). He constantly assisted and guided others. Today He is most often remembered for His service to others as a savior, a teacher, a healer, and a counselor. Many people do not think of Jesus first and foremost as a "leader" because of misconceptions of leadership as rank, position, or status, of which Jesus appeared to have very little. But Jesus was clearly a leader. Not only did great multitudes follow Him during His earthly life, but Jesus ignited the most amazing movement of all time, so that millions still claim to follow Him even today.



It is important that we understand that for the Christian, servanthood and leadership go together. Jesus was a leader not in spite of His humble servanthood, but because of it. It was from His position as servant that Jesus started the movement that turned the world upside down. Jesus gave his life for His followers. He was (and is) the greatest leader ever because He was the greatest servant ever.

For those who follow Jesus, the mandate is theirs to lead as He did (Jn 20:21). Leadership is not a matter of charismatic salesmanship, the application of the latest motivational theory, or the exercise of personal power. Like Jesus who did God's will, SCP leaders give up their own will in exchange for the will of the Master. They give of themselves, as a servant gives, in order to see results.

The outstanding first century SCP leader, the Apostle Paul, helped orchestrate a great advance of the Gospel in Asia Minor from a training

base in the city of Ephesus (Acts 19:10). Like Jesus, Paul gave himself to his followers. When he described his ministry style to the Ephesians, we learn that his humble approach as a servant leader was central to his success as a leader (Acts 20:17-21).

Influence - Facilitation

Traditionally Church leaders have been thought of as the ones who "do" the ministry. However, the task of leadership is primarily to influence others so that ministry gets done. Christian leaders are like farmers, who plant seeds, till the soil and water, but have no power to make the seeds actually grow (1Co 3:6-7). The job of the farmer is to nurture what he has planted and to remove obstacles to its growth, providing the best possible environment for its development. The situation is similar for an SCP leader. Like a farmer he is a "doer," but it would be more accurate to say he "influences". SCP leaders are facilitators, people who create the conditions so that things can happen.

Facilitation can be very difficult for people who find their sense of self-worth in what they do. They may even find the SCP approach to ministry an impossible step of faith, because so much of SCP depends not on themselves but on God working through others. SCP movements cannot be managed, controlled or contained by anyone other than God. Leaders using their God-ordained influence can only facilitate it.

TRADITIONAL LEADER	FACILITATIVE LEADER
"Get the job done"	"Get people involved"
A Practitioner	An Equipper, Enabler, Trainer
A Doer	A Delegator
Performs the work of the ministry well	Equips others to minister effectively

If the people are not equipped to complete the Great Commission, it is the failure of leadership. It is God's plan to build His Church through leaders who equip the members (Eph 4:11-13). One of the marks of success for an equipper is the increased ministry effectiveness of others. SCP leaders understand this and put a major priority on equipping others through encouraging and enabling them to use their gifts, talents and

abilities. Equipping evangelists, cell group leaders, church planters, and pastors in a multiplication pattern promotes church planting movements.

Vision - Z thinking

SCP leaders are uniquely focused. Being driven by the question "what does God want?" for their city, region, and nation, they are convinced that God desires all to have the opportunity to hear and respond to the Gospel, and that this requires a viable witnessing local church.



Z thinking affects the SCP leaders' style, his daily focus, and his role in the church and in his community. These leaders do not merely begin programs or organize institutions. They inspire movements through mobilizing believers toward completing the Great Commission. They use their God-ordained influence to mobilize the Body of Christ toward the completion of the Great Commission through the planting of reproducing churches.

SCP leaders do not invent the vision. Sometimes it may sound that way to others, as SCP leaders tend to see things that others do not see. The SCP vision is really God's vision. SCP leaders simply discover it through struggling with that key question "what does God want?" This ultimate question can have a profound impact on leadership. It can lead to the accomplishment of far more than other leaders ever think of. SCP leaders by faith believe Jesus when He said that He would build His Church (Mt 16:18). They inspire others to believe it also.

5

THE CHURCH

Jesus Christ owns the Church. Colossians 1:18 says, "He is the head of the body, the church." The Church is not just the pastor, or even one congregation or one denomination. The Church is the whole body of Christ, every Christian in every group. The Church, the *whole* body, is God's instrument for reaching the world. It doesn't exist for its own sake; it exists to fulfill the Great Commission.

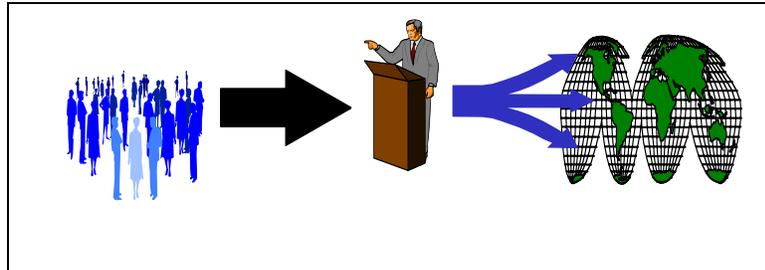
Comparisons of Church Models

Churches often fall into one of two patterns. They can be places to gather, or they can be agents of mobilization to reach the world for Christ. They can exist solely for the members, or their purpose can be much greater.

Two different models for comparison are presented on the following pages. They are (1) the church as a "gathering" compared to the church as an "agent for mobilization", and (2) program-centered churches versus "Great Commission" churches.

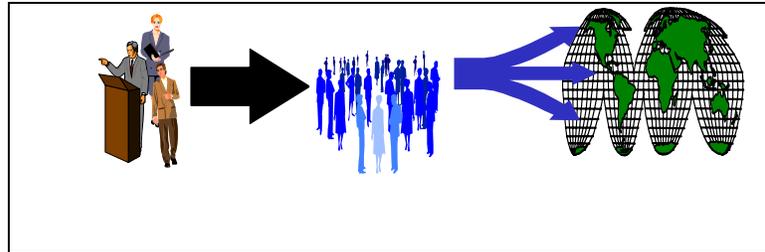
1. The Church as a “Gathering” Compared to the Church as an “Agent for Mobilization”

The Church as a Gathering



CHURCH	PASTOR	WORLD
<p>Members are called “laity.”</p> <p>The laity support the pastor to do the work of ministry. The laity show their support by attending services, tithing, and agreeing with the pastor’s decisions and actions.</p> <p>The laity believe the primary purpose of the church is to take care of the needs of the church members. The laity do not see it as their responsibility to evangelize the lost.</p>	<p>The pastor is recognized as the professional minister. He is called “Father,” “Reverend,” or “Pastor.” He is “The Minister.”</p> <p>Usually in this system, the pastor dominates the worship service since he views the members as “only laymen.”</p>	<p>The pastor is the only one at the front lines of battle in the world.</p> <p>The pastor usually is not taken seriously by the world. He is “paid to do this,” the people say.</p> <p>The world is not won to Christ, and the pastor wears himself out trying to do all the ministry.</p>

The Church as an Agent for Mobilization

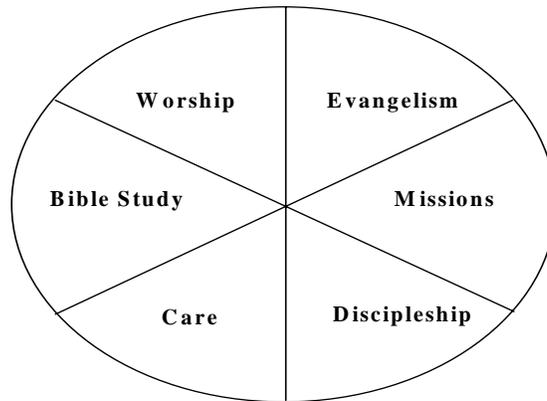


LEADERS	CHURCH	WORLD
<p>The primary work of the leaders is to equip the church members so that they can minister in the world (Eph 4:11-16).</p> <p>Leaders must get to know the needs and spiritual gifts of their church members so that they can properly equip them to minister effectively.</p>	<p>The laity are trained by the leadership to be “ministers”. Therefore, a church with 100 members should expect to have 100 ministers (not pastors).</p> <p>Church members are released to use their spiritual gifts to minister to one another and to evangelize the lost.</p> <p>Penetration of the world with the Gospel is the primary responsibility of the church members. The church leadership provides the equipping for the members to take up this responsibility.</p>	<p>The world is where the members live.</p> <p>Church members are full-time ministers where they live and work.</p> <p>All levels of society are being penetrated with the Gospel (Mt 28:19-20).</p>

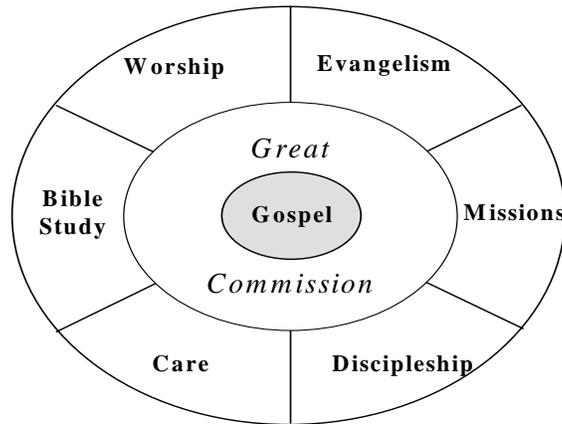
2. Program-Centered vs. Great Commission Church

Another way to look at it is as churches that are *program-centered* versus those that are *Great Commission focused*. In a program-centered church, the programs act almost independently of each other, existing for their own purposes. In a Great Commission church, all programs, actions and plans of that church have one purpose—to spread the Gospel!

The Program-Centered Church

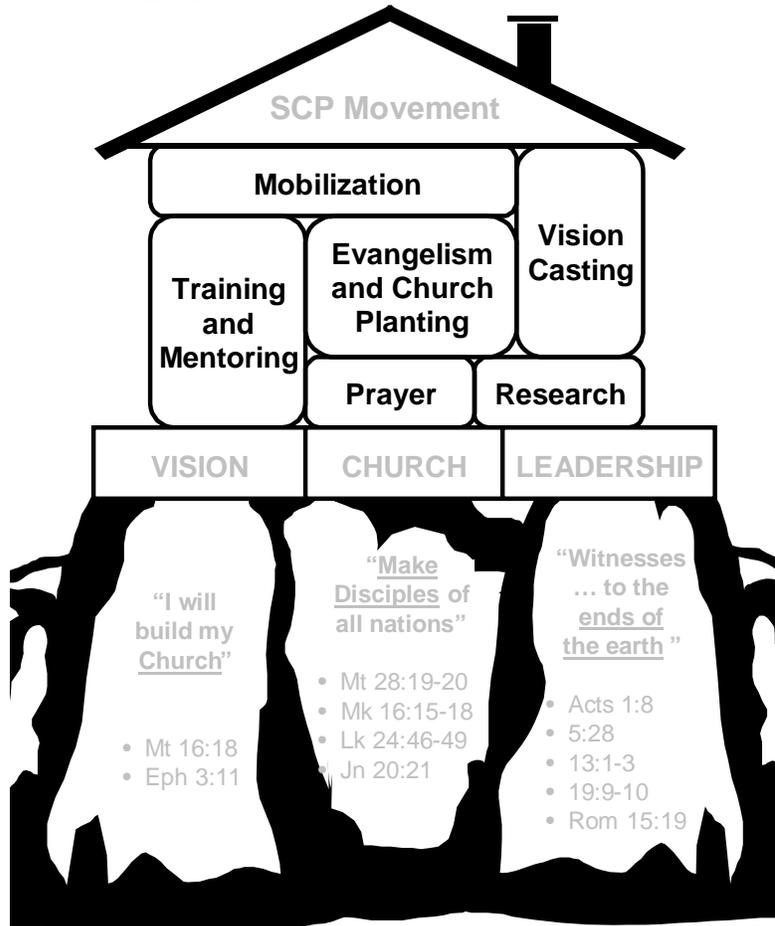


The Great Commission Church



Elements of Saturation Church Planting

Hab 2:14 "The earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the sea."



Ps 127:1 "Unless the Lord builds the house, its builders labor in vain."

6

PRAYER MOVEMENTS

For a church planting movement to take place, prayer efforts must be mobilized. A prayer strategy for saturation church planting must be focused at the point where it matters—each village and neighborhood of every town and city of your nation and among every unreached people group. There are a wide variety of ways in which people can organize concerted prayer for a city or nation.

We realize that God doesn't need our prayers to accomplish this work. But, He has chosen, in His divine and sovereign plan, to make use of us and our prayers in order to see His will accomplished among the nations. God wants to use your prayers in accomplishing the Great Commission. *He desires that your prayers be linked to the planting of churches, for the spread of the Gospel.* Therefore, He will use His people more effectively as they mobilize for prayer to guide and empower His work and to extend His Church.

Strategic prayer on a large scale requires certain key elements: research, vision casting, training, and finding and networking prayer leaders.

Prayer Research

Because it is God's desire to reconcile people to Himself and declare His glory among this nation, it is likely that the Holy Spirit has been already giving people a burden to pray for their neighborhood, region, city or nation. The first step in mobilizing prayer on a wide scale is to seek out people who have a burden for prayer.

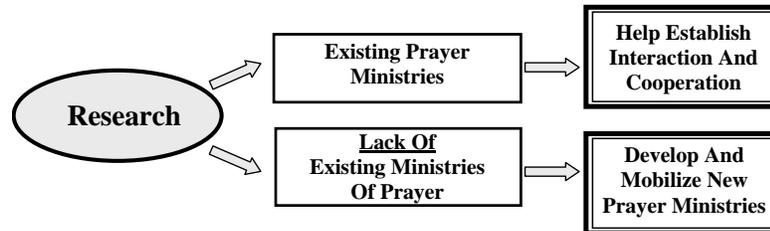
Once existing prayer groups have been identified, they need to be linked together with those doing evangelism and church planting in their area or region. Too often, prayer groups and networks are isolated from evangelism and church planting efforts and do not pray for them.

In addition, the leaders of these prayer groups should be encouraged to mobilize groups or networks of prayer in other parts of their city, region

or nation. Their experience and vision can be used to develop other leaders of prayer.

Periodically, these prayer groups and networks can be brought together with their churches for larger concerts of prayer. These meetings focus on praise and worship and on the advance of the Gospel. This promotes unity among Christians, which can result in more cooperative efforts.

If research reveals very little activity in the way of organized prayer, the focus should be on asking the Lord to raise up potential prayer leaders, vision casting and mobilizing strategic prayer among believers in local churches.



Train and Equip People to Pray for Saturation Church Planting

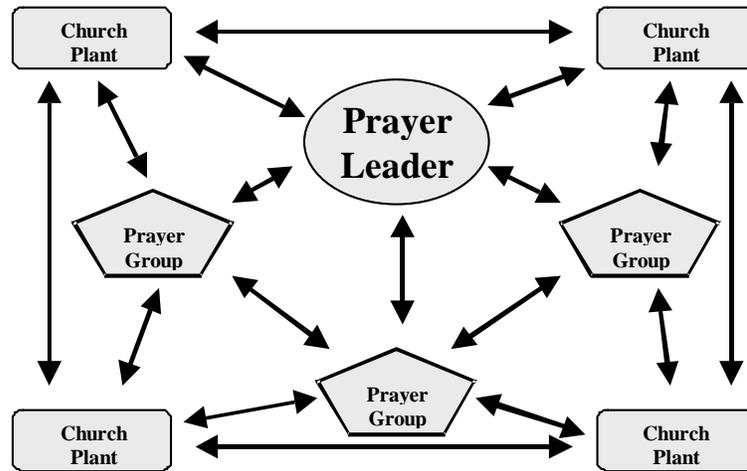
Once people catch a vision for what God wants for their area, they will need practical ideas and helps on how to participate prayerfully in the advance of the Gospel. Practical training in various methods of encouraging prayer, include the following:

- Prayer Triplets—A small intercession group of 3 friends.
- Prayer Walking—A time of walking and interceding for a target area.
- Prayer Support Team—A team that assists a church planting team through prayer intercession.
- Spiritual Warfare—Strategic intercession to identify strongholds of Satan and to repel and counter-attack the enemy's advances.
- Information Sharing—Insuring that prayer groups are kept informed and are linked to evangelism and church planting efforts.

- Concerts of Prayer—Gatherings for intercession that meet on a regular basis and have a prayer leader(s) who "conducts" the time of prayer.
- National Days of Prayer—Nationally recognized days for prayer, especially intercession for the nation itself.
- Prayer and Fasting—Focused times of prayer that take the place of other daily activities, most often eating.

Find and Network Prayer Leaders

In order for any movement to be effective, it needs leadership. Prayer leaders will function at different levels in a prayer movement. Some will lead specific prayer groups—maybe in a local church, or with members from several local churches in a community. Others will be leaders of prayer networks—small groups or individuals throughout a region, city or nation, who are linked by a burden to pray for the advance of the Gospel in that area.



Characteristics of an effective prayer leader:

- A submissive and humble attitude toward church leadership. He should not consider himself more important than his church leaders.
- Ability to lead prayer meetings—able to keep the prayer meeting focused and able to restrain any inappropriate or unhelpful praying.

- A strong commitment to Christ and be faithful in spiritual disciplines, such as Bible reading, personal prayer, fellowship, etc.
- Good relationships with people and a good reputation among the believers in his church.
- Not prone to gossip; able to keep confidences.
- A vision for saturation church planting. He is able to communicate this vision to others.
- Able to coordinate information flow between prayer groups and church planting efforts.

National prayer leaders rally prayer for issues and concerns that affect an entire country. They also promote prayer for those serving in government, the military, etc. They rally prayer networks throughout the nation for specific prayer efforts and might coordinate activities, such as a national day of prayer. These national prayer leaders may be networked to national prayer leaders from other countries around the world.

Regardless of whether prayer is at a local, city, regional or national level, the goal of facilitating prayer and prayer movements is to see Christ-centered, growing churches accessible throughout each nation so that all people can hear and see the Gospel in a way which is relevant to them and their situation.

7

RESEARCH: INFORMATION FOR STRATEGIC PURPOSES

Research is a tool that helps churches mobilize toward fulfilling the Great Commission. It helps agencies and churches know where churches need to be planted, and which methods of evangelism are successful/unsuccessful among various people groups.

Research also:

- helps Christian workers understand the big picture of what God wants to do in their nation or people group.
- helps them to stay focused on the task of fulfilling the Great Commission.
- ensures that their strategies remain flexible and effective.
- helps them to know when the job is complete.

Biblical Examples

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

- In the book of Numbers, God required the people of Israel to count the available soldiers in preparation for battle (Nu 1:1-46). This allowed Israel to organize their people for possessing the land. For church planting, information obtained from research about those who are available to do the task is a necessary tool for mobilization.
- God commanded spies to go and collect firsthand information on the land that Israel was to possess (Nu 13:1-14:38). Through the spies' observations, Israel was able to see the land and determine what kind of strategy to use and what obstacles they would need to overcome

as they invaded the land. For church planting, good research of the target area can indicate what type of people the churches will include, how to approach these people, and what obstacles will need to be overcome.

- Jesus went among the people and saw their needs before sending His disciples out to work among them (Mt 9:35-10:1). He felt a deep compassion for them based on personal experience. This observation also motivated Him to mobilize people for prayer and ministry. For church planting, firsthand research generates compassion, mobilized prayer, and ministry.
- In John 4:35, the Lord Jesus commanded His disciples to "look at" the harvest of men's souls. Sometimes we forget how God looks at people. How do we look at people? Do we just overlook them? Do we see them as obstacles? It is easy to forget that God wants us to go out and bring people to Him. He uses the analogy of the harvest, the time when the reapers go out into the fields, harvest the ripened fruit, and bring it in to the owner of the land (Jn 4:35-38).
- As the Lord added to their numbers, the early church kept track of the numerical growth of the churches and reported it (Ac 2:41, 47; 4:4; 5:14; 9:31). This kind of information gives a clue as to where and how God is working in the lives of people in any region.

The Need for Research Today

Obtaining and maintaining an accurate, up-to-date picture of what the harvest force—the Church—has been doing, is doing, and has yet to do, requires careful planning, research and analysis. It is also essential to study the context in which the Church ministers. Too often the Church labors under false suppositions, vain imaginations, outdated forms and erroneous data. Yesterday's truths easily become today's fictions. When this occurs, the Kingdom of darkness has an advantage.

We are engaged in Kingdom warfare (Col 1:13-14). For the Kingdom of Light to win the battle, we need the illumination of the facts. Truth—facts, reality, and light—is necessary for dispelling darkness. Jesus said, "the truth shall set you free." But the greatest truth about God has no impact unless it is effectively communicated, embraced and acted upon.

Information, or research, tells the Church what is yet to be done, who will do it, when to begin, where to work and how to define when each stage of SCP is complete.

Good information about the target audience—the harvest field—is needed to effectively communicate truth. Information about the condition of the unsaved helps to mobilize the whole Body of Christ in a city or a region to reach people with the Gospel.

Sometimes church planting and church growth stagnate because of a lack of the right information. Success in ministry requires the right information, in the right form, in the right hands, at the right time. Having the right information doesn't guarantee success, but you can't get there without it. Why do some churches in an area grow and others stagnate or decline? Careful investigation often reveals a lack of awareness of the social and cultural differences within a society. Such church leaders see the harvest field as if it were all apples, but fail to see the potatoes and grapes as well.

Researching the "Harvest Field"

Generally, we need information to tell us three things:

- 1. What has been done during the past 10 years.*
- 2. What is currently being done.*
- 3. What is yet to be done, in order to reach our goals.*

The phrase "harvest field" is drawn from the story in John 4, where Jesus commanded His disciples to "look" on the fields that were ready for harvest. The words "look" and "field" are insightful. "Look" means "to study, or to examine, with a view of interpreting an object." This word speaks of research. The word "fields" refers to people. Jesus called the disciples to look at the people coming out toward them, who had likely heard from the woman about Jesus and His Gospel. Jesus was speaking of a harvest of souls. (See also Lk 10, Mt. 9.)

When considering reaching a target area (a region, often defined geopolitically), or a target people (often defined by common traditions, language, beliefs and customs), several categories of information are needed. Church planters should know the social, cultural, and religious distinctives of the target group. Often new methods are needed for evangelism, training, and church planting. This also applies to existing churches. "Business as usual" will reap "results as usual." The changing times we live in often create a mismatch between the Church and emerging generations. Understanding must be gained of the worldview and mindset of the unchurched.

Gathering harvest field information can be done through personal interviews and surveys. Some foundational harvest field data can be obtained in community centers, libraries and government offices. More and more information is available through the Internet and the World Wide Web. Some minimal amount of "field research" will be necessary to fill in the gaps and for updating and validating. Field surveys and interviews should be made to determine current status of felt physical, emotional and spiritual needs. It can be valuable to interview local government officials regarding how they perceive the needs—and always ask people how you can pray for them!

Researching the "Harvest Force"

The harvest force is comprised of churches, denominations, and parachurch groups, including educational institutions, training ministries, and Christian media. To gather harvest force data you need to know the number of churches, their identity, organizational association, size and distribution by area and people group. It is important to map out where the churches are to note which churches are growing, which are not, and why. You will want to know who is in the churches, who isn't, and why. Lastly, it is important to discover who is using successful methods of leadership, evangelism, training, mercy ministries, and church-planter training.

Although some needed information may already be published and available, much of it will have to be obtained first-hand. This is good, for you need to get personally acquainted with your context. Not only will this will improve your knowledge base, but it will also give you credibility not otherwise attainable.

Information Needed - Summary Overview

- Identify, locate, and describe the status of the harvest field and the harvest force.
- Provide a clear picture of where churches are located, and where they are not. Use maps.
- Identify where the Church is growing and not growing, and gain insights into why.
- Provide a clear picture of the ethnic and cultural makeup of the region.

- Evaluate where the Church is now compared to short and long-range goals.
- Describe the task remaining to reach the goals for the various geographic, ethnic and cultural groups.
- Identify the major areas of societal pain and suffering.
- Describe the political, cultural and spiritual history. Identify enemy strongholds.
- Determine the degree of impact and influence of the Church on the various elements of society.

Using Information Gained from Research

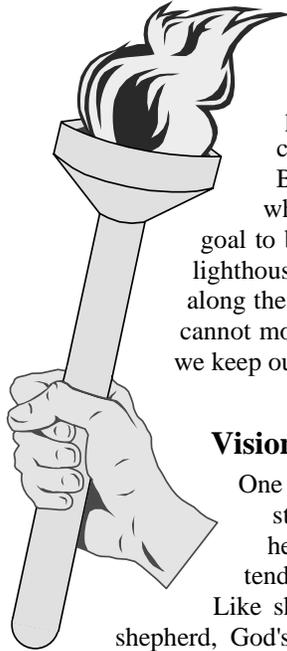
As important and vital as information is, it still all comes down to people, to godly men and women who are committed to seeing God's plan for His Body and Bride fulfilled, who are diligent stewards in the exercise of their gifts and skills, and who are willing to sacrifice that others might live.

Sharing research results with the region's leadership can be eye opening. It helps them see how their ministries fit in the overall picture. As they see the task remaining, they become aware of the implications for completing the task, both for themselves and collectively with others. The information, coupled with God's revealed will and purpose, provides a "call to action" to the Church to guide it through possessing the land in the current generation.

8

VISION-CASTING

Challenging God's People to Do God's Will



Vision Determines Direction

Vision takes people forward; it gives them direction. Some regions lack church planting movements because the local churches in those areas lack a vision for it. But then, how can people strive toward that which they do not see, or see only as a vague goal to be achieved only in the distant future? As a lighthouse gives guidance to a ship, so vision helps us along the way as we keep a firm eye on the goal. We cannot move toward that which we cannot see. But if we keep our eye on the goal, our path will be straight.

Vision Gives Motivation

One of the greatest problems in the Church today stems from the Church's lack of awareness of her true purpose. The Body of Christ has a tendency to sleep.

Like sheep without a shepherd, God's people easily lose sight of where they are supposed to go, and take the paths of least resistance instead of the steps of faith required by "Z" thinking. Vision casting is bringing the Church back to a renewed awareness of its purpose, and then holding the local church accountable to the purpose. Believers need to be regularly reminded about God's priorities and about our purpose: to be instrumental in the reconciling of all nations to Himself.

Vision casting is bringing the Church back to a renewed awareness of its purpose, and then holding the local church accountable to the purpose.

The vision needs to be cast and recast. Some ways of accomplishing this are through preaching and teaching on the purpose of the Church and the nature of the Great Commission task, or by talking about "Z" thinking and by asking the critical question, "What does God want?"

Vision and Faith

God's desire to have disciples from every tribe and people is clear, but some people respond with skepticism concerning the achievement of this goal: "We are too small and poor, we can't be part of that, it cannot work here." Has God called us to do something that cannot be done? Has He called us to do something and then not equipped us to do it? If not, what is missing? Faith!

In Hebrews 11:6 we read "without faith it is impossible to please God." In the same chapter, we read of some of the great Old Testament heroes, who had faith in what God called them to and, by acting on that faith, "conquered kingdoms, administered justice and gained what was promised" (Heb 11:33). God gives us a vision. Faith is essential in order to do more than just look at the vision and say "Yes, but." In order for a church planting movement in your region to be a reality, you must respond to the vision in faith. Responses by faith will be blessed by God!

Your Role in Casting Vision

Can you, by yourself, make a church available to every person in your nation? Of course not. Can you, by yourself, make a church available to every person in your region or in your city?

Again, probably not. But God can use you to help reach each of these goals. There are specific things you can do in order to inform and motivate others to make God's vision their own vision, and to work together with them towards the fulfillment of that vision.



*Vision is the fuel that keeps the movement running—so **KEEP CASTING VISION!***

First: Own the Vision

God's plan is not that you have a church, but that all the nations be discipled. Look up at the whole harvest field, not just your little patch—and see how

white it is, ready for harvesting. Find out what God is doing in your region. Become excited about His work. Begin praying for the whole field. Recognize that you are part of God's harvest force for your area.

Second: *Share the Vision*

Share your excitement about God's vision. Help others in your church to see that they also have a part in God's plan for this world. Encourage them with the importance of their work. Pray with them for the whole field. A lone, burning coal will quickly go out, but many coals will share heat and stay warmer longer.

Third: *Work the Vision*

Join with other pastors in your region. Share your vision for seeing the whole region disciplined for the glory of God. Pray with them for the fulfillment of the Great Commission in your region. Work with other like-minded pastors and churches to reach your whole region. Begin to do research to discover where new churches are needed. Prayerfully plan where and how to plant these new churches. Begin to train people to start those churches. Empower these new leaders to plant the new churches. Do more research and praying.

Conclusion

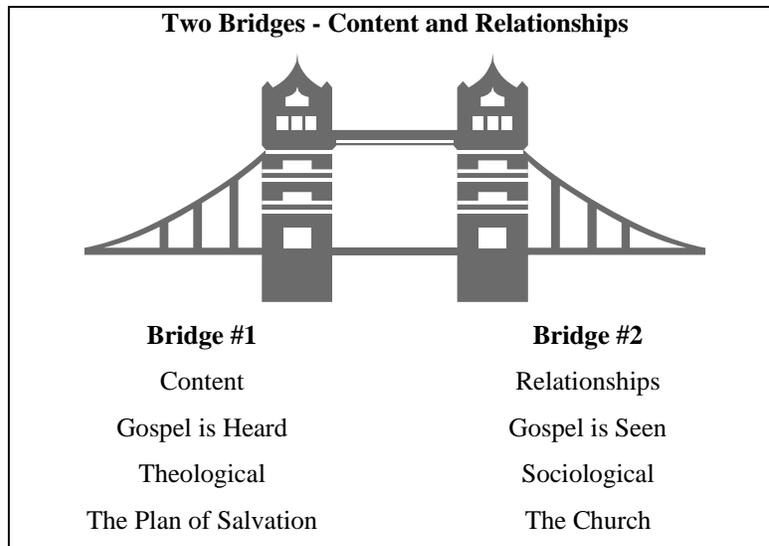
Vision casting is raising the level of commitment to God's purpose for the Church. But vision inspires and gives direction only as people hear, understand and then internalize what they have grasped. Biblical vision needs to be cast in order to excite faith and cause internal changes in the lives of people. If values do not change, then any changes in priorities, behaviors, actions and ministries will only be superficial and temporary.

Vision must be continually kept before people in order to bring about the internal changes that will result in the external activities that lead towards a biblical church planting movement.

9

EVANGELISM THAT LEADS TO CHURCH PLANTING

It is impossible to plant a church without evangelism, but evangelism alone is not enough. For church planters, the goal is not just to expose people to the Gospel, nor is it even simply to help them to make a decision for Christ. The goal is to make disciples who will come together to worship and grow with God's people. If the church is God's primary instrument for world evangelization, then evangelism should always result in local church growth or church planting.



Two bridges must be crossed to lead to salvation and assimilation into the local church. One bridge is theological. This corresponds to the basic content (theological truths) of the Gospel. The other bridge is relational. It has to do with the relationships that help people be incorporated or gathered into a local fellowship of believers. If people

are hearing (being exposed to the content) without experiencing the relationships, then the process of making disciples will be short-circuited.

Important Principles to Help Connect Evangelism to Church Planting

Old forms of evangelism often bring people to a point of personal decision for Christ but do not help them cross the relational bridge into the fellowship of local believers. New believers, therefore, remain without discipleship or the influence of other believers.

With one or all of the following principles, a church leader and/or church planter can bring the lost across both bridges so they will be saved and become active participants in the Body of Christ.

1. Use Church Planting Vision to Drive Evangelism Outreach

Those who enter into the work of evangelism must have in mind their "Z." Leading people to Christ mandates that they do all they can to follow-up these new believers and assimilate them into a growing, vital fellowship of believers. Therefore, evangelism strategies should plan for new church plants. Evangelistic teams should make it their responsibility to work with Evangelical churches in the area, as much as they are able, to assimilate new believers. Where a viable church does not exist, strategies should be developed to start new churches from the first converts.

2. Use Natural Webs

Every person has a network of friends, relatives, co-workers, and others who he knows well and with whom he has regular contact. These natural relationships provide for the free flow of ideas. Often conversions "travel" through these networks, because the Gospel, like electricity, follows the path of least resistance.

Jesus was aware of these natural networks and had the ability to reach not just individuals, but networks of individuals as well. In Matthew 9:9-10 Jesus called Matthew and was soon at Matthew's house with the whole network of tax collectors gathered. After Jesus met Andrew the fisherman, there suddenly was a whole group of fishermen following Jesus (Jn 1:40-41). When Jesus shared the Gospel with one person he often asked that person to share the Good News with those in his or her network (Lk 8:38-39). The book of Acts as well is filled with stories of whole families (Ac 11:14, 16:31) and whole villages (Ac 9:35) coming to Christ because of one person's conversion.

3. Have New Believers Witness Immediately

Newfound faith is contagious. Even without deep theological understanding, the new convert will enthusiastically give evidence of the change that has taken place in the most dramatic way. Others can see the change right after his conversion better than they can over the course of his growth as a Christian.

John 4 provides a good example of a brand new believer who is a very effective witness. When the sinful Samaritan woman met Christ, she had a very simple but profound testimony: "Come see a man who told me everything I ever did. Could this be the Christ?" This woman could not answer difficult theological questions, but she knew what had happened to her. And who could argue with her? She spoke of what she had experienced. That was all that she needed to know to draw others to Christ. The men of the city rushed out to meet Jesus. How effective would her witness have been if she had waited a year to start to tell her story?

4. Go for "Gatekeepers"

Every group of people includes some who are more influential than others. When change takes place in a group, these few are normally the ones who initiate the change or at least allow it to take place. When these "influencers" are won to Christ, others will likely follow. We call these people "gatekeepers" because of their influence on the group and because they are the ones who allow us access to the rest of the group.

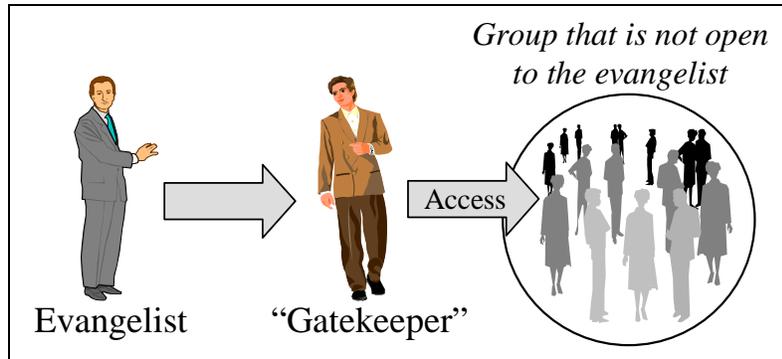
Who is a gatekeeper? A person who

- has a good reputation among his peers.
- is open to a friendship with you.
- is open to the Gospel.

Paul, the great church planter, understood this reality. He specifically expected to win influential people. Understanding the great influence kings have (Pr 16:15; 19:12), he boldly targeted them (Ac 9:15)! He proclaimed the Gospel before Governor Felix, Festus and King Agrippa (Ac 23-26). Paul's normal church planting strategy was to teach in the synagogue and then in the home of a "gatekeeper." For example, at Philippi the gatekeeper was Lydia (Ac 16:11-15), at Thessalonica it was Jason (Ac 17:1-9), and at Corinth, it was Titius Justus (Ac 18:7). When Paul led someone to Christ, others often followed.

Other examples of "gatekeepers"

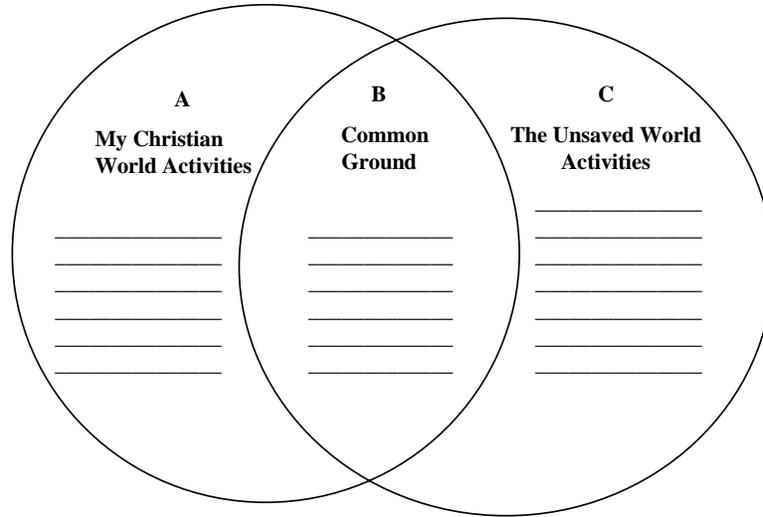
- The Philippian Jailer (Ac 16:32-34).
- Crispus (Ac 18:8).
- Stephanas (1Co 16:15-16).



5. Look for "Common Ground"

Sometimes a "common ground" approach is just what is needed to develop relationships and win people to Christ. By "common ground," we mean those activities that are common to both believers and non-believers alike. Common ground can be used as a means to develop relationships and communicate the Gospel.

Take several minutes to write down several common ground activities related to your Christian life. List these activities in the spaces provided below the letter "A" in the "Common Ground" diagram. Next, list the typical activities in the average day that are unacceptable to you as a Christian but are common to the unsaved in the group you are targeting. Write these answers in the circle labeled "C." Lastly, in section "B," list the activities that you are engaged in that are acceptable to you and would be acceptable activities for the unsaved people around you.



6. Consider Cultural Barriers

People rarely cross cultural barriers. People may make a decision to follow Christ, but are more often than not hesitant to attend a church where they have to cross a cultural bridge. This represents a cultural or social barrier. They would rather congregate with people of similar social or ethnic background and economic status.

New converts are more likely to be integrated effectively into an established church, only if they are not required to cross these barriers. But often, older established churches tend to represent a foreign sub-culture that is uncomfortable and unknown. Paul was willing to adjust his own culture in order to decrease the barriers that stood between him and the people he sought to reach (1Co 9). Church planting is an effective way to take advantage of this homogeneous principle. New churches, as new wineskins, can have forms that are relevant to the culture and social expression of these new believers.

“While serving in the US Army, I was taught that no matter how much air power or artillery power you would bring upon a target, land was ultimately conquered by the foot soldier with a rifle. This is also true in the spiritual realm. In the end, it matters not so much how much mass evangelism, radio broadcasting or literature distribution you do; it is the itinerant church planter armed with the Bible and the Gospel, empowered by prayer, who wins each village and neighborhood for Jesus Christ by establishing Gospel-preaching, reproducing churches.”

Rich Correll—Church Planters' Training, International

10

TRAINING

It is God's plan to build the Church through leaders equipping members (Eph 4:11-13). Practical, multilevel training is an essential element to SCP movements. Equipping evangelists, cell group leaders, church planters, and pastors in a multiplication pattern promotes the health and expansion of the church. When ordinary men and women receive practical, skill-based training to use their giftedness, watch out!



If you want a church planting movement, you must train God's people. Every church should be a training center and every Christian involved in any ministry should be engaged in training others to minister. All of God's people must be motivated, equipped and mobilized. It is as simple as that!

Training Focuses on Ministry Skills

Many confuse training with teaching and even preaching. We must do all three in ministry, but we should understand the differences.

- **Preaching:** To declare, to herald, to proclaim the truth and make an appeal to the will of the hearer for a response or decision.
- **Teaching:** To impart, to convey truth or information so that the hearer understands the truth in his own way of thinking.
- **Training:** To equip, to develop skill in practical ways so that the performance and actions of the trainee are changed and may accomplish a specific task.

Many churches preach faithfully and teach correctly, but fail to train God's people to minister. Training is an active process and the best way to train others is to involve them in supervised ministry. They will learn most from what they do.

The following five-step process can help someone develop a particular skill

Step 1: "I Do It" Model ministry before you require it of your trainee. Your own example is the beginning of training. Often training fails because there is no modeling of the skill.

Step 2: "I Do It; You Watch" While the trainee also "watched" in step 1, it was a more passive, one-way activity. In this step, we have active, two-way interaction between the leader and the trainee. The trainee knows he is being trained and is absorbing everything he can learn by observing your ministry. Explaining your actions is very important. Tell the trainee what you do and why you do it that way.

Step 3: "We Do It Together" This step is a bit like a child learning to ride a bike with the parent steadying it as needed. Your presence will give the trainee confidence that you can help if he has a problem, but he will also be able to test out the things he is learning from you.

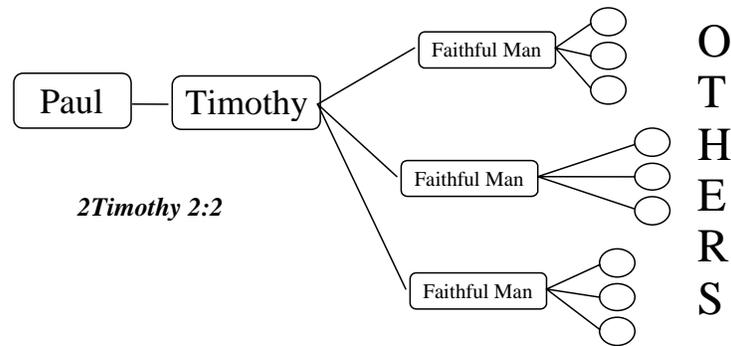
Step 4: "You Do It; I Watch" Observe a trainee without interfering. Allow him to succeed or fail, and then, after the event and in private, objectively explain the strengths and weaknesses you have observed. It is important to explain both the positive and the negative, but whenever possible, emphasize the positive.

Step 5: "You Do It" As soon as you think a new leader is ready, turn the task over to him. Don't rush it, but usually the tendency is to wait far too long, and cripple the trainee by our continued presence. Encourage this co-laborer to begin training others in ministry skills.

Training Should Be Reproducible

Church planting movements require training methods and concepts that can be taught again to others. Paul expected his training/equipping of Timothy to go on for four generations. It began with Paul passing on the teaching from his heart (2Ti 2:2). Timothy then taught reliable men who were "able to teach others also." This four-generation model is a strategic way to plan training. This requires simplicity so that others can pass it on without expensive instruments, elite knowledge, or formal education.

This multiplication principle applies to all levels of church life. Small group leaders train apprentices to lead new groups. Church planters identify and nurture the ministry skills of new believers who later assume leadership in the church. Pastors train members to be pastors of new ministries or daughter churches.



Make Training Accessible to Everyone

It is the job of the Church to train workers to complete the Great Commission. When people think of ministry training they commonly think of seminaries and Bible colleges or some other residential program. This is regrettable since some of the most effective training programs in the world are non-residential and church-based. Assuming that church workers need to go away to a school to be trained can hinder a church planting movement. When, on the other hand, local churches take seriously their responsibility to train workers, then training is available to more people.

Training Includes Mentoring

Mentoring is fundamentally a purposeful relationship in which someone who knows or has something transfers that something to another person at a teachable time, resulting in growth and development. Training should be structured around a long-term relationship between a mentor and the trainee. The mentor observes the trainee in his/her ministry, provides encouragement and prayer, measures accomplishments, and gives advice or correction. A mentor is not an ivory tower scholar who only delivers lectures and writes books. Rather he is a friend who visits trainees in ministry in order to observe their activity, pray for them, encourage them, and help them. Surveys of church planters who have been involved in formal training programs reveal that out of all the benefits of the training program, field visits (mentoring) were valued most highly of all, more valuable than teaching or financial help.

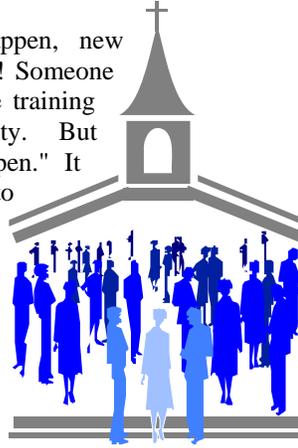
Mentoring involves:

- relating to people more than managing them.
- equipping people more than controlling them.
- investing in people more than demanding from them.
- challenging people more than pushing them.
- encouraging people more than criticizing them.
- convincing people more than commanding them.
- training people more than lecturing them.

Surveys of church planters who have been involved in formal training programs reveal that out of all the benefits of the training program, field visits (mentoring) were valued most highly of all.

Training Church Planters

For saturation church planting to happen, new churches have to be planted everywhere! Someone must plant those churches, and therefore training church planters must be a main priority. But church planter training does not "just happen." It takes intentional work and prayer to challenge local churches to send people for training, prepare materials for the training, and then actually train and mentor new church planters.



When church planters enter the harvest field they are normally pioneers engaging the enemy on his territory for the souls of men (2Co 4:4, Col 1:13). The church planter will need to be a competent evangelist, a good leader of small groups as well as a skilled discipler of new believers. In addition, the spiritual battle which is an inevitable part of the church planting experience requires the right spiritual preparation for the church planter to succeed.

Many church planters begin their ministry without many or most of these skills. The best way to acquire them is through a combination of experience, trial and error, and training with intentional mentoring. In this way the church planter will learn what to do, how to do it, and what to teach so that a new church will result.

Aspects of Successful Church Planter Training

Church planter training must teach not only information, but also the practical skills needed to start new churches. Successful church planter training programs are:

Reproducible

Training for church planters must be done in such a way that it can be easily reproduced in the lives of second and third generations of church planters. Methods for teaching and materials used should be prepared so that they can be re-taught to others in a similar fashion. Church planters tend to want to teach other church planters in ways similar to how they were taught.

Appropriate

Appropriate church planter training meets the needs of the trainees in their context. The teaching should address foundational issues, as well as problems and obstacles that the church planter will encounter.

Practical

Church planter training must be practical and vocational, relating to the real-life needs of a ministry. Ministry is the primary proving ground for leadership, not education.

Catalytic

A training program can never fully equip the church planter. But, it can communicate vision, provide resources, accent success, encourage cooperation and make a beginning. Other future training in theological and practical matters will be needed by those leading new congregations, which is outside the scope of vocational church planter training.

Results-Oriented

All training should have the goal of a change of performance in the life of the trainee. Knowledge about church planting is not the point, though a well-developed understanding of the overall principles of how to plant churches is required. Rather, a change in perspective and ministry performance is sought. The trainee must be helped to work through a process of investigation, initiation and implementation concerning his values, perspectives, actions and beliefs.

Different from most seminary or Bible college curriculums, church planter training focuses on the work in the field. Success is defined not by what the students have learned, but by what the students have delivered. Because of training, has a new church resulted? How many members are in worship?

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MOBILIZATION

The Whole Church Taking the Gospel to the Whole World!

The cry during war is to MOBILIZE! To “mobilize” simply means *to assemble people into readiness and to participate where they best contribute in a common cause.*

As the church strives to grow, the eternal destiny of millions is at stake. Mobilizers see the expansion of the Church as it truly is—a spiritual war. With military-like zeal they cry out for mobilization.

When the whole body of Christ will consciously mobilize around the cause to witness for Christ, God will accelerate the church toward reaching the goal of making disciples.

Why Should Believers Be Mobilized?

- Jesus prayed that His followers would be united (John 17).
- He designed the Church to work together as a body (1Co 12, Ro 12).

Mobilization is not simply a good idea; it is essential. No part of the Body can fight the spiritual war alone. The Church works best when every part is mobilized toward the attainment of the goal. Without this kind of mobilization, the Church fights from a position of weakness, without making use of all its members as God intends.

Mobilization Focuses on People and Resources

People Must Have A Common Vision. Why should people work together when they are not trying to accomplish the same things? Without vision, to what do people mobilize? Mobilization is impossible without common vision. Common vision provides the focus for mobilization. A common vision can only come from God – for a vision

from the Lord can hold people united in the spiritual battle. Prayerfully asking, “what does God want?” is perhaps the most helpful way to stir up vision toward mobilization.

People Must Be Trained. Training naturally follows vision. Each part of the body must understand their role and each gift must discover its expression. In this all the members of the body join the cause and pursue the goal.

People Must Release Resources. When people lack the resources to do what God has called them to do, they are not mobilized. Resources include money, equipment, literature, skills, etc. For SCP movements to happen these kinds of resources are needed. But, the fulfillment of the Great Commission in a nation should be done primarily with the resources and initiative of the believers of that country. At the heart of the issue of resources is the fundamental truth that God’s own people provide the primary means for the work of the Gospel. Their own tithes and offerings should be used to support their work.

The fulfillment of the Great Commission in a nation should be done primarily with the resources and initiative of the believers of that country.

As Jesus said, “*For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also*” (Mt 6:21). As a person gives financially and substantially according to one’s means, the person becomes committed in the heart to his investment. If people do not give sacrificially to local ministry, then the work has no heart-felt following. Something very powerful happens when people decide that a ministry or program is *theirs* and that it’s success or failure depends on God’s work through them alone.

Resources can be drawn from outside sources—including mission agencies and churches—in order to get new works started. However, this should be the exception, and not the rule of where resources come from.

Biblical Examples of Mobilization

The Free-Will Offering for the Tabernacle

Moses collected an offering from the Israelites to build the tabernacle while they were homeless in the wilderness (Ex 25:1-8). The people gave of their livestock, their personal things, and even their labor in response to this call to mobilization (Ex 35:4-29). They were not

required to give but gave willingly. In fact, they gave far more than was necessary, so that Moses had to ask people to stop giving (Ex 36:4-7)!

The Rebuilding of the Wall of Jerusalem

Nehemiah mobilized the Jewish people after the exile to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem. He cast a vision, gathered resources and put people to work according to their giftedness. Nehemiah's vision and goal to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem came to him as a result of information (research), having heard about the conditions in Jerusalem, and through prayer (Ne 1:2-4). The mobilization of the Jewish people in Jerusalem resulted in **synergism** so that the *results were more than the sum of the parts*. The wall was completed in 52 days, amazingly fast, instilling fear in those of the surrounding nations (Ne 6:15-16). When God's people unite and work strategically to accomplish God's plan, God blesses in amazing ways.

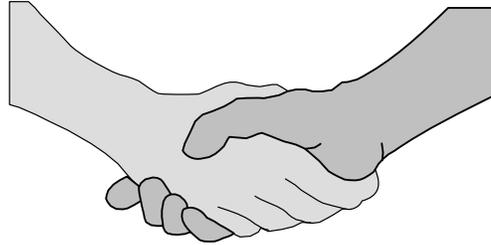
The Missionary Activity of Paul

Paul mobilized people. He taught that everyone has a spiritual gift (Ro 12; 1Co 12; Eph 4) and made the churches aware of the potential they themselves possessed to minister (1Co 1:4-9; Ro 15:14). Paul trained Timothy, challenged him to boldly exercise his spiritual gift and instructed him to mobilize still others (2Ti 2:2). Timothy is by no means the only one to have been mobilized by Paul. The last missionary journey of Paul was a training-discipleship-mobilization trip during which we read of seven people traveling with Paul, learning from him (Ac 20:4). In his epistles, Paul mentions Epaphras, Demas, Archippus, Titus, Phoebe and many others. In Romans 16, Paul greets 27 people, many of whom he had influenced or some way facilitated in ministry, giving more evidence for the vast network of people Paul had mobilized in his travels.

Paul mobilized many of the churches to give to the Jerusalem Church during her time of need (Ro 15:25-27; 1Co 16:1-2; 2Co 8:1-6, 9:6-11). Paul taught on giving, encouraging churches to support those who minister to them (1Co 9:4-14, 1Ti 5:18). It is interesting to note that the often-repeated phrase "*my God shall supply all your riches*" is found in the context of Paul congratulating the Philippians for their giving (Php 4:15-20). In other words, those who give enjoy a wonderful promise from God that He will reward them in proportion to their giving. Indeed, God will generously provide for our needs if we have the faith to give generously to Him (2Co 9:6-11, Lk 6:38).

Conclusion

Mobilization is a spiritual task. A church planting movement will not succeed without effective mobilization. It helps to focus and release existing resources to the task of world evangelization—the establishing of new churches everywhere.



*When The Body Of Christ Is Not Mobilized—It
Cannot Fight At Full Strength!*

Saturation Church Planting—It Works!



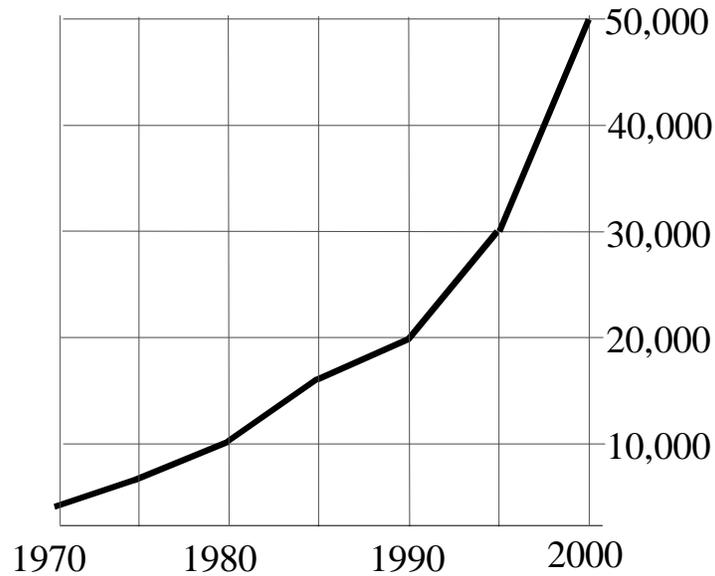
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CONTEMPORARY EXAMPLES OF SCP

The Philippines

Jun Balayo has led an interdenominational effort in the Philippines that is still strong today. Jun and other believers set long term goals of 50,000 new churches in the Philippines by 2003. As the graph below indicates, growth was steady but not dramatic at first. However, labor from the results of the harvest leads to acceleration over time, and today, they are on target!

Church Growth in the Philippines from AD 1970 to AD 2003.



Russia

Two hundred Baptist leaders from the Pacific coast of Russia gathered in Khabarovsk in the Fall of 1999 to cast vision and set church planting goals. This part of Russia includes 8 oblasts (regions) with a total of over 6 million people. The Russian Baptist Union (RBU) is well organized there and has had a strong saturation church planting focus.

The RBU already has 96 churches and small groups in the region, up from 27 in 1991. To date, they have dedicated about 15 missionaries (church planters) to the task.

The following goals were set. The 96 existing churches hope to plant another 469 churches in the next 5 years and have set an overall “Z” target of 1,900 churches. Then, the ratio of churches to population would be one church for every 3,334 people.

Ukraine

Revival has come to Ukraine and many churches are being planted. Both Pentecostal and Baptist denominations are setting goals for churches planted. Helping spur on that revival are ministries that train church planters. In the period from 1992 to 1998, the Baptists and Church Planters’ Training, International, have helped plant 327 churches, start 465 home groups, and train 748 church planters in 17 sites.

As a result of the church planting focus within the country, Ukrainian believers are now planting churches in other countries of the former Communist block as well.

Romania

At present, a team of 5 Romanians serve as a national SCP team. This team has mobilized and trained teams from local churches in 18 counties. The county teams use the same principles as the national team, only on a local level. These local teams help churches have vision for church planting, help them mobilize their people, and then help them train. Have they been effective?

In 1996, these teams organized 19 churches and had 36 trainers. By 1998, they had helped to plant 76 churches and prepared 126 trainers. These teams had 18 local church training sites in 1996. By 1998, they had 67.

Together, the national and local teams have done church planting research. Because of this research, the teams are also holding regional conferences with local and regional pastors. These teams show that

church planting is in decline in Romania and at the present rate of growth, the Church in Romania will not reach this generation of Romanians. They are inviting more and more churches to mobilize and train for more churches to be planted.

Next Steps...

- ✓ **Share the Vision for Church Planting**
- ✓ **Call People to Prayer for Church Planting**
- ✓ **Find Like-Minded Partners Who Want To Plant Churches**
- ✓ **Organize a Gathering or Conference in Your City or Region to Promote Church Planting Vision**
- ✓ **Do Research of the Harvest Force and the Harvest Field**
- ✓ **Do Strategic Planning For More Churches Planted**
- ✓ **Develop Training of Church Planters**



About *The Alliance*

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

What We Believe

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

What We Do

Church Planter Training and Mentoring

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

Information Gathering

The *Alliance* can help with training and consulting in research and information gathering in the areas of church planting and church growth.

Prayer Movement Consulting

The Alliance can help you better understand the role of prayer movements in the church planting task and how you can facilitate a prayer movement in your region.

Vision Casting

The *Alliance* can help you foster a vision for new churches with conceptual seminars on the principles of saturation church planting.