

Vietnam Edition

Practical Training for Saturation Church Planting

**Book 4
Training Leaders**

**Practical Training for
Saturation Church Planting
Vietnam Edition
Book Four – Training Leaders**

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PRACTICAL TRAINING FOR SCP

BOOK 4 – TRAINING LEADERS

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CURRICULUM OVERVIEW

Book	1. Laying Foundations	2. Winning The Lost	3. Establishing Converts	4. Training Leaders	5. Multiplying Ministry
Overall Goal: The participant should complete this bookcertain of his call and a strategic approach to the church planting task.	...with the skills and motivation to share the gospel.	... able to organize new converts into small groups and lead them toward maturity.	... able to start corporate worship and to equip new leaders for ministry.	... with the skills and commitment to multiply new churches and continue in SCP ministry.
Subjects / Lessons, Timeframe	<p><u>Month 1</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> God’s Ultimate Purpose Making Disciples Of All Nations Planting Churches Everywhere “Z” Thinking Research SC 1: Spiritual Adoption <p><u>Month 2</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Prayer In The Church Planting Process Purpose Of The Church Nature Of The Church Defining The Church SC 2: The Centrality of the Cross 	<p><u>Month 3</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Form And Function Understanding the Message Sharing A Personal Testimony Evangelism And Church Planting Biblical History Of Redemption SC 3: Who Needs the Gospel? <p><u>Month 4</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review <ol style="list-style-type: none"> History Of Christianity, Advance Of The Gospel Barriers To Effective Evangelism Chronological Bible Storying 1 IBS: Intro IBS: Method IBS: Demonstrated SC 4: The Law and the Gospel 	<p><u>Month 5</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Group Inductive Bible Study Cell Group 1: Intro CG 2: Leading Cells CG 3: Preparing to Start SC 5: Understanding and Overcoming the Sin Nature <p><u>Month 6</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Perseverance Through Persecution Prayer And Fasting Discipleship 1: Intro Discipleship 2: Forms Chronological Bible Storying 2 SC 6: Understanding and Overcoming Self-Pity <p><u>Month 7</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Discipleship 3: Toward Maturity Caring For Others Team Ministry Developing Your CP Team Styles Of Interaction SC 7: True Repentance 	<p><u>Month 8</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Introducing SCP leadership Servant Leadership Spheres of Leadership Christianity and Culture Discipleship 4: Multiplying the Process SC 8: Growing in the Gospel <p><u>Month 9</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Mobilizing Leaders Identifying and Equipping Leaders Training Cell Group Leaders Skills for Leaders Strategic Planning SC 9: Forgiveness <p><u>Month 10</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Multiplying Cell Groups Corporate Leadership Skills – Supervising Cells Worship Effective Communication Studying Culture SC 10: Conflict Resolution 	<p><u>Month 11</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Church Planting Cycle Next Steps – Planting More Churches Training As Part Of A Church Planting Movement Signs Of A Movement Vision And Telescoping— Taking The Gospel Into The World Contextualizing The Gospel SC 11: The New Nature <p><u>Month 12</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Biblical Examples Of Saturation Church Planting Movements Strategy Components For A Church Planting Movement Shepherding Within A Movement Mobilization SC 12: Ministry Through Weakness
Outcome Project (Homework)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Research The Target Region Organize Prayer Support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evangelize The Lost And Their Friends 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organize Converts And Contacts Into Cell Groups Identify And Begin Working With Disciples 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Train And Release Leaders Complete A Strategic Ministry Plan Organize Cells Into Corporate Worship Groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Research And Cast Vision For Work In New Regions/New Groups Start Daughter Churches

Note: the Vietnamese language version of this curriculum corresponds to the English, with the exception of being organized into six books of two months worth of lessons in each book.

MONTH 8

Review of Month 7

THE BIG PICTURE

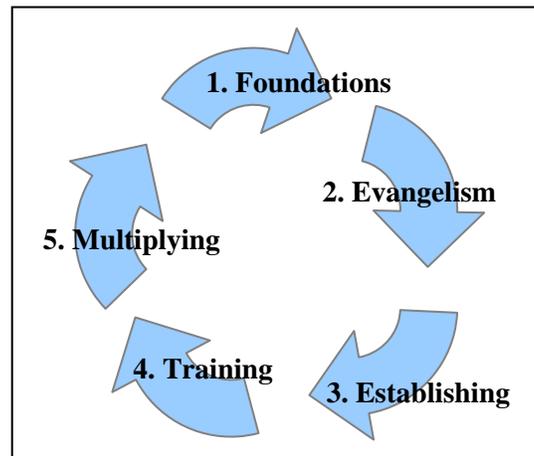
This course has been designed to lead you through the actual process of starting a church. This is not theoretical, but rather intended to provide the skills and knowledge necessary to see a new churches established.

In the introduction of Book One we described the “church planting cycle” by which the lessons in this course are organized. The first phase (Book One) of the church planting cycle dealt with foundational issues which the church planter needs to understand, such as his vision and the definition of the church. The second phase (Book Two) involved evangelism of the lost, bringing people from the kingdom of darkness to the kingdom of light. The third phase (Book Three) involved establishing these new believers in cell groups, grounding them in biblical truth, and helping them to grow in their spiritual maturity.

We have now arrived at Book Four which will emphasize training leaders, the fourth phase of the church planting cycle. By this phase, it is assumed that the church planter has evangelized, disciplined and gathered many people into cell groups. The task is to identify the new believers whom God has gifted to become leaders and to train and release these new leaders for ministry as evangelists, disciplers and cell group leaders. The intent of this book is to provide the ministry skills and knowledge necessary for you to successfully do that.

Finally, the fifth phase will involve multiplying (Book Five) the existing church planting ministry. In other words, your new church which has been started will pray and plan to start other churches itself, thus repeating the cycle from the beginning. As this cycle repeats itself over and over again, we begin to see entire movements of new churches in your region or area.

Take some time to assess where your ministry is in comparison to the church planting cycle. By this time in the process we hope that you are leading a healthy cell group (maybe a few cell groups), and that you are discipling new believers to become leaders of new groups. Is this the case in your ministry? Discuss this with your mentor.



ASSIGNMENTS FROM MONTH SEVEN

In the last month of training the main emphasis was on disciple making. You were asked to do the following:

From Lesson 12, “Discipleship 3 – Toward Maturity”

Describe your discipleship plan for at least 10 people in your church. Your plan should describe the goals for each person, the primary discipler for each person, as well as how, when people will meet and what will be discussed. Share your plan with your mentor.

From Lesson 15, “Developing the Church Planting Team”

Recruit people to be on your church planting team.

From Lesson 16, “Styles for Interaction”

As a way to understand these four categories, pick out five people that you know from your circle of friends and quietly observe them in various situations and discreetly note their actions or statements that verify their interaction style.

Consider the “action steps” that follow each of the styles. Identify two that you will consciously work on before the next training session. Share this with your mentor, and ask your mentor to give you feedback on how you are doing.

In addition to reviewing the assignments, take some time to make a list of the things you have learned in your church planting ministry.

LEADERSHIP

Lesson 1: Introducing SCP Leadership

If there is one ingredient that is key to the success of any project, it is leadership. Leaders show others the goal and motivate and equip people to attain the goal. While leadership is a broad subject filled with many nuances and perspectives, we are interested in the following specific leadership issues: Why are some leaders more effective than others? How do some Christian leaders become movement initiators? What kind of leaders do saturation church planting (SCP) movements need?

In our lessons on leadership, when we talk about leaders, we are talking about those who influence others toward church planting. If you are involved in church planting as an evangelist, small group leader, pastor, or discipler, then you are a leader. Read carefully to learn how to become a more effective leader.

I. THE SCP LEADER'S SOURCE OF POWER

Leaders are influencers. They have the power, or ability, to help others see things differently and to inspire action. When they speak, people listen. When they act, people notice. When they call, people respond.

The primary question, though, is where does this power to influence others come from? In other words, what empowers them? Worldly leaders tend to see themselves as controllers of others. They may be born with strong personalities that attract people. Or, they may have authority because of their position or rank in an organization. Some leaders are followed for their skills and abilities. Others have seniority and experience that enables them to influence others.

A Christian leader might have some of the qualities described above, but this is not where his power comes from. First and foremost, a Christian leader is a person of faith. He puts his trust not in his own wisdom, skills, or his position, but in God the Almighty whom he serves (Pr 3:5-6). He knows that human resources are not enough to accomplish God's goal of filling the earth with His glory and so he humbly accepts the authority with which God empowers him. (1Pe 4:11)

A Christian leader recognizes, understands and prayerfully uses spiritual gifts in working as a servant-leader (Ro 12:3-8, 1Co 12:8-10, 28-30, Eph 4:11). As a "catalyst," he leads others not to himself, but to the common source of power, the Holy Spirit. When people look at his ministry, they see accomplishments that only the Holy Spirit could bring about – things never possible through human power.

Question 1: Where should a Christian leader's power come from?

Luc is a pastor in a remote village. He always has been concerned about his church and the people in the church. His desire to see evangelism done was always rooted in seeing his church grow. Lately, he has been feeling worn out by all the work he had to do to keep the church running. Luc felt that he had a responsibility before God and the church to keep things running, but there was little joy anymore, only tiredness and frustration. He has talked to his friend and fellow church leader, Kinh, about his exhaustion, but has never felt that it would be appropriate to share all his feelings.

Meanwhile, Luc has a vision to reach other villages in his region, but he is afraid that this vision is too big for him. He is worried that daughter churches in nearby villages would create an impossible amount of work. If he is tired now, what will he be if he begins to reach out? The more he thinks about this, the more fearful he becomes.

Question 2: What does Luc need most in this situation?

II. THE SCP LEADER’S CHARACTER

Scripture tells us that when looking for a leader, “*man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart*” (1Sa 16:7). This is why character is a very important distinctive of a Christian leader. While people in the world often evaluate leaders by their charisma, or skills and abilities, the Lord looks at the person’s heart first.

The leader whose sole source of power is the Holy Spirit has a loving, humble and serving character. At the same time, his life is based on sound doctrine, and he is able to explain and defend, when necessary, God’s purpose for the Church, especially in relation to SCP.

The Christian leader follows the steps of Jesus, who was the greatest leader--and the greatest servant--ever to walk the earth. Although Jesus certainly had the power to “control others” to accomplish His goals, He never did. On the contrary, Jesus 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). We follow Him because He gave Himself on the cross, enabling others to do God’s will through the power of the Holy Spirit.

It was from a position of servanthood that Jesus started the movement that turned the world upside down. Likewise, from the Apostle Paul, we learn that his loving approach as a servant-leader was central to the success of the advance of the Gospel from Thessalonica (1Th 1:8-9, 2:1-12) and for the church planting movement in Asia (Acts 19; 20:17-34).

Like Jesus, who fully submitted Himself to the Father, 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 God’s glory filling the land.

Question 3: How did Jesus enable others to do God’s will?

Question 4: What is the most important distinctive of a Christian leader? Why?

III. THE SCP LEADER’S GOAL

Saturation Church Planting (SCP) leaders have a unique goal. They are driven by the question, “what does God want?” for their cities, regions, and nations. They are convinced that God desires that all people have the opportunity to hear and respond to the Gospel, and that this requires a viable, witnessing local church.

Note that the SCP goal does not originate with the leader. It is God’s vision – SCP leaders simply discover it as they prayerfully struggle 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 people would normally even think of.

“Z” thinking, which we have already talked about (see Book One), affects SCP leaders’ style, their daily focus, and their role in the Church and in their community. “Z” thinking leaders do not merely begin programs or organize institutions. They do not simply raise groups of followers or build their own congregations. As “catalysts,” they develop new leaders and inspire movements in which the whole Body of Christ works toward the completion of the Great Commission through the planting of reproducing churches.

Question 5: For review: what is “Z” thinking? How does it affect an SCP leader when he or she is setting goals in ministry?

IV. THE SCP LEADER’S METHOD

SCP leaders come to understand that the hard work of one man or one church alone will never reach God’s goal. Something bigger is required – the whole body of Christ working together according to their giftedness. SCP leaders focus their efforts with this reality in mind. This kind of leadership is called “catalytic” (or sometimes

“facilitative”). These leaders are like gardeners, 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 gardener is to nurture what he has planted, to remove obstacles to its growth, providing the best possible environment for the plant’s development. In a similar way, SCP leaders, humbly realizing that they have been empowered by God, don’t force or manipulate people towards “the result,” but rather use their influence to create conditions in which things can happen.

Catalytic leadership includes instilling the vision and goal in others, matching others' gifts and talents to areas of ministry needed for reaching the goal, and making sure necessary training and guidance is available.

Enabled by the servant-leader, and with his guidance, support and training, others in the group are free to more fully use their spiritual gifts, skills and talents in working for the common goal. These may include information sharing, input in decision making, and having authority/responsibility for specific areas in the SCP work. While the leader has overall responsibility, others on the team share the vision and commitment for reaching the goal.

Compare the methods of two leadership styles in the chart below:

	TYPICAL LEADERSHIP	CATALYST
CONCERN	"Get the job done"	"Get people involved"
SKILL	A practitioner	An equipper, a trainer
ROLE	A doer	A delegator

Question 6: What is “catalytic leadership”?

CONCLUSION

For SCP to be realized, leaders must emerge. However, “leadership as usual” will not accomplish what God wants. As we have seen, certain kinds of leaders must be developed. By way of review, note the contrast, in the table below, between three kinds of leaders. The worldly way of leadership and has no place in the SCP ministry. Catalytic leaders tend to become church planters while nurturers tend to become the pastors of established churches. While catalytic leaders are normally the most active in SCP ministry, nurturers and catalytic leaders need to work together in the SCP effort. After all, SCP starts and ends with established churches.

	WORLDLY LEADERS	NURTURERS	CATALYTIC LEADERS
Source	Flesh	God	God
Character	Pride	Servanthood	Servanthood
Goal	Performance	Development of people	SCP movement
Method	Manipulation or force	Support and encouragement	Motivation and equipping

A good example of SCP leadership was seen recently in Romania. In 1997, in Cluj County, Romania, two new churches were planted. Church leaders might have been happy with that. But Gavi, a church leader, realized that two churches were not enough and that he needed to do something about it. Gavi, with help from other church leaders in the county, mobilized believers to work in church planting. God accelerated the ministry of these few people such that within two years, 22 new churches were planted, 75 lay people were trained in church planting, and 60 prayer triplets were formed to support the ongoing church planting work. This is SCP leadership in action.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Describe your style as a leader. How do you expect God to use you in the SCP process?
2. Does God’s vision for a particular group always come through the leadership, or does it come through the laity, or both? Write your thoughts below.
3. How do “Nurturers” fit into SCP movements?
4. Describe a leader who has had a significant influence in your Christian life. How was it that this person so influential for you?

ASSIGNMENT

Great movements of God resulted from Paul’s ministry in Thessalonica (1Th 1:8-9) and later from Ephesus (Acts 19:9-10). Providentially for us, Paul describes his leadership approach in each of these cases. After reviewing Acts 20:18-34 and 1Th 2:1-12 very carefully, describe Paul’s leadership in those situations. How would you evaluate your own leadership in the light of these passages?

Lesson 2: Servant Leadership

The world we live in has many different approaches to leadership. Unfortunately, worldly approaches are often destructive to the plan that God has for us. Thankfully, Christ provided us with an example of how to lead others, and our pattern for leadership should come from His example. His approach to leadership involved giving of Himself to His followers. In this lesson, we will talk about how to do that.

I. WORLDLY LEADERSHIP

The world tends to view leadership as a matter of authority or force. Some feel that authority gives them the right to lead by ruling others. Thinking this way can result in devious and self-serving leadership. We see examples of this in politics, education, business etc. This can create a tendency for us to lead according to the ways of the world, since those ways are so familiar to us.

Worldly leadership is based on certain assumptions about how people are motivated, such as:

- You can't trust people to do what you want them to do.
- If you trust others too much, they will take advantage of you.
- Leaders assume authority on the basis of either their position or by their personality.
- People will do what you want them to do only when motivated by reward, or threatened by punishment.
- Leaders should avoid close contact with their followers, or their followers will view them as weak.

Question 1: Do you agree with any of these statements? Why or why not?

The assumptions above are common in many leaders. They may not say it outwardly, but inwardly, they may think of their leadership task from a selfish, despotic perspective. Listen to the 'self talk' of the following leaders and discuss how each one is selfish:

- *"I know best what is to be done. After all, I am better trained, more experienced, and more informed about our task than anyone else. My followers expect that from me as the leader."*
- *"As the leader I cannot do everything myself, so I need the help of my followers to do the work, but I do not need their ideas or plans to implement what is to be done."*
- *"I suppose I should listen to my followers. These days they expect that much from me. But, I don't expect to hear anything new. I'm quite confident we'll end up doing it my way."*
- *"Of course, I am the one who handles the proceedings and controls the pace of all meetings. After all, the agenda is mine and I've thought each point through already."*

Question 2: Think about a time when you were a leader. Which of the above thoughts were part of your experience?

When worldly styles of leadership are imported into the church the tendency is towards authoritarian, controlling leadership. If we do not break this yoke of non-biblical leadership and unleash the resources of the Body of Christ, there is little hope that the world can be evangelized and brought under the Lordship of Christ in our lifetime.

II. SERVANT LEADERSHIP

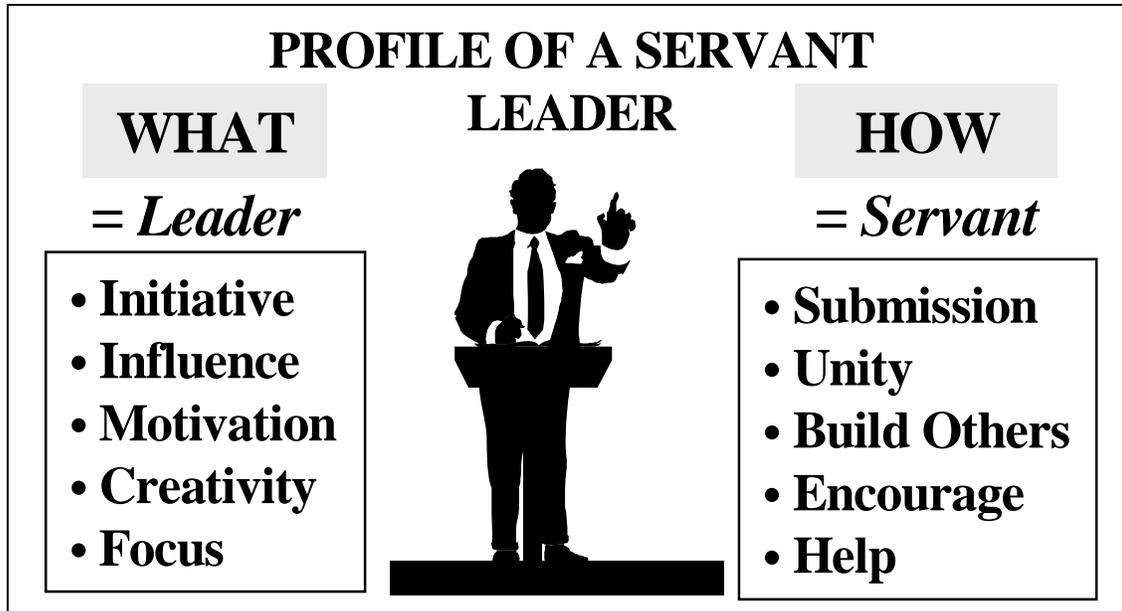
Jesus took time to clearly explain the world's way of leading (Mt 20:25-28). He pronounced *"Not so with you,"* and made it clear that the disciples should never employ heavy-handed, self-centered methods of leadership. Instead, those who follow Jesus are to be "servants of all."

Servanthood and leadership can coexist

An initial glance at the words “servanthood” and “leadership” appear somewhat contradictory. On the one hand, a servant is a person employed by another, who does the will of his employer. His job security depends on it, as well as his honor as a hired servant. Servanthood implies responsive activity, subservient position, and a submissive spirit.

Leadership, on the other hand, implies initiation. It involves direction, influence and motivation. It requires pro-activity, creative involvement, focus, and building others up so that together they can produce more than each person could individually. Leadership is knowing where one is going, and having the ability to inspire others to go along.

The Servant leader



So how can the two fit together? Whereas leadership describes the ‘what’ of our work, servanthood addresses fundamentally the ‘how’ of our work (the needs of others). We lead as servants. To be a “leader” in the worldly sense does not require servanthood. However, in the task of spawning church planting movements, it is a must.

Christian principles concerning motivation and leadership

- People are made in the image of God and therefore have intrinsic worth (Ge 1:27-28).
- People are motivated to perform with excellence in recognition that everything is to be done to the glory of God (Col 3:23).
- People will not grow and develop unless they are trusted and given freedom both to succeed and to fail.
- A leader is appointed by God and assumes authority from Him (Ro 13:1).
- Successful leaders view others as friends, not as subordinates, and interact with them in a spirit of openness and humility (Jn 15:15).

Question 3: Which of the Christian leadership principles listed above do you not always see in your leadership style?

III. NEW TESTAMENT TEACHING ON SERVANT LEADERSHIP

Jesus and the Apostles not only taught about servant leadership, but also demonstrated it with their lives. Their example should continue to challenge us as we minister today.

The Example and Teaching of Jesus

Jesus' leadership was not self-serving (Mt 20:25-28; Jn 13:1-16). Jesus put aside his own honor to serve—most graphically in the upper room as he washed the feet of the disciples. Eventually, his unique ministry led him to physically die for those he under his care (Php 2:1-11). He took the form of a servant in order to carry our burden of sin. He invited the lost to come to him and find rest from their burdens. He said, “*Come to me all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light*” (Mt 11:28-30).

As a great leader, Jesus ignited the most amazing movement of all time – the movement of his world-wide church. Yet Jesus was also clearly a servant. How ironic that it was from this position as a servant that Jesus started the movement we are discussing today.

Jesus calls his disciples “friends” and himself a “servant” (Jn 15:15). The disciples did not demand this of him. The disciples' role was one of deepest respect and obedience. In ordinary relationships, these roles are often reversed. The leader demands respect and obedience, as followers look for a friend and a servant.

Jesus also taught his disciples the importance of being servant leaders. In Matthew 20:25-28, he warned them not to follow the world's system of leadership. Rather, he challenged them to follow his example by giving their very lives to seek and save the lost.

The Example and Teaching of Paul

Perhaps the best example of Paul's servant heart is seen in his second letter to the Thessalonians. Look closely at how he described his service among them:

“We were not looking for praise from men, not from you or anyone else. As apostles of Christ we could have been a burden to you, but we were gentle among you, like a mother caring for her little children. We loved you so much that we were delighted to share with you not only the gospel of God, but our lives as well, because you had become so dear to us. Surely you remember, brothers, our toil and hardship; we worked day and night in order not to be a burden to anyone while we preached the gospel of God to you” (1Th 2:6-9).

Clearly Paul felt that his position as an apostle entitled him to serve others and bear their burdens, rather than to be served. He taught us to do the same:

- “We who are strong ought to bear with the failings of the weak and not to please ourselves” (Ro 15:1).
- “And we urge you, brother, warn those who are idle, encourage the timid, help the weak, be patient with everyone” (1Th 5:14).
- “Brothers, if someone is caught in a sin, you who are spiritual should restore him gently. But watch yourself, or you also may be tempted. Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ” (Gal 6:1,2).

Question 4: In what ways has a leader been a servant to you?

The Example and Teaching of Peter

In his first epistle, Peter makes it very clear that leaders in the church are expected to be servant leaders (1Pe 5:1-4). Peter appeals as one who saw Christ's suffering first hand and even alludes to Jesus' teaching on leadership (Mt 20:25-28) by instructing these elders not to ‘lord it over’ those entrusted to them.

The life of Peter confirms that he believed what he taught. He suffered greatly in the Lord's service. Tradition says that Peter was crucified upside-down *at his request*, because he did not feel that he was worthy to be crucified in the same position as Christ.

IV. APPLICATION

Servant leadership is the biblical approach to leadership. In simple terms, servant leadership means that the leader puts his followers' well-being ahead of his own. Christian leaders are first and foremost servants. Intimidation, superiority, and force should never be characteristic of a Christian leader (Mt 20:25-28, 1Pe 5:1-7). The Christian leader is not a “ruler” in the sense of a dictator [the word “rule” (Greek root ‘arch’) is never used in the New Testament to describe relationships between Christians]. Instead he is a servant.

Qualities and Characteristics of the Servant Leader

- The servant leader maintains and builds unity (Eph 4:3). He avoids needless arguments about ownership, credit or territory.
- Servant leaders are not threatened by others' strengths and accomplishments. Instead, they recognize the value of these strengths and use them to help achieve the goals of the group.
- The servant leader is one who “builds up” others. The servant leader works to encourage and lift up others in every possible way. They celebrate the victories of others, no matter how small.
- Servant leaders are pro-active to move issues ahead, while maintaining meekness and a consideration of others.
- Servant leaders speak well of others at all times.
- The servant leader seeks to build a broad base of leaders to lead with him.
- Servant leaders recognize and use authority appropriately (positional, relational, experiential, personal, and spiritual).
- A servant leader does not draw his meaning, worth or reputation from the position he holds.
- A servant leader does not make decisions based on his progress, advancement, comfort, increase of authority or position at the expense of those he serves.
- A servant leader's commitment to his followers' progress, their ministries, and their increase is a key expression of his love.
- A servant leader develops other servant leaders, so as to provide a strong base of leadership for new, reproducing churches.

Question 5: Consider your leadership in comparison to the points above. Which of these points least describe you as a leader? In what ways are you an effective servant leader?

CONCLUSION

The attitude of the servant leader is that his job is to lead others to do what God wants from them. His job is not to ‘lord it over’ others, or manipulate people into doing what he thinks is best. Instead, he is to build up others in all areas of life and ministry. The success of a servant leader is measured by the accomplishments in the lives of those he leads.

A servant leader realizes that before God, he is on the same level as those he leads. His authority to lead is not really his but comes from God, so that he is not free to use this authority in any way he wishes. He must use this authority in the same way that Jesus did, as a servant to those he was leading.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Why is it difficult for a leader to be a servant leader?
2. What are some of the burdens that a church planter should be willing to bear for others?
3. Describe what a church planter would look like who was a servant leader.

4. God calls us not to lead others, but to inspire others to follow Christ. How does this truth change your understanding of leadership?
5. What changes in your own life and ministry do you need to make to be a better servant leader?

ASSIGNMENT: THE LEADER’S CHECKLIST

Use the scale below to evaluate your qualities as a church-planting leader. Circle the one number (from 1 - 5) that best represents how well each statement describes you. It may also be useful to allow someone you know and trust to evaluate you honestly, such as your spouse or a spiritual friend. Then compare the results to determine points of agreement and disagreement. From this you may want to make some changes in your ministry style in order to be more effective in church planting.

Circle one number for each question

		Poor			Excellent	
1.	I am always willing to take faith-motivated risks for God.	1	2	3	4	5
2.	I have the ability to communicate a God-given vision to others.	1	2	3	4	5
3.	I am committed to evangelism, church planting and the starting of cell groups.	1	2	3	4	5
4.	I like to take initiative.	1	2	3	4	5
5.	I am willing and able to work through interpersonal conflict.	1	2	3	4	5
6.	I am able to create ownership of ministry in others.	1	2	3	4	5
7.	I can utilize the spiritual gifts and abilities of others.	1	2	3	4	5
8.	I walk with Christ.	1	2	3	4	5
9.	I am a servant leader.	1	2	3	4	5
10.	I have the full cooperation and support of my family.	1	2	3	4	5
11.	I relate well to the unchurched and the unconverted.	1	2	3	4	5
12.	I approach challenges as "opportunities" rather than as "problems."	1	2	3	4	5
13.	I follow through on goals that I have set with others.	1	2	3	4	5
14.	I am resilient when faced with hard times.	1	2	3	4	5
15.	I know how to delegate to people.	1	2	3	4	5
16.	I train others to use their gifts more effectively.	1	2	3	4	5

Lesson 3: Spheres of Leadership

One of the most important guidelines is that new leaders must be trained in order for any ministry to grow and expand. This is especially true with the planting of churches. Without ongoing development of new leaders, the church planting process will stagnate and die.

Every church planter should be involved in the development of new leaders. But even then, there needs to be some kind of guidance concerning which leaders to train, and how much time to invest in each one. Jesus is the best example of how to maintain this balance.

I. THE EXAMPLE OF JESUS

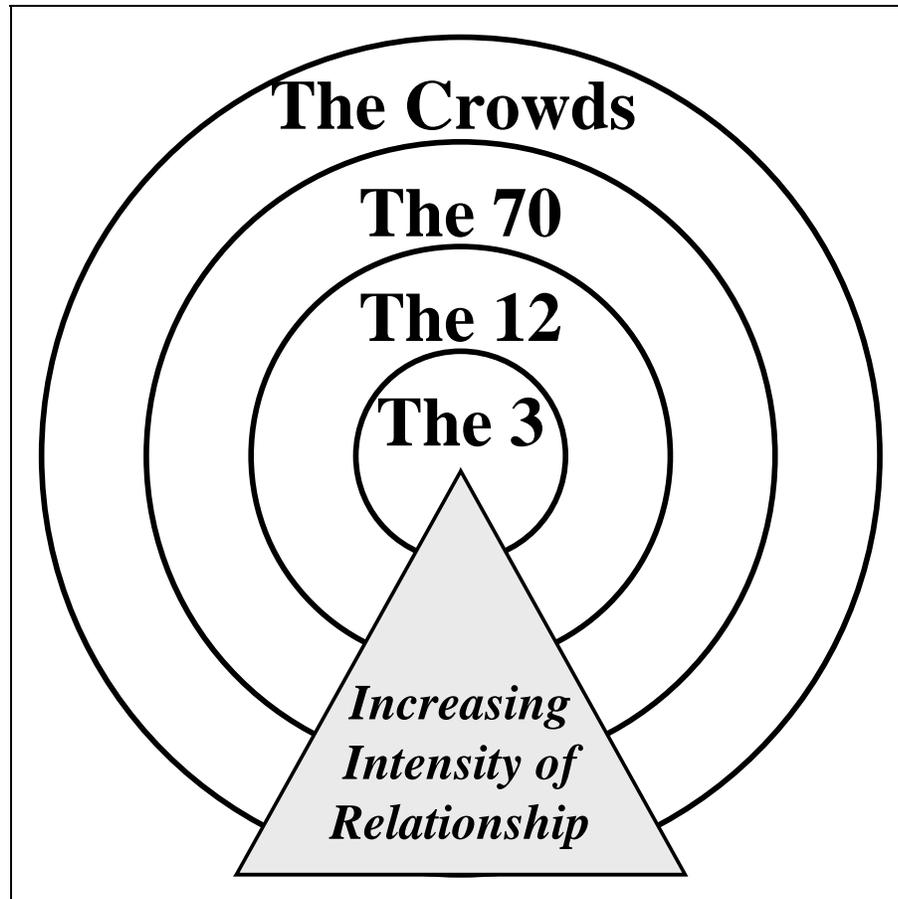
Jesus came to earth in order to pay for our sins, and to establish His Church. This Church would be His instrument to preach the Gospel to all nations. Considering the huge task that faced Jesus, it is truly amazing that He chose to spend His time as He did. He could have done incredible miracles every day, and spend all His time preaching to the multitudes who came to see them.

Indeed, Jesus did many miracles, but not daily, and not nearly as many as He could have done. Furthermore, He clearly chose to spend most of His time training twelve men rather than the multitudes. Instead of reaching as many people as possible, Jesus trained a handful of leaders who would reach others. The results were incredible. Although the powerful Roman Empire viciously persecuted the young, new Church, it survived and grew until Emperor Constantine himself became a Christian. Clearly Jesus' unusual method works.

A close look at the ministry of Jesus shows that He seems to have dealt with four distinct groups of people:

- *The Three* – Jesus repeatedly took Peter, James and John apart from the other disciples and showed them more about His nature and purpose. Examples include Mt 17:1, Mk 5:37, 13:3, and 14:33. As we look to the Book of Acts, we see that these three played a much more prominent role in the development of the Church than did the other disciples.
- *The Twelve* – The twelve apostles enjoyed a special relationship with Jesus. They were chosen for this honor from among the many disciples that followed him (Lk 6:13). Although the other disciples would play an important role in the new Church, the twelve (except for Judas) would provide the leadership. They were therefore a priority for Christ's time and effort.
- *The Disciples* – As we have seen above, there was a larger group of 'disciples' who were not chosen to be among the twelve. This group also left their homes and lifestyles in order to follow Him (Lk 14:27). The total number apparently changed often. On one occasion, many of them left Jesus (Jn 6:66). In Luke 10:1, the group was large enough for Jesus to select seventy-two of them for special ministry. After His resurrection, He appeared to more than 500 (1Co 15:6). And a core group of 120 devoted themselves to prayer as they waited for the promised Holy Spirit (Acts 1:15).
- *The Crowds* – Large numbers of people followed Jesus, listening to His teaching and waiting to see His miracles (Mt 4:25; 13:2). We know that they numbered up to 5000, counting only the men (Lk 9:14). Some of them believed, and some did not. The people included in them ranged from disciples to Pharisees who wanted to catch Jesus in some fault.

Spheres of Jesus' Leadership



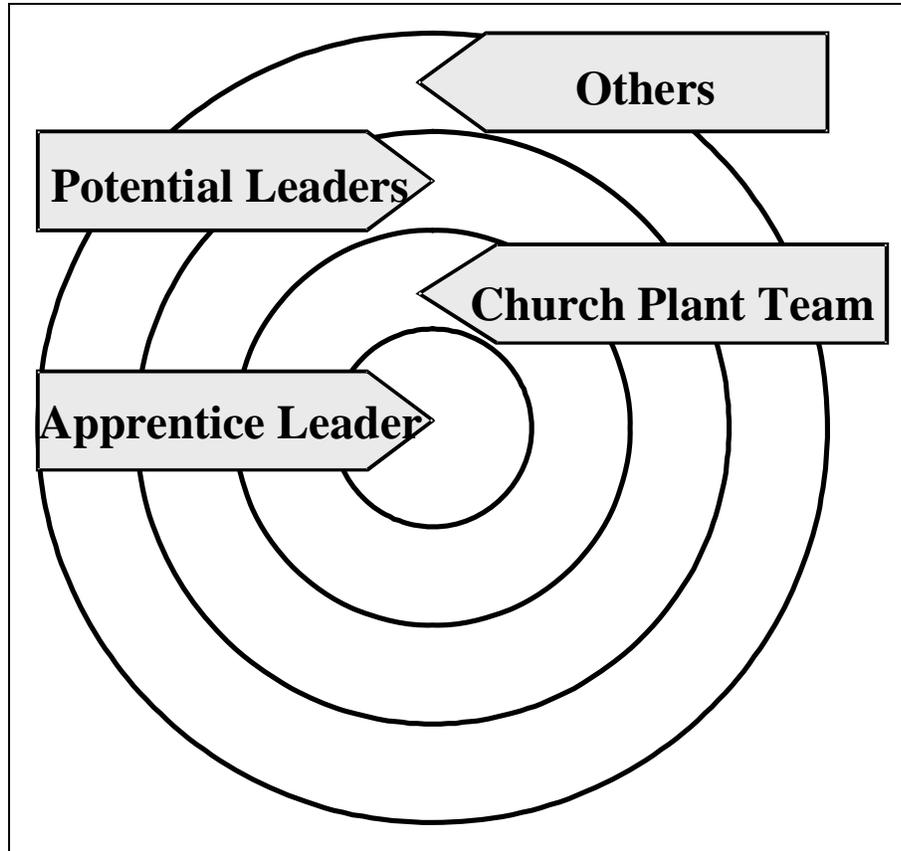
The figure above illustrates these various groups that followed Jesus as a series of spheres. The intensity of the relationship increases as we move from the crowds in the outer circle toward the inner circle composed of Peter, James and John.

As we look at Jesus' ministry, He seems to set a higher priority on the formation of the spheres nearer the center. As we move from the outer to the inner circle, He spent more time, revealed more truth, and expected more in return.

II. THE CHURCH PLANTING SPHERES OF LEADERSHIP

Church planters should also follow the example of Jesus by focusing their leadership training efforts on the appropriate people. If you were to draw out your relationships as spheres, it might look something like figure below. On the 'outside' would be the general group to whom you minister—including both believers and unbelievers. The next level in would include those believers who seem to have potential as future leaders. Further in would be the church planting team—those with whom you are working to plant the church and who are already involved in the ministry. The center would be the person (or perhaps 2-3 people) with whom you are working most intensely to prepare him or her for leadership.

Church Planters Spheres of Leadership



As you look at figure above, there are several key points that you should notice:

- The closer one is to the center, the more time and effort you should spend developing them for leadership.
- You should be working to some degree with *everyone* in your spheres, since you cannot be sure who will or will not become a good leader in the future.
- Ideally, those in the outer spheres will continually move to the inner ones as they grow and mature, and as the apprentice leaders are released for ministry.
- Because you spend most of your time with the inner spheres, the other people with whom you work need to be carrying on the ministry to the ‘outer’ spheres so that they are not neglected. You will be the ‘equipper’ and they will be the ‘ministers.’ This model is biblical (Eph 4:11-12).
- Apprentice leaders will most likely be members of the church planting team that makes up the next spheres. This is similar to Peter, James, and John who comprised the inner Three, but were members of the Twelve.

III. YOUR SPHERES OF LEADERSHIP

What about your situation? Who would fit into your spheres? Take a few minutes and fill in the following illustration “Your Spheres of Leadership” with the names of the individuals and groups to whom you minister that would best be described by each of the spheres of leadership.

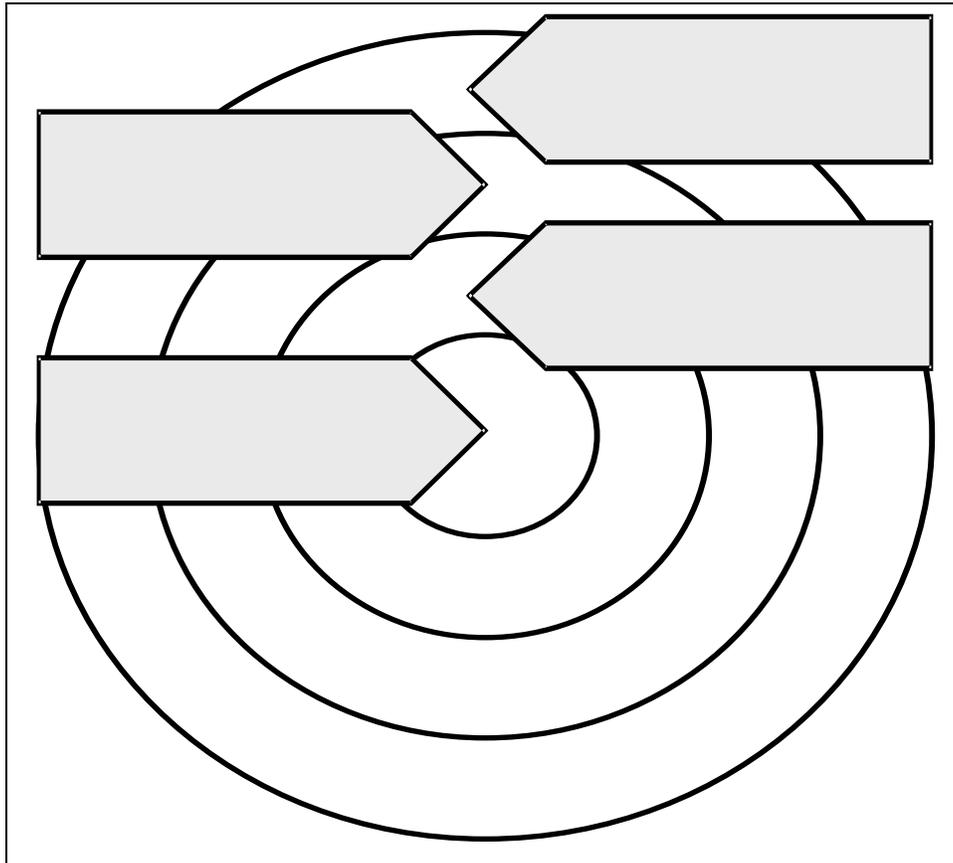
You may have a formal church planting team, and you may not. The ideal situation would be to begin a new church plant as a team, for the reasons already explained in this material. Unfortunately, the ideal is not always possible. If you already have a team, the spheres should be easy for you to fill in. If not, consider the following ideas and fill it in the best you can:

- If you don’t have a ‘formal’ church planting team, perhaps you have an ‘informal’ one. Is there a small group of committed individuals with whom you are working closely with the goal of planting the new

church? Consider them your team, even if it is not ‘official.’ But as you lead them using the principles in this material, you might want to discuss the possibility of forming a more organized team in the near future.

- Sometimes you have to begin a work alone in a new area with no known believers. If this is your situation, you can only fill in the outer circle, but you should start planning now how you will train new believers and move them up through the levels as soon as possible. Your situation is far from ideal, and it is doubtful that you will be very successful in planting the new church unless you can begin to find people for the inner spheres.

Your Spheres of Leadership



- If you have doubts about whether people should be in a ‘higher’ circle, write their name in with parenthesis around it. This will remind you to spend the necessary time to evaluate these people, and to develop learning activities to see if they are indeed faithful. If you find that they are not, you can then remove them from that circle.
- Don’t worry about having a lot of people in the inner spheres. Jesus was only able to intensely disciple three—Peter, James, and John. Don’t be concerned if you are not able to accomplish more than the Lord. Having only one apprentice is better than having none. And it is much better to have only one and train him or her well, than to train several poorly.
- If you just can’t think of anyone who might be in the inner spheres, you need to begin serious, specific, intense prayer that God would raise up leaders from within the new church plant.

Now that you have filled in your spheres, think about how you use your time and energy. If you have people at every level, you should be concentrating your time near the center. Are you? How much more time do you spend with those in the inner spheres than the outer ones? What kind of activities do you do with them? Are you consciously developing leadership and ministry skills in them?

Assuming that you are now spending enough time with the leaders and potential leaders, are the outside spheres being neglected? You will not have enough time and energy to minister to them alone and still develop leaders.

It is imperative that you learn to delegate ministry to those who work with you. You need to be an equipper and resource person for those who are doing that ministry. How are you doing in that?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How long will it take for a new believer to move through the spheres to the inner circle? That is about how long it will take to establish the church. Is this an acceptable time?
2. How high a priority is leadership training in the eyes of most pastors in your area? How will this help or hinder church growth and the planting of new churches?

ASSIGNMENT

Develop a plan to help those in each of your “spheres of leaders” grow as leaders. Then critically evaluate your plan to see if it is possible for you to implement it. Will you have enough time to spend with the ‘inner’ circle? How much? How often? Will someone minister to the ‘outer’ circle? Who? When? How? Make any needed adjustments to you plan, and then discuss it with your mentor. Then do it.

CROSS-CULTURAL MINISTRY

Lesson 4: Christianity and Culture

Greetings, rituals, schedules, eating habits, attitudes, relationships... all are expressions of culture. Everyone has a culture and no one can completely separate themselves from their culture. However, as missionaries, if we do not try to separate our faith from our culture, we end up making our culture the message instead of the gospel. Additionally, the gospel is transcultural, and culture must be considered in carrying the gospel to all peoples. In this lesson we begin to learn how to do these things.

I. WHAT IS CULTURE?

Culture can be understood as *“the integrated system of learned patterns of behavior, ideas and products characteristic of a society”* (Perspectives, p. 367). Simply stated, culture is the way people think, feel and act – a way of life. It includes the way people greet one another, the food they eat, the language they speak, the work they engage in, the games they play, etc. When people have these things in common they are said to share the same culture.

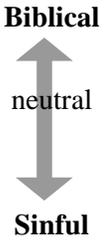
Everyone lives in and with Culture

In Eastern Europe men may greet one another with a kiss – this is culture. In most of Asia the same practice would be very strange – also culture. In parts of Asia, eye contact toward a superior is a sign of defiance – culture. In the West this is not so – also culture. Culture is a powerful force, always at work, explaining who we are and giving significance to events in life. Yet, rarely does a person think about their own culture. Like a fish that does not consider itself to be ‘wet’, we assume that our culture is just the way things should be.

We live in a world in which many people live or work cross-culturally and often notice cultural differences. In fact, cultures are not static and unable to change. Instead they are dynamic and overlapping – constantly responding and adjusting to the ongoing influence of other cultures. Hispanics living in London have a similar but different culture from Hispanics living in Latin America.

Culture and Morality

Are cultures good or bad? Are some of them good and ‘Christian’ and others bad and ‘sinful?’ This is a complicated question. The idea of culture is certainly biblical. All cultures are expressions of humanity, which was created by God. However, every culture also expresses the sinfulness of man. Therefore the various aspects, behaviors or beliefs of any culture will have sinfulness at some level. As the table below shows, some cultural practices are biblical (category 1) and a given culture may practice these things even without knowledge of the biblical teaching. Other practices may be harmless (category 2), or they may seem harmless (category 3) but have anti-biblical roots under the surface. Others are completely sinful (category 4). It may take great insight to discern the differences.

Category	Example	
1. Cultural practices that are commanded in the Bible	Honoring one’s elders	Biblical  neutral Sinful
2. Harmless cultural practices	Hair style, foods	
3. Cultural practices that seem harmless in and of themselves, but have sinful intent attached to them – these practices should be transformed	Dancing and singing in a certain way (for example to call on the spirits)	
4. Some practices are completely sinful and should be eliminated	Slavery, wife burning, sexual perversion, idolatry	

Question 1: As a church planter, how will you learn the practices (both good and bad) in your target culture?

II. WHAT IS CHRISTIANITY?

Christianity is not a culture

Can Christianity be thought of as one culture out of the many thousands of cultures in the world? Our answer is “no.” If Christianity were a culture, we would have to say that all Christians belong to the same culture – and this is simply not true. We learn from John’s vision of heaven that people from “every nation, tribe, people and language” will be represented (Rev 7:9). Christianity is much more than a culture. It is a relationship with Jesus Christ. This relationship is not based on or dependant upon a culture. It is beyond culture and yet it has its place in every culture.

Christianity does not change like cultures do. The Word of God contains absolute truth – truth that is true in all cultures and in all situations. It never changes. At its core, Christianity is all about Jesus, who never changes. He is the same yesterday, today and forever (Heb 13:8).

Christianity is expressed in culture

Although Christianity is a message from God that is meant to impact all cultures, spiritual truth must be expressed and applied in cultural ways. How can someone hear the gospel without language and symbols of their culture? As Christians, we are commanded to love our neighbor. However, we must do this in culturally meaningful ways.

Because we live out our faith in culture, nearly every Christian community is tempted to equate their culture with Christianity. This becomes clear when Christians from different cultures meet and share how they live out their faith. In one culture, people love their neighbor by taking the time asking about their relatives every time they spontaneously meet. In another culture, people express love by a simple warm “hello” – anything more would be rude. These differences are not bad – unless we insist that one way is the right way.

III. CULTURE IN THE BIBLE

God is aware of culture and is sensitive to it. The Bible is both divine and human, written by God and his selected people in a way that teaches absolute truth using a variety of cultural settings. God reveals his unchanging self to his created people in their own changing cultural contexts. We see tribal societies, nomadic settings, urban and rural cultures, Hebrew and Greek worldviews, etc. God walked with Adam and Eve in the Garden. He related to Abraham, Moses and David and other Old Testament saints according to their ancient, middle-eastern, Hebrew Culture. Jesus came and lived like a first century Palestinian Jew.

One of the clearest lessons about culture in the Bible comes from Acts 15. Here the early church had to deal with a difficult situation. The first wave of converts to Christianity was Jewish (religiously and culturally). In fact, Christianity initially seemed to be a sect of Judaism. But, due to the missionary activity of the first Christians after their scattering during the persecution in Jerusalem (Acts 7), many Gentiles (non-Jews) became followers of Jesus. These Gentiles did not share the Jewish traditions which the Jews had naturally carried into their newfound faith. The question which needed to be addressed was, ‘should the Gentiles be expected to keep the Jewish traditions in order to follow Jesus?’ Another way to put it was, ‘did one have to become Jewish (adopt a new culture) in order to become a Christian?’ By God’s guidance, they determined that new converts would not be expected to adopt the Jewish traditions. They could become Christians as Greeks, Latins, Egyptians, etc.

While the idea of ‘culture’ is affirmed in the Bible, God still has a message of radical transformation for all peoples. The process of putting this message into a form that people from another culture will understand is called contextualization. For example, in the Old and New Testaments we see God’s unchanging salvation message communicated to a variety of cultural settings. The Old Testament talks about shame and mercy, while in the New Testament we read about guilt and grace. These terms reflect the differences between the relational, Hebrew culture and the logical, Greek culture. Both the shame/mercy theme of the Old Testament and the guilt/grace emphasis of the New Testament teach us about the same unchanging good news of salvation.

The Bible is filled with specific examples of contextualization. David and the other Psalmists used poetic styles that were common to the people of the day. The Old Testaments prophets preached using metaphors and examples that were understandable the hearers. Peter’s sermon on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2), Stevens at his

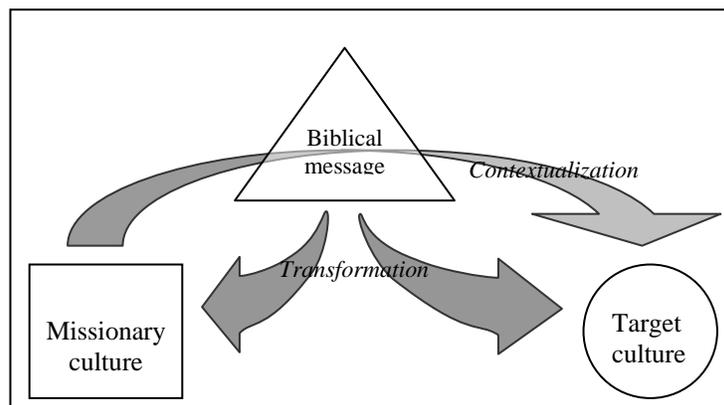
martyrdom (Acts 7) and Paul’s in Athens (Acts 17) are all attempts to explain who Jesus is in a way that reflected the unique culture of the audiences. Paul says that his intention is always to identify with the audience in order “to win as many as possible” (1Co 9:19-23).

Question 2: Read Acts 3:12-20. How did Peter use the culture of his audience to explain who Jesus was?

Question 3: Read Acts 17:22-31. How did Paul use the culture of his audience to explain who Jesus was?

IV. CHRISTIANITY MEETS CULTURE

The relationship between Christianity and culture is a dynamic one. Cross-cultural workers need to understand all the implications. The diagram that follows shows three spheres that influence cross-cultural ministry: the Biblical message (triangle), the missionary’s own culture (square) and the target culture that the missionary is trying to reach (circle). The job of the missionary is not to put his ‘square’ culture into the ‘circle’ target culture. Instead, his task is to contextualize, or communicate the Biblical message into cultural forms that will be meaningful to those in the target culture. At the same time God is using the biblical message to transform people of all cultures to be like himself.



Culture can Distort Christianity

Some people take culture too seriously, as if culture can determine what is true. When we give culture this much authority, Christianity ends up conforming to culture, biblical absolutes are compromised and the message is distorted. This is called syncretism.

Take, for example, a pagan group in Asia that believes there are many gods in the world. When they first hear the gospel, they are very interested since the gospel is about Jesus – a new god! A syncretistic response would be for them to add a new idol to their idol shelves – one of Jesus whom they consider to be just one more of the many gods. The truth is that they have not accepted Jesus at all, because to do so they would have to forsake all their other gods. In effect they have only added a new idol which they call ‘Jesus’. Syncretism is a distortion of the true Christian message.

It is a mistake to think that other cultures are the only ones that fall into this error. Consider the fact that in many ways your own understanding of Christianity has been shaped by your culture! We must all continually evaluate our cultural practices in light of the Scriptures.

Christianity Should be Culturally Relevant

Some cross-cultural workers do not take culture seriously enough. They assume that their cultural way of relating to God and their church life is a meaningful way for those in the target culture. But the unchanging truth of Christianity must be expressed in words and forms that are meaningful to the target culture. As we have already said, this is called contextualization.

An example of making Christianity relevant might look like this. Music that sounds joyful in one culture might sound strange in another culture. A missionary to Africa had never experienced worship music using drums. But drums were a very important part of expression in the culture he was serving. Worship music from the missionary culture (without drums) would not be contextualized. Meaningful worship in the target culture would use require new kinds of music using drums and other instruments. This is making Christianity culturally-relevant.

Christianity Should Transform Culture

All cultures need to be transformed by the message of the gospel. By ‘transform’ we are not saying that we change people from one culture to another. This error is common in the history of missions. Many missionaries, recognizing the sins of their target culture but being blind to the sins of their own, taught converts to adopt the missionary’s culture. The truth is that the gospel is designed to transform both cultures.

An example of Christianity transforming culture is seen when pagan tribal members come together and ceremonially burn their idols to acknowledge the One True God. It happens when materialistic North American businessmen sell all they have and give to the poor for the sake of Christ. It is seen when Latin American plantation owners stop exploiting the workers and pay them a fair wage. It happens when South East Asian sex industry leaders come to Christ and stop spreading immorality. These things happen as we, His people, *“demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and [we] take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ”* (2Co 10:5).

CONCLUSION

God loves the nations! Because of his love, we are commanded to take the gospel to every nation (ethne) and every culture! As we have seen in this lesson, this is an amazing and complicated endeavor – far beyond our abilities. But in the same passage where Jesus commands us to take the gospel to all the nations, he reminds us of his absolute power and promises to be with us as we go! We know that He will succeed, for in heaven we will enjoy fellowship with people from every tribe and tongue (Rev 7:9).

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What is culture?
2. Is Christianity a culture? Why or why not?
3. What does contextualization mean?
4. Why is culture important for the missionary?
5. What is the danger of placing too much importance on culture?
6. In what ways has your understanding of Christianity been conditioned by your culture?

ASSIGNMENT

Think about your culture, or one that you are ministering in. Make a list of aspects of your culture that fit each of the four categories of the following table. If you cannot find a cultural trait for one of the categories, find someone to help you do so. Share your results with your mentor.

Category	Example	Biblical  neutral Sinful
1. Cultural practices that are commanded in the Bible		
2. Harmless cultural practices		
3. Cultural practices that seem harmless in and of themselves, but have sinful intent attached to them – these practices should be transformed		
4. Some practices are completely sinful and should be eliminated		

DISCIPLE MAKING

Lesson 5: Discipleship – Multiplying the Process

Discipleship is the heart and soul of church planting. It is impossible to plant churches without making disciples. In fact, the reason we plant churches is to make disciples in obedience to the Great Commission of Jesus.

Perhaps you are a leader in a church plant, and knowing how important discipleship is, you are already discipling others. In this lesson we are going to talk about the importance of equipping others to be disciple makers along with you.

I. MINISTERING TO GOD'S PEOPLE

In your cell group(s) you have a wide variety of people. They all need different kinds of ministry and there are many ways to view their needs. In this section we are going to look at the people in your church to understand how they fit into the discipleship process.

Seekers

We expect that there are people in your cell group(s) who are not yet believers. They are there because a believer has invited them, or because they are curious about spiritual things. For this reason, we call them “seekers”. Hopefully there are many seekers in your group(s) because they feel drawn to the love that is shown by the believers in the group and they feel free to honestly explore the claims of Christ among believers. Seekers need to be evangelized; they need to become disciples. They are not disciples, but rather are potential disciples.

Disciples

By this term we are referring all people who have turned to Christ and are becoming like Christ. Disciples first of all need to be rooted in their faith. As Col 2:6-7 says “... *just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live in him, rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught and overflowing with thankfulness.*”

Question 1: How long does it take a new disciple to become a discipler of others?

Disciplers

Disciples are mature when they are able to reproduce themselves in the lives of others. We hope that all disciples become disciple makers rather quickly. As we will see, they don't need to be believers for many years before they can share their new-found faith with non-believers, or pass on what they are learning to new believers.

Disciplers need to be mobilized in ministry in and through the Body (Eph 4:11-12). In many churches too many Christians are not sufficiently grounded in their faith or are not mobilized to have a ministry to others. These believers are content to take in, to be ministered to, but do not have either the vision or the skills to lead another in growing spiritually. This reality is a great hindrance to people hearing the gospel. However, when the majority of average people in a church are discipled and are discipling others – watch out! The church is mobilized to grow.

The Leader

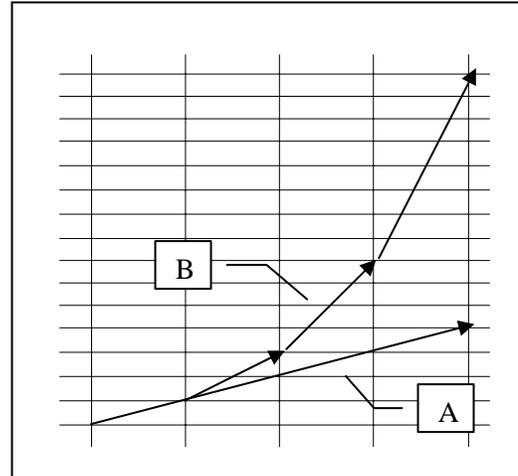
As we are learning in this book there are many kinds of leaders. There should be several leaders in any cell group and any local church. In this context, leaders are the ones who are called to mobilize other disciplers and

to reproduce this ministry in others. We often think of a leader as the one who does the ministry. However, as we have been learning in the leadership lessons, leaders should be those who inspire ministry and service from others. The success of SCP ministry is less dependent on the ministry skills of the leader (preaching, counseling, organizing), than it is on the ability of a group of lay people who have been equipped to witness to and disciple their neighbors, co-workers, relatives, and friends.

Question 2: Consider each person in your cell group/church. Describe the seekers, disciples, disciplers, and leaders.

II. ADDITION VS. MULTIPLICATION

The common form of expansion is “addition.” As illustrated on the graph to the right, with addition (line A), “one” becomes “two” which becomes “three,” etc. Most people may think of growth this way. But “multiplication” is a much more powerful mode of expansion. With multiplication (line B) “one” becomes “two” and “two” becomes “four” which becomes “eight,” etc. With multiplication, it does not matter how large the group is at the beginning. If the vision and ability to reproduce is implanted in successive generations, the impact of this kind of expansion can be unbelievable.



The growth of the church in the book of Acts is astounding.

When Jesus ascended into glory, a few hundred faithful disciples were left to spread the good news. Yet miraculously, within a few decades, the gospel spread and hundreds of churches were established all over the Roman Empire. The Word of the Lord grew “mightily” (Acts 19:20). This growth was not superficial – it took root, impacting Roman society as it continued to grow for centuries. Even the enemies of the church admitted that believers had “turned the world upside down” (Acts 17:6).

Such growth cannot be sustained by addition alone. For the Great Commission to be fulfilled, multiplication should be a normal part of church ministry at every level. A good Bible teacher should not seek to produce only good students of the Bible, but more effective Bible teachers. The mark of a good leader is not only followers, but also new leaders. The ministry of an evangelist does not result in only new converts, but in new evangelists. In the same way, a disciple of Jesus should be a zealous disciple maker – establishing not only converts – but new disciples who establish other disciple makers.

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

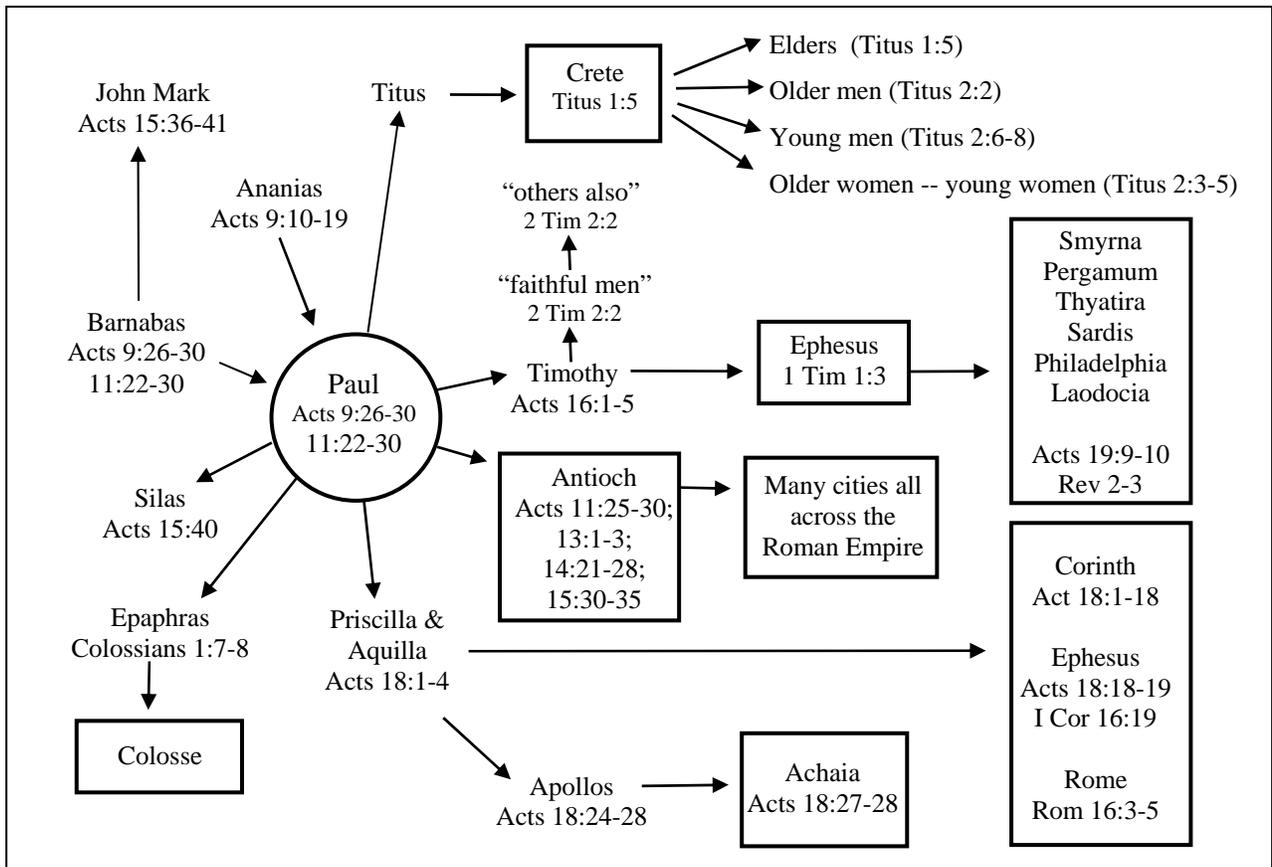
These leaders need to realize that there is a limit to growth. In nature, all living things grow to maturity, plateau (stop growing physically), and eventually die, while their fruit or offspring live on in the same cycle. The principles are similar in discipleship. Christianity lives on through its fruit. The true ‘fruit’ of a mature Christian is not a new convert, but another mature Christian who can impact others. This is what we call multiplication.

Question 3: How can church buildings hinder the process of church multiplication? How can church buildings be used in a more strategic way to help multiplication happen instead of addition?

III. DISCIPLESHIP CHAINS (FROM CURTIS SERGEANT)

Biblical Examples

One way to help each believer to grow is to utilize one-on-one discipleship forms (see Book Three Lesson 9). When this is done in such a way that disciple makers make other disciple makers in a multiplication fashion, the result is called a “discipleship chain”. The following diagram shows some of the various discipleship chains found in the New Testament that centered on Paul the Apostle.



The diagram is not exhaustive. Others like Aristarchus (Col 4:10), Andronicus and Junia (Rom 16:7), Philemon (Phil 1), Epaphroditus (Php 2:25), Clement (Php 4:3), Urbanus (Rom 16:9), and still others are described by Paul as co-workers. It is safe to assume and in some cases it is evident that the gospel was spreading by means of discipleship chains of these and other believers. In fact, when Paul declared that “all over the world the gospel is producing fruit and growing” (Col 1:6), he immediately credits Epaphras with bringing the gospel to the Colossians (Col. 1:7-8). This is just one example of many discipleship chains.

Starting Discipleship Chains

The pattern for a discipleship chain is that a more mature believer discipled two others from within the congregation, each of whom discipled two others, who then discipled two others. Each discipling relationship involves mutual accountability (1) to put into practice scriptural truth that is learned and (2) to teach someone else what one has learned. This twofold accountability is extremely important.

In order for this process to work, a person needs to be only one step ahead of the person whom he or she is discipling. For instance, a believer who has been in the Lord ten weeks can disciple others who have been believers for only eight weeks, who could in turn disciple others who have been disciples six weeks, etc. This pattern has many advantages over common discipleship models in which one person is required to be highly mature and experienced in order to disciple others. When the discipler is an “expert”, new believers become accustomed to constantly being on the receiving end of teaching. Only a rare few will ever consider themselves

to be potential leaders because the few leaders who do exist are extremely experienced and mature. In a bad sense, these experts become the only ones who can ever disciple others.

A discipleship chain, however, not only allows but requires the development in maturity of other believers. In a discipleship chain every believer is required to become a discipler. Even those believers at the end of the chain are expected to teach what they've learned to an unbeliever, whether it be a child, a family member, or a friend. The command to make disciples was given to every believer; so we need to equip and expect every member to do so.

The discipleship chain pattern is not limited in its growth potential like the traditional model, since it develops more mature believers in a shorter period of time than one-on-many forms.

One important thing to remember, however, is that the leader or head of the chain needs to have continuing input and equipping from some source. This can partially be provided by a mutual accountability in discipling between or among the heads of other discipleship chains. It can also be provided within a network of groups by regular leaders meetings where more advanced biblical training and equipping is provided by an outside source. Failure to provide for this ongoing equipping and accountability has resulted in the death of many good churches around the world.

As a rule, a discipleship chain will extend only as far as the local house church or cell, so will not exceed four or five generations. When a church grows to the point of multiplication, the existing chain dissolves and re-forms in the new church. This provides an opportunity for those who are growing quickly or are able teachers to “move up” in the chain. This results in church multiplication.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What is the role of a leader in the discipleship program of a church?
2. What are some of the keys to a successful “discipleship chain?”
3. Is it realistic to expect that everyone in your church or cell group could be a discipler of someone else? What would you need to do in order to make this begin to happen?

SPIRITUAL CHARACTER

Lesson 6: Growing in the Gospel

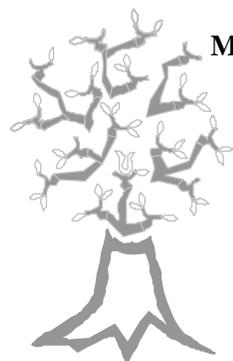
How are we changed? How can we walk in intimate fellowship with our heavenly Father? We know that God loves us, that we are His adopted children and that He promises to care for us. We have talked about many ideas that help us grow in Christ (our adoption, true repentance, the cross chart, etc). However, we can still often find ourselves living like spiritual orphans on our own, as if Jesus had not risen from the dead and given us his Holy Spirit. How can we live, on a daily basis, in a way that is consistent with the gospel?

I. THE WAR WITHIN

We have seen that God desires to have a closer, more intimate relationship with us than we can even imagine. We have also seen that Satan, the world, and even our own flesh are working to destroy the relationship that God wants to have with us. The battle is best described as one between the flesh and the Spirit as the following table describes:

Life in the Flesh

Life in the Spirit



Ministry with wrong motivation

Unbelief or self-effort

Self-pity and pride

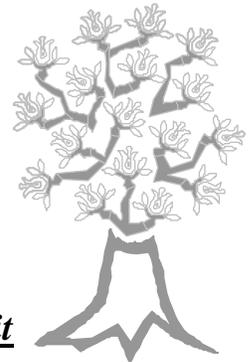
*The sin nature -
controlled by the flesh*

Obedient ministry

Faith and love

Repentance and humility

*The new nature -
controlled by the Holy Spirit*



These two natures exist simultaneously in the life of every believer. Being completely different in orientation, they are constantly at war with one another (Gal 5:17). We need to die to life in the flesh and yield to life in the Spirit. But how do we do this?

Question 1: How is this war won? Is personal will power enough to conquer the flesh and live by the Spirit?

Question 2: How do the following passages give us insight into the battle?

John 6:28-29:

Gal 2:20:

Titus 2:11-12:

II. REPENTANCE AND HUMILITY

A life that is changed by the gospel is characterized by repentance and humility. What breaks the power of sin is daily, specific repentance of our sin and believing that the finished work of Christ is all we need to know the love and forgiveness of our heavenly Father. The power of sin is broken because there is power in the gospel. Since sin is rooted in pride, when we humble ourselves we are cutting out the heart-motive for sin. If we do not have this faith and repentance, our efforts are fruitless and we find ourselves losing the war within.

Read the following passages and note next to each what humility leads to:

<i>2 Sam. 22:28:</i>	
<i>Ps 147:6:</i>	
<i>Prov 3:34:</i>	
<i>Is 57:15:</i>	
<i>Mat. 18:4:</i>	
<i>James 4:6:</i>	
<i>James 4:10:</i>	
<i>1Pet. 5:5-6:</i>	

Growing in humility

To come to Christ humbly is to come empty handed with no righteousness to offer him, and no base from which we can defend ourselves. When I see that it is all Jesus' righteousness and not my own, and all his power and not my own, then I am not only humble, but I am also believing the gospel. This breaks the power of sin and leads to God's overwhelming blessings.

Question 3: How does a person become humble?

Question 4: Why is humility such an important part of growing as a Christian?

Read the following passages and note next to each what repentance leads to:

<i>Is 30:15:</i>	
<i>Prov 28:13:</i>	
<i>Is 59:20:</i>	
<i>Jer. 15:19:</i>	
<i>Ezek. 18:32:</i>	
<i>Mat. 3:8:</i>	
<i>Lk 17:3:</i>	
<i>Acts 2:38:</i>	
<i>Acts 3:19:</i>	
<i>Acts 11:18:</i>	
<i>2Cor 7:10:</i>	

2Tim 2:25-26:	
1John 1:9:	
Rev. 2:5:	

Practicing repentance

Repentance is difficult. Like humility, repentance is not something you can just decide to do and then do it. It is not something that is done once and for all. It is not something that we can even "do" well. Thinking otherwise reveals a misunderstanding about the very nature of repentance. Note Spurgeon's comments:

From All of Grace by C. H. Spurgeon

I hear another man cry, "Oh, sir, my lack of strength lies mainly in that I cannot repent sufficiently!" What a curious idea men have of what repentance is! Many believe that so many tears are to be shed and so many groans are to be heaved and so much despair is to be endured. Where do they get this unreasonable notion? Unbelief and despair are sins. Therefore I do not see how they can be constituent elements of acceptable repentance. Yet, there are many who regard them as necessary parts of true Christian experience. They are in great error...

Remember that the man who truly repents is never satisfied with his own repentance. We can no more repent perfectly than we can live perfectly. However pure our tears, there will always be some dirt in them; there will be something to be repented of even in our best repentance! But listen – to repent is to change your mind about sin, about Christ and all of the great things of God. There is sorrow implied in this, but the main point is the turning of the heart from sin to Christ. If there is this turning, you have the essence of true repentance even though no alarm or despair should have cast their shadows on your mind.

If you find it difficult to repent, it will greatly help you to firmly believe that "*in due time Christ died for the ungodly.*" Think of this again and again. How can you continue to be hardhearted when you know that out of supreme love Christ died for the ungodly? Let me persuade you to reason with yourself like this. Ungodly as I am, though this heart of steel will not relent, though I hit my breast in vain, yet He died for such as I am, because he died for the ungodly. O that I may believe this and feel the power of it in my unmerciful heart!...

Repentance will not make you see Christ, but to see Christ will give you repentance. You may not make a Christ out of your repentance, but you must look from repentance to Christ. The Holy Spirit, by turning us to Christ, turns us from sin. Look away, then, from the effect to the cause, from your own repenting to the Lord Jesus, who is exalted on high to give repentance...

Question 5: Why can't we repent perfectly?

Question 6: What should you do when it seems difficult to repent?

Question 7: What do you think Spurgeon meant when he said "to see Christ will give you repentance"?

III. PREACHING THE GOSPEL TO YOURSELF

To live according to the gospel is to live out of the fact that Christ's righteousness is ours because Christ's sacrificial death made our adoption as God's child possible. Christ died for me, in my place. He now lives in me and through me, enabling me to live life intimately dependent on God my heavenly Father.

In spite of this great truth our tendency to live by ourselves, independent of God, is strong and deceptive. To

fight this tendency, **we need to preach the gospel to ourselves every day.**

Question 8: Read the following scriptures. How can you preach the gospel to yourself by these passages?

<i>Ps 103:12:</i>	
<i>Is 43:25:</i>	
<i>Is 53:6:</i>	
<i>Micah 7:19:</i>	
<i>Gal 3:13:</i>	
<i>Col 1:22:</i>	
<i>Col 2:13:</i>	

Meditating on the following truths may help you to preach the gospel to yourself.

1. My huge debt is canceled and I am released from God's vengeance.
2. My sins are forgiven, covered, and forgotten.
3. Jesus has borne the anger and justice of God on my behalf, and continually intercedes for me.
4. The righteousness of Jesus' perfect obedience is credited to me.
5. I am not a slave or an orphan who is alone and powerless.
6. I am now an heir, and a co-heir with Christ.
7. I have a compassionate high priest who understands my trials and temptations, and who is interceding for me.
8. The Spirit of sonship lives within me, reminding me of my identity, guiding me to be like my Father, coming alongside me as my helper, and crying out on my behalf.
9. There is no condemnation against me and no one can accuse me.
10. No one (and nothing) can separate me from my Father's love.
11. My Father has seen and paid for every dark part of my heart already.
12. My Father has a glorious vision for me. I need not fear anything He wants to create in me.
13. I have not been given a spirit of fear or timidity. My Father fights for me, and has placed His courageous heart within me.
14. I have access to the throne of grace, and may boldly approach my Father with my struggles.
15. My heart has been sprinkled to cleanse me from a guilty conscience. I am set free from the bondage of guilt.
16. I have been set free from the law but can obey it as an expression of my Father's heart, in whom I delight.
17. Jesus is my holiness and sanctification. He is the Author and the Completer of what He has begun in me.
18. I have been set free from bondage to Satan and no longer must obey him. My Father is victorious over Him. I need not fear.
19. I have been set free from bondage to sin. My Father empowers me to follow His will.
20. One day I will be made a perfect lover like my Father, and will fellowship with Him forever. He wants me to taste and enjoy more and more of that reality in this life.

Question 9: Which of the previous statements is most difficult for you to accept?

IV. EXAMPLES OF PREACHING THE GOSPEL TO YOURSELF

Quang preaches and applies the Gospel to himself

Quang struggles with self-pity. He lacks confidence and often feels discouraged. The self-pity he experiences is actually a form of pride. For Quang, what others think of him has become more important than what God thinks. He is also learning that God's love for him is greater than he can ever imagine. In spite of this love, Quang has been seeking other loves and serving his reputation rather than serving God.

Quang learns to repent of this regularly. Specifically, he repents of putting others ahead of God. Quang reminds himself everyday that although he is more sinful than he could ever imagine, he is also loved by his Heavenly Father more than he can hope. He reminds himself that the punishment that he deserves was put on Christ his savior. No higher price will ever or could ever, be paid for Quang's sins. Quang reviews God's promises daily.

For Quang, reminding himself of the gospel every day takes the pressure off himself and puts the focus on God. The sins that seemed so attractive are much less so compared to the love and acceptance His heavenly father freely gives through the gospel. Quang now has a new sense of hope making him bolder and more honest with God and others.

David preaches and applies the Gospel to himself

David is prone to self-righteousness and pride. His self-righteousness is offensive to God and others. He has been enslaved by his own laws and standards. These standards make his heart cold and critical toward others - he only loves those who "measure up" to his standards. This is not really love at all.

He finds that he needs to repent of his judgementalism daily. Every day he reminds himself that his laws and standards add nothing to what Christ has done for him. Each day he remembers that he is far more sinful than he can ever imagine, but he is also far more loved than he could ever earn because of what Christ did for him.

For David, repentance means he no longer expects perfection from himself or from others. Instead, he is learning that it is alright to make mistakes, because his mistakes are covered by the work of Christ. When David finds himself feeling critical toward others, he looks deep in himself to discover what law his heart is holding onto that keeps him from loving as Christ does. To their joy and surprise, others notice that David gives advice less often and that he more interested in their thoughts and opinions.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Why should believers practice repentance as a lifestyle?
2. How can preaching the gospel to yourself every day lead to a new intimacy with God?
3. In what area of your life do you most need to "preach the gospel" to yourself right now?
4. Write a paragraph that preaches the gospel to yourself right now.

MONTH 9

Review of Month 8

ASSIGNMENTS FROM MONTH EIGHT

In the last month of training the main emphasis was on leadership. You were asked to do the following:

From Lesson 1, “Introducing SCP Leadership”

Great movements of God resulted from Paul’s ministry in Thessalonica (1 Thessalonians 1:8-9) and later from Ephesus (Acts 19:9-10). Providentially for us, Paul describes his leadership approach in each of these cases. After reviewing Acts 20:18-34 and 1 Thessalonians 2:1-12 very carefully, describe Paul’s leadership in those situations. How would you evaluate your own leadership in the light of these passages?

From Lesson 2, “Servant Leadership”

Assignment: The Leader’s Checklist

Use the scale below to evaluate your qualities as a church-planting leader. Circle the one number (from 1 - 5) that best represents how well each statement describes you. It may also be useful to allow someone you know and trust to evaluate you honestly, such as your spouse or a spiritual friend. Then compare the results to determine points of agreement and disagreement. From this you may want to make some changes in your ministry style in order to be more effective in church planting.

Circle one number for each question

		Poor			Excellent	
1.	I am always willing to take faith-motivated risks for God.	1	2	3	4	5
2.	I have the ability to communicate a God-given vision to others.	1	2	3	4	5
3.	I am committed to evangelism, church planting and the starting of cell groups.	1	2	3	4	5
4.	I like to take initiative.	1	2	3	4	5
5.	I am willing and able to work through interpersonal conflict.	1	2	3	4	5
6.	I am able to create ownership of ministry in others.	1	2	3	4	5
7.	I can utilize the spiritual gifts and abilities of others.	1	2	3	4	5
8.	I walk with Christ.	1	2	3	4	5
9.	I am a servant leader.	1	2	3	4	5
10.	I have the full cooperation and support of my family.	1	2	3	4	5

- | | | | | | | |
|-----|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 11. | I relate well to the un-churched and the unconverted. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 12. | I approach challenges as "opportunities" rather than as "problems." | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 13. | I follow through on goals that I have set with others. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 14. | I am resilient when faced with hard times. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 15. | I know how to delegate to people. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 16. | I train others to use their gifts more effectively. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

LEADERSHIP

Lesson 7: Mobilizing Leaders

Leadership development is one of the most important aspects of church planting and church growth. Without leadership development, church members remain forever dependent on the church planter and his or her team. In growing churches and among church planting movements there is normally a program, formal or informal, in which leaders are trained to assume responsibility.

So, what kinds of leaders are needed? Who should be a candidate for leadership training? Where should church leaders be trained? How should they be trained? Who should train them? What roles should they assume in church life?

When these types of church leadership questions are discussed, there are two common false assumptions. The first assumption is that the leaders can only be trained in special programs (at a Bible Institute or Seminary) and then be sent out to work in local churches. The second assumption is that leadership means “pastors.” These assumptions limit the number of people who are available to fill leadership needs. This lesson will attempt to provide a better understanding of the real needs for leadership in the Church.

I. KINDS OF LEADERS NEEDED IN THE CHURCH

As we will see shortly, there are many kinds of church leaders. But, the following phrases should describe Christian leaders in any situation.

A Christian leader:

- is building an intimate relationship with God.
- demonstrates the fruits of the Spirit.
- uses his/her spiritual gifts in ministry.
- has a growing love for God and others.
- demonstrates moral integrity.
- is committed to the authority of the local church.
- shows love and concern for those in his/her fellowship.
- relates well to other bodies of believers.
- applies biblical principles to relationships.
- manages interpersonal conflict well.
- listens to others and responds appropriately.
- is convinced that the Bible is the word of God.
- has a working knowledge of the Old and New Testament.
- studies and applies the Bible.

When we talk about church leaders, many think only about pastors as the sum total of church leadership. But this thinking ignores the fact that many other kinds of leaders are needed in the Church if we are to fulfill the Great Commission. Furthermore, it is not the Lord’s will that pastors alone carry on the ministry of the Church. There are many kinds of church leaders. Understanding the various kinds of leaders will clarify the various kinds of training programs which are needed to prepare them for service.

1. Cell Group Leaders – *The Practitioners*

Cell group leaders are critical to the life of a healthy church. These leaders have the most direct contact with the lost, and with both new and mature believers. They are in many ways on the “front line.” The “higher” levels of leadership really exist to help train, mobilize, and envision cell group leaders to carry on the majority of the church planting work. While such a leader should be a growing Christian, there does not seem to be the same strict guidelines for this level of leaders as there is for elders. This is a good place to use less mature believers in ministry. It will be a stretching experience for them, and as they mature and succeed, they can be given additional responsibility. Much of the actual ministry of the early church happened in small groups with this kind of leadership (Acts 2:46-47).

Cell group leaders should also display the following abilities and character traits:

- Demonstrates a passion for lost souls.
- Practices personal evangelism.
- Relates well to the lost.
- Can present the Gospel clearly.
- Can give a clear personal testimony.
- Has been discipled.
- Shows sensitivity to newly converted believers.
- Shows love for his/her disciples.
- Forms disciples, who in turn disciple others.
- Can lead a group inductive Bible discussion.
- Understands the need for cell groups as a foundation for healthy growth.
- Is able to effectively lead a cell group meeting.

2. Local Church Leaders – *Pastors and Equippers*

Local church leaders have responsibility to equip the entire local congregation for ministry, and to guide them in that task. Local church leaders may oversee several cell groups (each of which functions like a church body) and may lead these cells when they gather for cooperative worship.

Local church leaders and pastors were never intended to do the work of the ministry by themselves. Rather, they are like the “apostles”, “prophets”, “evangelists”, “pastors and teachers”, who are called “to prepare God’s people for works of service” (Eph. 4:11-12) Those in this category might be called brothers, elders, deacons, pastors, or something else, depending on the particular church association to which they belong. There might be only one, or many, depending on the size of the congregation. They have a great responsibility before the Lord, and should be chosen carefully. Only those of proven character and godly lives should be considered for this level of leadership.

Local church leaders are to be characterized by the following traits:

- Is a model disciple worth imitating.
- Understands that the Church is God’s vehicle for world evangelization.
- Knows the biblical basis for church planting and missions.
- Is able to use various methods and techniques of evangelism.
- Is able to conduct basic research in preparation for church growth and church planting.
- Is able to lead public worship.
- Teaches the Bible effectively in a group or in a one-on-one setting.
- Identifies and develops potential leaders of cell groups.
- Can organize believers into a self-governing, self-nurturing, and mission-oriented congregation.

- Understands how to put biblical functions into culturally relevant forms.
- Builds and works well with a team.
- Knows how to delegate responsibility.
- Sets goals, makes plans and establishes objectives to attain them.
- Develops the giftedness and abilities of others.
- Takes initiative; is pro-active.

3. Regional Church Leaders – *The Movement Mobilizers*

By the time a person has risen to this level of leadership, they should be spending most of their time motivating others to do the work of the ministry. In this way, they can multiply their efforts and make the maximum impact with their experience. They exercise influence over multiple churches, denominations, church planting movements, or a network of churches in a region. Those in this level of leadership might be called overseers, bishops, presbyters, or many other titles. The name is much less important than the role they fulfill. People at this level are perhaps more vulnerable to the sin of pride, and therefore must be chosen carefully.

Regional and national leaders lead denominations and train church planters and pastors. These leaders should reach an even higher standard of character and abilities:

- Is able to preach and teach.
- Will be able to provide spiritual guidance and counsel to a wide variety of situations.
- Has advanced understanding of the Bible and of Theology.
- Can train church workers for evangelism, discipleship, cell group leadership, stewardship, and worship, as well as other areas of ministry as needed.
- Builds and uses cell groups to saturate a community and mobilize the body of Christ.
- Shows a growth mentality.
- Demonstrates seeker sensitivity, assimilates newcomers.
- Is able to administer baptism and the Lord's supper.
- Communicates vision which inspires others.
- Can lead others into discovering their gift(s) and applying it in ministry.

Question 1: Do these three levels of church leadership (cell group, local church, regional church) exist in your context? What are the main differences between them in terms of qualifications and ministry responsibilities?

II. HOW MANY LEADERS DOES THE CHURCH NEED?

The answer to the question “How many leaders do we need?” is “as many as we can possibly train!” When we consider all the levels of leadership, we see that the need is massive, and it only increases as people are won to the Lord, small groups are formed, and new local churches are established.

A. The ‘Sand Table’

Ministry will rise or fall on its leadership. This means that before a church can add new members, it must expand its leadership base. This is analogous to piling sand on a table. You can pile only so much sand on the table before it is covered. When there is no more space on the table, the sand assumes the shape of a pyramid with all the extra sand running off the table. If you want to add more sand and build a bigger pyramid, you must expand the base of the table.

The point of the pyramid principle is simple. If you want to grow, you must start by expanding the base – training new leaders. Potential leaders can be found right in your cell groups and churches. They simply need to be identified and trained. If you train new leaders, your church will be able to grow in health and numbers. If your church is not growing then it is very likely that it does not have enough leaders at a certain level. For instance, does your church have enough small group leaders? If not, perhaps you need to concentrate on leadership development so that your church can be more effective at reaching others for Christ.

B. The ‘Jethro Principle’

Secular leadership experts have said that for effective group action, whether in the military, business world, or in the social realm, 10-15% of the group must be in leadership positions. This percentage ensures that the group has proper communication, supervision and interaction so that they can accomplish something. In other words, there should be one leader for every seven to ten people being supervised.

It is not surprising that God provided us with a biblical example of leadership ratios thousands of years before these secular experts made their discoveries. In Exodus 18, Moses was exhausted from leading the people of Israel. His father-in-law Jethro saw this, and suggested a better way to lead the people. This example, which we will call the ‘Jethro Principle,’ is still valid today. He advised Moses to appoint leaders of thousands, hundreds, fifties, and tens. How many leaders is this? Let’s add up the leaders for a group of 1000 people:

For Each 1000 People	Leaders over:	Number Needed
1000 ÷	1000 =	1
1000 ÷	100 =	10
1000 ÷	50 =	20
1000 ÷	10 =	100
Total Leaders Needed Per 1000		131

You can see that according to the ‘Jethro Principle’ there should be 131 leaders for every 1000 people being lead. If we state this as a percent, 131 out of 1000 is 13.1%. That number matches the secular 10-15% figure very well. Here is a simple guideline for you: in your current church or church plant, 10-15% of the people should be leaders.

How are you doing? Congratulations if you have even more than 15%. This means that you are in a good position to grow. If you have less, it is important that you begin to work on developing leaders.

III. WHERE DO WE FIND THESE LEADERS?

When churches are growing and multiplying there is always a need for a growing number of leaders. In fact, there never seem to be enough leaders. Sometimes it is even tempting to slow growth down in order to find and train leaders. This challenge of leadership development in situations where leaders are few is seen in the Bible. Titus was sent to the Island of Crete specifically to establish local leaders (Titus 1:5). Apparently, groups were meeting in every town of the island – without leaders! Titus’ main task then was not to lead all the groups, or to import leaders from somewhere else, but to find and mobilize local leaders from within those groups. Paul then gives a list of qualities to look for in these leaders (vs 6-9). Note that Paul also goes on and describes the local population as very different from the list (vs 10-12). In other words, most of the people were unqualified to lead! What a difficult task Titus had. How would he find leaders among “liars, evil brutes, and lazy gluttons?” Maybe you feel that you have a similar task!

Remember that the Lord never gives us a task to complete unless He knows that it is possible. We can accomplish this seemingly impossible task, and train leaders as the church is growing and multiplying, if we are careful to follow some basic scriptural principles of leadership training.

In Matthew 25:14-30, Jesus told a parable about three servants. While the parable has a specific purpose, verses 21 and 23 repeat a noteworthy phrase, “You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things.” This concept is reasonable, and seems to explain how we can find the leaders that we need. We should look for those who are faithful in ‘smaller’ leadership roles, and give them increasing responsibilities. We have already seen this when we looked at the levels of leadership. Success (and faithfulness) at lower levels was always a requirement for higher roles.

Therefore, this increasing need for Christian leaders for the Church will have to be met by discipling new believers and training them for leadership. This is where we should look for leaders, and where we should begin to train. Consider the reality that some of the future leaders in your church planting movement may not even be believers yet! The resources are in the harvest!

This is not to suggest that new converts are immediately ready to serve as church leaders. They are not, and the Bible warns against rushing this process (1Ti 3:6). However, the fact that they can not immediately *serve* as leaders does not remove our responsibility to begin to train them for possible *future* service. We should focus on developing faithfulness, godly character, and a servant attitude immediately. As men and women prove faithful, they should be given both more responsibility and more in-depth training.

Question 2: What does it mean to say that "the resources are in the harvest" when we are looking for leaders to train?

SUMMARY

Now is the time to get more serious about training more leaders at more levels. Future growth and church health depends on it. We cannot assume that the right kind of leaders will simply emerge when we need them. Local church leaders need to take initiative in actively seeking out and training new leaders.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. Describe the kinds of leaders in a church planting movement.
2. Re-read Section I "Kinds Of Leaders Needed in the Church". What areas of leadership do you need to work on?
3. What do you do when you do not have enough leaders to start new churches?

Lesson 8: Identifying and Equipping Leaders

As a church planter and a leader, you must multiply yourself by developing other leaders. Early in the church planting process, when the church planter is spending most of his time engaged in evangelism, he needs to begin identifying and building up those who might be future leaders. At later stages in the church plant, he is likely to spend most of his time being involved in leadership development. Leadership development is essential in order to create an active, growing church. How do we do it? That is the focus of this lesson.

I. BIBLICAL EXAMPLES OF LEADERSHIP MULTIPLICATION

A. Moses and Joshua

Moses accomplished incredible things for God. He liberated the children of Israel from Egyptian slavery and brought them to the border of the promised land. Joshua was at Moses' side as a reliable fighter from the beginning of Moses' leadership (Ex. 17:9-14). Joshua went with Moses on Mt. Sinai to receive the law and commandments, (Ex 24:12-13), and seemed to have special permission to enter the 'tent of meeting' where God met with Moses (Ex 33:7-11). Joshua's great faith was best displayed when he and Caleb alone believed that God would give them the strength to conquer Canaan (Nu 14:6-9).

At some time in Moses' life he asked himself a question that all leaders should frequently ask: "Who is going to replace me?" Moses knew that Israel would need future leadership, and asked God for a replacement. God chose Joshua, who had been learning at Moses side, and then told Moses to delegate authority to Joshua so that the people would know that Joshua was the man of God's choosing (Nu 27:15-22).

Moses did not enter the promised land. Joshua, however, saw the realization of Moses' dream when he victoriously went into the promised land with all Israel. Moses could have become jealous that he would not enter the promised land and Joshua would (Dt 1:37-38). Instead, however, Moses handed off the leadership gracefully to Joshua, just as God had instructed (Dt 31:7, 34:9). Moses serves as a shining example of a servant leader who seeks the best for other people and for the Lord's work, rather than his own glory.

B. Jesus

Jesus had a plan to spread the salvation message to the whole world. How did he go about it? He taught large crowds on many occasions, but his real focus was on the development of his very close followers. Jesus personally selected these men before He initiated His larger preaching ministry (Jn 1:35-51). This relatively small group of men would carry on the message of salvation with great impact after He left.

Jesus spent three and a half years demonstrating the power of His message in His preaching and healing, and later in His sacrificial death and miraculous resurrection. He was a living model of His message for His disciples. At the earliest appropriate time, Jesus gave His disciples a chance to participate in the ministry by sending them out as missionaries (Mt 10). When their ministry was not successful, Jesus provided timely instruction to rectify the problem (Mt 17:14-21). He had enough confidence in his disciples to give them the "keys of the kingdom" (Mt 16:19), and to put the future of his ministry into their hands (Mt 18:18-20). Jesus prepared his disciples to be able to carry on without his physical presence.

We see, therefore, that Jesus multiplied Himself in the lives of others in order to accomplish His purpose. He said, "follow me and I will make you fishers of men" (Mt. 4:19). Jesus was himself a fisher of men, so He essentially said, "follow me and I will make you what I am!" In leadership development, we are also interested in training replacements rather than just finding helpers. Our desire should be to see trainees eventually reach or even surpass the level of success that we have had in ministry.

Question 1: How did Jesus expect that his disciples would be successful in the ministry he commissioned them to do (Mt 28:18-20)?

C. Paul

As we have already seen in previous lessons, Paul trained disciples in a multiplication fashion. Just about everything that we said about discipleship can be said about leadership development as well. So Paul’s words in 2 Timothy 2:2 “*And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others*” applies to leadership training.

Paul trained Timothy for ministry almost as if he were his own son, but Timothy is by no means the only one to have been trained by Paul. We read of Silas, John Mark, Barnabas, Aquila and Priscilla, and Apollos—all of whom learned from Paul to various degrees. The last missionary journey of Paul seems to have been a training/discipleship trip. During this trip we read of seven people (Ac 20:4) traveling with Paul, most of them learning from him. Many of Paul’s disciples eventually became leaders.

You should use this pattern explained in 2 Timothy 2:2 and modeled by Paul by involving potential leaders in all you do during the time you are together. Equip leaders “in action.” In this way, others will observe in a practical way how to develop leaders. Whether planning group meetings, visiting the lost, counseling hurting people, praying for lost sheep, or teaching—all should be joint projects. Remember, discipling others is something that is not only taught; it is also “caught”, as they see you modeling what they need to imitate in their own lives.

Question 2: Who are you involving in your ministry as potential leaders? Can you name more than one or two?

II. TRAINING OBJECTIVES

In a church planting context, we always encourage planning with the final outcome in mind. In terms of training new leaders, the main questions we need to ask are: “*What kind of leaders are needed?*” “*What are we aiming for?*” and “*What does a finished product look like?*” These foundational questions are important, since they guide the training process.

We need to have a clear idea of the leadership needs which exist, but we must be careful not to place the wrong people into leadership positions. When we find “faithful” people who have leadership ability, they should not be trained in a rigid, inflexible program. Each potential leader has his own personality, abilities, spiritual gifts, background, and experience which *must* be taken into account.

It is normally the task of a trainer or mentor to evaluate the trainee and determine how best to develop the leadership skills and qualities of the trainee in the current church planting situation. Each situation is different, just as each person is different. An approach that is often effective is to form a list of “training objectives” which will characterize a leader, as well as qualities that you want to encourage in this emerging leader (note that several such lists were provided in lesson 7). As you compare potential leaders to this list of objectives, it will help you know how to approach the training process for each of them. For example, if a leader in training falls short of a particular objective, then a “learning activity” can be designed to help him grow in that area. Note the following examples:

TRAINING OBJECTIVE	LEARNING ACTIVITY
To improve poor preaching skills.	Let him see exactly how you prepare your sermons.
To increase Bible knowledge enough to be able to lead a cell group effectively.	Have him take a correspondence course to increase his understanding of the Bible.

TRAINING OBJECTIVE	LEARNING ACTIVITY
To strengthen weak nurturing (pastoral) ability.	Have him study the pastoral epistles inductively (1 and 2 Timothy and Titus).
A mature believer aspires to be a cell group leader but does not relate well to unsaved people.	Have the potential leader try to befriend an unsaved person and keep a record of his experiences in growing this friendship.

III. FIVE-STEP PROCESS FOR TRAINING NEW LEADERS

Always remember that training is an active process. Do not place all the emphasis on knowledge and information. Instead, look for creative ways to get the aspiring leader to **DO** things. He will learn most from what he does. The following five-step process can be used to help a potential leader develop a particular skill. It is an activity-based process.

Step 1: “I Do It”

In the training of leaders, you should lead by example. Perhaps the number one rule in leadership development is to be the kind of leader others will want to imitate. Often training fails because it has not included good modeling of a concept or skill. **You need to model ministry before you require it of your trainee.**

Step 2: “I Do It; You Watch”

While the trainee also ‘watched’ in step 1, it was a more passive, one-way activity. In this step, we have in mind an active, two-way interaction between the leader and the trainee. The trainee knows he is being prepared to lead, and is absorbing everything he can learn by observing your ministry. Explaining your actions is very important. Take nothing for granted. Explain what you do and why you do it the way you do. Explain the ministry principles which guide your actions.

Step 3: “We Do It Together”

Be sure you have performed the particular ministry skill with your aspiring leaders to give them hands-on experience. This will also help them to see and learn from their mistakes in a secure environment with their mentor (you). This step is a bit like a child learning to ride a bike with the parent steadying it as needed. Your presence will give the trainees confidence that you can help if they have a problem, but they will also be able to test out the things they are learning from you. The length of time that this stage continues depends entirely on how soon you and the trainee agree that he or she is ready to try to lead by themselves.

Step 4: “You Do It; I Watch”

Observe your aspiring leader perform the ministry skill. Do not step in. *At this step you must allow them to succeed or to fail.* Then, after the event and in private, objectively explain the strengths and weaknesses you have observed. Review the objectives at this point. It is important to explain both the positive and the negative, but whenever possible, emphasize the positive. Provide a learning activity to strengthen the weaknesses if necessary.

Step 5: “You Do It”

As soon as you think new leaders are ready, turn the task over to them. You don't want to hurry, but you also don't want to delay the process. Usually our tendency is to wait far too long, and we cripple the new leader by our continued presence. You should remain a close friend, treating the new leader as your equal. The process does not end with the training of another leader. We are interested in the multiplication of many leaders. Therefore encourage the new leader to soon begin to multiply himself in the life of another.

The Step	The Leader	The Trainee
Step 1	<i>Do</i>	-
Step 2	<i>Do</i>	<i>Watch</i>
Step 3	<i>Do</i>	<i>Do</i>
Step 4	<i>Watch</i>	<i>Do</i>
Step 5	-	<i>Do</i>

These five steps do not always need to be followed in a strict fashion. Often, however, training fails because part of the process is not followed. Consider the young aspiring leader who was asked to preach a sermon, but was not trained in this process. His sermon was not very clear and everyone concluded, including the young man, that preaching was not his gift. In reality, he just needed to see and receive a little guidance on how to prepare a sermon.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1. Why is leadership development important?*
- 2. How were you trained as a leader? Describe the formative activities that helped you develop your leadership ability.*

ASSIGNMENT

- Pick a common ministry task that you know how to do well like sharing your faith, preaching, or visiting an elderly person. Teach someone else to do it using the 5-step process described in this lesson. Describe the results to your trainer or mentor.

Lesson 9: Training Cell Group Leaders

As we discussed in lesson 7, there are many kinds of leaders in a church planting movement. However, by far the most important kinds of leaders are the cell group leaders. Without numerous trained and mobilized leaders working to establish and multiply cell groups, rapid reproduction of churches is not likely to happen. So with the more general material we have already discussed as a foundation, let's talk about this very critical area: training cell group leaders.

I. CHOOSE AN APPRENTICE LEADER

Training cell group leaders happens best in cell groups. It is simply not practical, nor desirable, to send people away to a school or seminar so they can learn to lead a cell group. Instead, cell groups themselves provide opportunity for training leaders “on the job.” Remember that **we learn best by doing**.

A. The Importance of Apprentice Leaders

A biological cell in the human body, by its very nature, will reproduce itself. The definition we have chosen for a cell group, which sets it apart from other groups, is that a cell group also multiplies. However, whereas a cell in the body is able to multiply on its own, a cell group cannot multiply without someone to lead the new cell which is formed.

The overall philosophy of cell group ministry is that cells are only a building block, or smaller part, of a larger ministry strategy to start new churches. There are many methods and approaches to using cell groups in order to start churches, and the groups themselves are often an integral part of the church planting process.

Without new leaders to begin new cells, it is obvious that this process breaks down.

Question 1: Where do you find new cell group leaders?

Did you have trouble answering this question? The answer is from within the cells themselves! One of the first tasks of a cell group leader then is to prayerfully choose and develop an apprentice leader. The process of cell group multiplication becomes a reality only when new leaders are chosen and discipled.

B. The Process of Choosing an Apprentice

The cell group leader should spend much time in prayer before choosing an apprentice leader. He should pray for guidance and wisdom from the Holy Spirit as he makes a decision. Selecting someone as an apprentice leader is no small matter, and the cell group leader must seek confirmation from the Holy Spirit about the choice he is making.

The timing for choosing an apprentice leader is important. The cell group leader cannot make the choice too early, when perhaps he has not had sufficient time to observe and get to know the members of his group. On the other hand, the apprentice leader cannot be chosen at the last minute, when the cell is ready to multiply and the leader realizes that he needs a new leader to help. Sufficient time must be spent with an apprentice leader in order for him to learn and grow in his experience and skills in the cell group. The cell group leader must prayerfully decide when to choose his apprentice and begin modeling ministry with him.

C. Exercise: Whom to Choose When No Choice is Obvious?

Cell group leaders often struggle with the important decision of whom to choose to be an apprentice leader. It is helpful to observe the example of the Apostle Paul as he traveled and started new churches. As we look in the book of Acts, Paul and Barnabas did not install leaders in the new churches until some time later as they returned home from their first missionary journey (Acts 14:21-23). They did not immediately appoint elders to lead these churches, but they also did not wait an extraordinarily long time either.

1 Timothy 3:1 says, “Here is a trustworthy saying: If anyone sets his heart on being an overseer, he desires a noble task.” 1 Peter 5:2 says, “Be shepherds of God’s flock that is under your care, serving as overseers - not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not greedy for money, but eager to serve.” Leadership is to be appointed to the person who “sets his heart” on it and is “willing” and “eager to serve.” Spiritual maturity is a prerequisite for leadership, but an apprentice leader must also earnestly desire to serve the Lord.

In class, discuss the following situations:

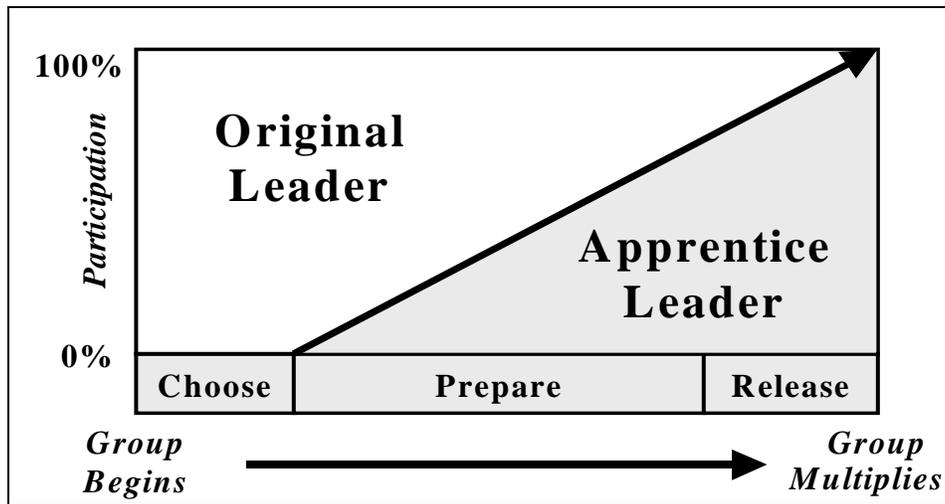
- *Scenario:* David has recently started a cell group in his neighborhood. His goal is to start enough reproducing cell groups so that several new churches can be planted in his city. He has invited several friends and family members, and the group has met for several months already. Everyone in the group is a new believer, and no one seems mature enough to be an apprentice leader. David has prayed about it, but he is unsure what to do. Can he choose a new believer to be his apprentice leader? What would you suggest to him?
- *Scenario:* Hoa has started a cell group with the help of two other believers. These other men have been Christians for several years, but neither of them has much ministry experience. Hoa thinks he should wait a long time before choosing one of them to be his apprentice leader, so that they will have lots of opportunity to watch him as he runs the cell group. What do you think of his approach? What would you suggest?
- *Scenario:* Duc started a cell group in a community with a very high unemployment rate. The group attempts to help the men in the community find work, as well as introduce them to the Bible. Duc asked the first few men who came to invite other friends who were out of work. The response was overwhelming, and the group grew to 15 people in one month. Duc knows that the group should multiply when it reaches 15, but this obviously cannot happen since none of the members are even believers yet. He is worried that the group will continue to grow, and he doesn’t know what to do. What advice would you give him? What do you think of his strategy? Is there anything you would have done differently?

II. PREPARE YOUR APPRENTICE FOR LEADERSHIP

A. Involve Your Apprentice with You in All Aspects of Ministry

Once you have chosen your apprentice leader, you must make a conscious effort to involve him in everything you do with regard to the cell group. Everything that you used to do on your own, you must now attempt to do with your apprentice leader. Explain everything, more than once, until you are sure that your apprentice understands it well enough to pass it along to another new leader.

You should begin involving your apprentice with the preparation and running of each cell group meeting. Discuss in advance what you are going to do in each meeting, and explain why you are taking this approach. After each meeting, discuss what you both learned from that meeting. Then plan the next meeting together. Discuss problems in the meeting, such as someone dominating the conversation, and how the issue was (or wasn’t) resolved. This increasing involvement of the apprentice is illustrated below.



Once your apprentice is comfortable with the various aspects of planning and running individual meetings, you can begin to help him develop an understanding of the bigger picture and philosophy of cell group ministry. Discuss your church planting goals and explain how the cell groups are a part of these larger church planting goals. Help him understand the life cycle of a cell group, and discuss at which phase your group is currently.

Of course, this process of involving your apprentice with you requires a significant investment of your time and effort. But in the process of discipling, there are no shortcuts. Investing your life in the life of another requires commitment, perseverance, and a lot of help and encouragement from the Holy Spirit.

B. Evaluate your Apprentice

As a cell group leader, you know all too well that you have strengths and weaknesses as you carry out your ministry. In the same way, your apprentice will excel in some areas of ministry, while making mistakes or struggling in other areas of cell group leadership.

You should discuss with your apprentice the things that he does well. This will provide encouragement and confirmation of his calling to be a leader. It is also beneficial to talk with him, in love, about areas in which he needs to grow. A cell group apprentice can have lots of ministry experience and yet lack good ministry skills. As you disciple your apprentice, you need to help him to see where and how he can improve as a leader. When you see an area of need, offer constructive ways to improve. In other words, don't simply point out the problems; offer suggestions on how he can correct problem areas.

As you model ministry with your apprentice, ask him also to share with you areas where he thinks you might have room for improvement. None of us is perfect, and quite often we have shortcomings or weaknesses that we don't even realize. The beauty of the discipling relationship is the ability to help each other towards deeper Christian maturity and growth. By discussing and evaluating together your strengths and weaknesses, you are demonstrating the value of team work. Church planting is best done in a team of people who can help to compensate for one another's strengths and weaknesses and help one another grow towards deeper Christian maturity.

C. Pray For and With Your Apprentice

As you disciple your apprentice and model ministry for him, take time to pray for growth in his character, his experience and his skills. Pray that the Holy Spirit will continue to comfort, encourage and guide him. Pray also for your ability to disciple him and to be an example of a cell group leader for him.

It is also important to pray with your apprentice. Make time to spend together in prayer as you plan meetings and evangelistic events. Pray together about individuals in the group, about their needs and the people to whom

they are reaching out. Pray for each other regarding areas of struggle or other personal needs. Attempt to instill in your apprentice the tremendous importance that prayer has in all areas of cell group ministry.

III. RELEASE YOUR APPRENTICE FOR MINISTRY

A. Give Vision to Your Apprentice

One of the most important steps in releasing your apprentice leader is to continually give him a vision for what could happen through his life and ministry. Ministry skills training without vision is like preparing to go on a journey but having no destination in mind. Your apprentice needs to understand that the potential end result of his ministry could be many, many new churches started through his cell group ministry. He needs to see how what he is learning and doing right now fits into this larger “end result” vision. The realization of what God can do through His imperfect people can be a tremendous motivation for your apprentice leader. Take time to ask your apprentice what his own vision is for the work God is calling him to do. Evaluate whether or not you are helping develop his vision. Make sure your apprentice understands that he has an important role in helping to fulfill the Great Commission.

B. Delegate Ministry to Your Apprentice

As your apprentice grows in his understanding of the various aspects of cell group ministry, you need to begin to delegate more and more responsibility to him. In general, you want to first model ministry for your apprentice, explaining what you did and why. Then, perform the ministry together with your apprentice (such as planning for a meeting or leading the Bible discussion time). Now allow your apprentice to perform the ministry on his own, with your encouragement and supervision. Objectively explain strengths and weaknesses you observed, and provide constructive suggestions for improvement. Finally, allow your apprentice to perform the ministry without any involvement on your part. When he reaches the point of being able to completely run the cell group meeting, you might want to “be busy” from time to time so that he gains confidence in his abilities without your being there.

This process of delegation starts small, but eventually you want your apprentice to have many experiences in leading a cell group without your involvement. It is the only way that he will be truly prepared to lead a group of his own, trusting the Lord Jesus to guide him in that leadership role.

Realize that delegation is not always easy for the cell group leader. Giving up the authority and responsibility for your group is hard to do. What if the apprentice doesn’t do a good job? What if he or she makes lots of mistakes? What will the group think, and how will they react? The cell group leader must step out in faith as the apprentice takes on more and more responsibility. He must decrease as the apprentice increases. To some leaders, it feels like they have “lost” their job and they are now unemployed. Share your feelings with your apprentice during this time, so that he will be prepared to deal with it when the time comes for him to turn over his group to a new leader.

C. Release Your Apprentice to Start a New Cell Group

As your cell group continues to reach out and grow, the time will come when it is ready to multiply. As this time approaches, discuss with your apprentice an overall ministry strategy for his new group. What are his goals for starting a church, and how will his new cell fit into this larger ministry strategy? Perhaps his cell group will be a building block for the same church as your group, or perhaps his group will help start a different church. The important part is that your apprentice understands the larger strategy and where his cell group fits into that strategy.

Encourage your apprentice to develop a prayer support team to pray for him before, during and after the beginning of the new cell group. Help him to understand how to prepare for the very first meeting, since he may not have been a part of that process when your group was started.

During the final month before your cell group is ready to multiply, completely turn over the ministry of the cell group to your apprentice. In this way, the members of the cell group will have confidence in him as a new

leader when he starts a new group. Finally, stay close and be available to help your apprentice with his new group. Don't "abandon" him to swim in the deep waters alone. Pray with him and hold him accountable to select an apprentice of his own from the new group. Continue to encourage him as he leads his own group.

D. Begin the Apprentice Process Again

An existing cell group can multiply into two new groups, or apprentice leaders can remain in the original group while they start other groups which meet on a different day. Both methods are a valid form of multiplication. Either way, once new group(s) have been started, your apprentice leaders must begin to pray about finding and training their own apprentices, and the multiplication process continues.

This process of finding, discipling, and releasing leaders is an effective method to see new groups started, to see people come to the Lord, and to fulfill the Great Commission through new churches.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What are the qualifications for an apprentice leader?
- If no one in your cell group appears to qualify as an apprentice leader, what are some concrete ways that you can develop leaders from within your group? What would you need to do to make this happen?
- What would you do if you prayerfully chose an apprentice leader and he or she refused?

ASSIGNMENT

- If you have not yet chosen an apprentice leader from within your cell group, pray about it and then do it. If no one seems qualified, select someone to disciple and develop into a leader.
- Begin to involve your apprentice in ministry with you, and actively delegate more and more ministry to him.
- From time to time, evaluate your apprentice, and ask your apprentice to evaluate you in regards to your ministry with the group.
- Pray for your apprentice leader.

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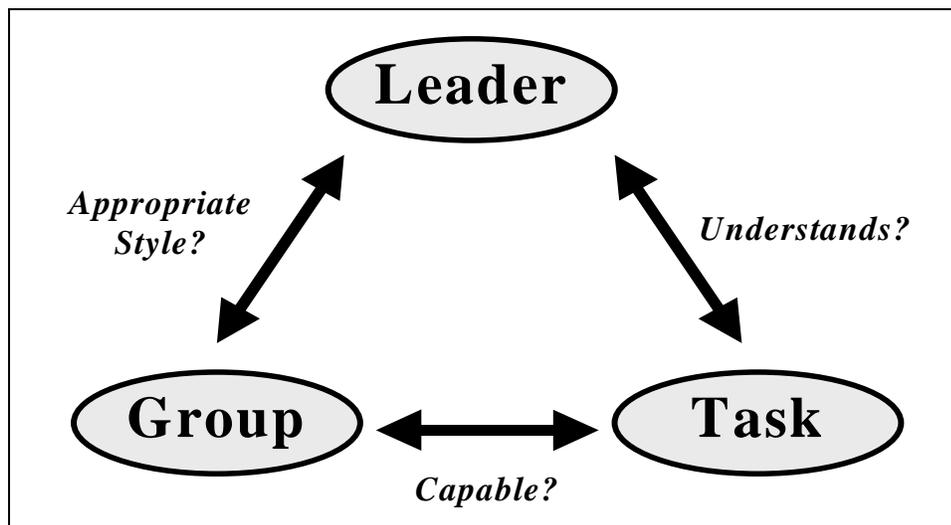
Lesson 10: Skills for Leaders

Why is it that some leaders fail and others succeed? Why do many leaders excel in some situations and fail in others? In the same way, is it really possible to describe a typical kind of leader who will be successful in all situations and in all cultures? The answer to these questions is complex because several factors influence the effectiveness of leaders, of which the skills of the leader is only one part. Instead, leadership involves the interrelationship of three factors.

- The characteristics of the leader
- The characteristics of the group
- The nature of the task

In order for a leader to guide his group in successfully completing its task, these three factors must fit together. The leader must be able to lead the group and understand how to approach the task. The group must be capable of completing the task and willing to follow the leader. In order to ensure that a group committed to planting a church is reasonably well prepared for the task, it is necessary to evaluate the ‘chemistry’ between all three of these elements.

Three Factors of Leadership Success



I. CHARACTERISTICS OF THE LEADER

The leader, while not the only factor, is the most important variable in the leadership process. Little happens without leadership, and the right leader can make all the difference in the world. Sometimes a group has no clear leader. This is a common ministry problem—no one rises up to take leadership. If, however, the group is accomplishing the task, the reality is that one or more members of the group are fulfilling the leadership role—even if this is not recognized. While this works on occasion, it is difficult to make progress on any task without one person to coordinate and make sure that group decisions are followed up.

This lesson assumes that your church planting group has a leader—even if the difference in authority between that leader and the other members is minimal. It is also assumed that you are probably that leader, and that you desire to do a better job of leading.

Question 1: *What are the important factors in the relationship between the leader, the group, and the task at hand?*

A. The Person of the Leader

When we are dealing with the spiritual task of church planting, the heart of the leader is probably the single most important factor in the group's success. That is why it is of such importance to the Lord, and why it should be the top priority for us (1Sa 16:7).

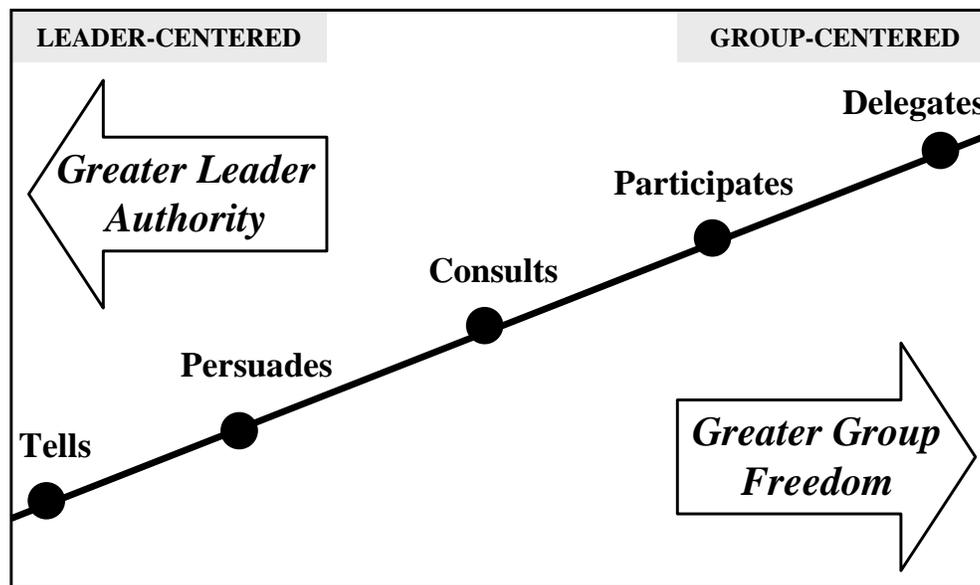
B. How the Leader Relates to the Group

Leadership styles vary from leader to leader and from situation to situation. The figure below illustrates five styles of leadership that are common. The leader's style may range from "leader-centered" to "group-centered" depending on how much the leader shares control with the group.

It can be argued that there is a time and place for each of these five styles of leadership. However, the 'leader-centered' end of the scale would normally only be appropriate when the group lacks the maturity or understanding to make good decisions, or perhaps in a crisis situation. For the purpose of church planting, there should be a significant level of maturity and spirituality on the part of all those who are ministering and directing the work. Therefore, a leader of a church planting group should expect to mainly use the 'group-centered' styles of leadership. Problems arise when the leader of the church plant is only comfortable with 'leader-centered' styles. This is likely to frustrate the entire group and hinder the planting of the church

As you look at the figure below and read the discussion of each style of leadership, evaluate your own preferred style. We say "preferred" because although most leaders may be able to use a number of different styles, they tend to be more comfortable in one of them.

Five Common Leadership Styles



1. Telling

Leaders identify problems, consider options, choose one solution, and tell their followers what to do. Leaders may consider members' views, but members do not participate directly in decision-making.

2. Persuading

Leaders make decisions and try to persuade group members to accept them. A leader using this style may point out that they considered the organization's goals and the interests of the group members. They even point out how the members will benefit from carrying out the decision.

3. Consulting

Group members have opportunity to influence decision-making from the beginning. Leaders using this style present problems and relevant background information. They invite the group to suggest alternative actions. Leaders then select the most promising solution.

4. Participating

Leaders participate in the discussion to a similar degree as the other members, and agree in advance to carry out whatever decision the group makes.

5. Delegating

Leaders define the boundaries within which to solve problems or accomplish tasks. Then they turn it over to the group to work out solutions or to implement the tasks.

Remember that none of these five styles is inherently right or wrong. The military, for instance, has had great success in *telling* soldiers what to do, with no discussion allowed. Even in church planting situations, there might be some times when it is best and simplest if the leader makes certain decisions without consulting the group. Usually this happens when there is an urgent need to make a decision *now!* However, in all but extreme situations, the leader of a church plant should consult those with whom he or she is working. A good leader needs to know when each leadership style would be appropriate, and be growing in his or her ability to use other than his natural style when necessary.

C. The Leader's Understanding of the Task

It should be obvious that a leader must understand the task to be accomplished and know how to carry it out. However, leaders are often appointed solely on the basis of personality or past leadership ability, even if they do not understand the task at hand. Some may be intelligent enough to learn quickly and succeed, but many fail in this situation. The leader should always have a thorough understanding of the task.

Church planting is too important of a task to commit to leaders who do not understand it, or who are not willing to learn about it. In fact, a leader who is not a learner will seldom guide a group to successful accomplishment of its task. Therefore, a leader of a church plant *must* understand the process of church planting, and be growing in his or her knowledge. The role of the leader is crucial. If the leader has faulty assumptions or ideas, the church plant will probably fail.

It is not necessary that the leader know *everything* about church planting. If so, no church would ever be planted—for lack of leaders. In the same way, it is not even necessary that the leader know more than any other member of the group. Perhaps another member is an 'expert church planter', but is not a particularly capable leader. The best solution in that case is for the more gifted leader to assume the leadership of the group, but to make sure that he adopts a 'group-centered' style so that the group benefits from the experience of the more knowledgeable member(s).

II. THE NATURE OF THE TASK

The second factor in leadership is the task. The task is the purpose for which the group exists. Your task is saturation church planting. As the leader, you need to continually evaluate whether or not your group is making progress in planting churches. Asking questions and doing ongoing research will help you to understand your particular situation and focus your efforts in the important areas.

It is important that the task of the group be clear in the mind of each member. The responsibility to keep this goal before them falls squarely on the shoulders of the leader.

There are two extremes:

- 1) failing to keep the task clearly before the group, and
- 2) overemphasizing the task to the detriment of group relationships.

The first extreme causes the group to flounder doing unimportant activities, or to get so caught up taking care of the group that they forget the lost to whom the Lord has sent them. The second extreme results in wounded relationships and an inability to model Christian community.

Question 2: Are those you work with committed to the task of Saturation Church Planting? How can you tell?

III. MANAGING THE GROUP

When we use the word ‘group’, we have in mind ‘whomever the leader leads.’ It may be a team, a church, a cell group, etc. The leader may not be in control of this factor. You may work with people that you did not pick, but God has brought you together. Whether you personally chose the group members or not, you can improve your leadership and the group’s success by being aware of the nature of the group.

The church planting team or group that you lead should be spiritually sensitive, and be able to perform basic functions such as evangelism, discipleship, and developing relationships. If the members are capable in these areas, your task as a leader will simply be to keep them focused on the goal of planting the church. If there is a deficiency in one or more areas, you will need to find a way to develop competency in those tasks. Therefore, a careful evaluation of the group will be very profitable, and will enhance their chances of establishing a solid, growing church. There are several areas to consider.

A. The Group Members’ Skills and Abilities

Look at the group you work with and consider the following questions:

- How much experience do group members have in evangelism, discipleship etc.? Do you need to concentrate on training?
- In what ways are some of them ready to be released for ministry?
- Are your group members aware of their spiritual gifts?

The answer to these questions will affect the progress of the group. You cannot lead the group where they are unprepared to go. If your group lacks ministry skills, you will need to train them.

B. The Group Members’ Commitment to the Task

Perhaps you have a group of skilled people to work with. Some may have planted churches before; others are experienced evangelists or cell group leaders. But perhaps your group members are not available to participate in the task because of other commitments.

- Do employment schedules interfere with ministry meetings and activities?
- Do family obligations interrupt the focus of group members?
- Do the members think that the church plant is of vital importance?

Perhaps group members are committed to the church plant, but have very different ideas about the kind of church they are establishing. They may expect different ministry styles, or have conflicting visions of church structure. If your team has not worked out a clear plan and strategy, this kind of problem will probably arise. You will have great difficulty moving the group forward until you all agree on what you are moving towards.

C. The Relationships Between the Members

Leadership is mostly a “people” activity. A large part of ministry is dealing with others. If there are relationship problems among those you work with, it will interfere with the task sooner or later. Leaders need to continually monitor the relationships among the group members. If the group does not trust each other, progress can be inhibited. If members are competing for recognition or position, true cooperation will be impossible. A variety of motivations and hidden agendas may unconsciously interfere with the goal.

It is also possible that one or more members of the group might have a relationship problem with the leader. This often arises when leadership styles conflict with expectations. A leader might use a very directive style with a group that values freedom, thereby making the members feel belittled. Or, in the opposite case, a leader might defer decisions to a group that would rather have stronger direction from the leader, and thus feel confused or have trouble knowing what to do. Both issues should be addressed and a workable compromise reached.

Question 3: As a leader, how should you deal with interpersonal conflicts in your group?

CONCLUSION

As you can see, there are many factors that affect the leadership process. As a church planter you need to watch your own leadership abilities and skills, shepherd and train your group and monitor the various realities of the task. The action plan at the end of this lesson will help you take stock of your factors.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What are the three main factors that affect the success of leadership?
2. What is the most typical style of leadership within your churches?
3. What style of leadership was exercised by those Christian leaders who have had the most positive influence on you in the past?

ASSIGNMENT

Write a report on the various factors in your leadership situation by answering the following questions. Give this report to your mentor and discuss it with him before the next training session.

1) Describe yourself as a leader

- What leadership style do you use the most?
- Which limitations do you see yourself as having? What can you do to compensate for these limitations?

2) Describe your group

- Describe their skills and abilities.
- What is their level of commitment to the task?
- Are there any interpersonal conflicts that need to be addressed?

3) Describe your task

- Are you planting a church among resistant or receptive people?
- Are you or members of your team “outsiders” or “foreigners” among these groups?
- Do you have enough information about your context? Do you and your group understand your task?
- Do you have a clear plan and strategy that takes the results of your research into account?
- Are there any unique spiritual dynamics that must be confronted?
- Are there any political pressures that are affecting the situation?
- Do you have the resources needed to complete the task?
- In what ways has God prepared you and your group for this task?

4) Conclusion

- As a result of what you have learned, what do you need to focus on?
- What leadership style would be most effective in your situation, and why?

SOURCES

D’Souza, A., and Engel, J. F. “Leadership Styles, Being a Leader” in *Leadership: Making Human Strength Productive*. St. Davids, PA: The Center For Organizational Excellence, Eastern College, 1996. (Used by Permission)

CHURCH PLANTING SKILLS

Lesson 11: Strategic Planning

Strategic planning in missions is a prayerful stewardship of time and resources, both human and financial, toward the effective accomplishment of God’s purposes. The lack of strategic planning can lead to misdirection and feeble efforts that risk wasting God’s resources and our lives. Strategic planning delivers us from shortsighted floundering and gives us confidence in long-term direction. It establishes our day-to-day ministries based on strategic objectives. These objectives, in turn, are developed on solid biblical and theoretical foundations and sound analyses of our ministry context. Strategic planning is also born out of prayerful vision development that seeks God’s purpose for our contexts and ministries.

Is strategic planning Biblical? Absolutely! We see examples throughout the Bible:

- Joseph, with God-given wisdom, developed and implemented a plan to save the Egyptians and surrounding nations from starvation during seven years of famine (Ge 41).
- Nehemiah surveyed the destruction of the city of Jerusalem and developed and implemented a plan for rebuilding the city wall in spite of many obstacles and risks (Nehemiah).
- Jesus’ life and ministry reflect that He had a very definite purpose and definite means to fulfill that purpose. For example, Jesus confidently directed His steps toward the cross (Mt 16:21-23). He focused His ministry on the twelve disciples and among the Jewish people.

A STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS

The strategic planning process we are sharing in this course contains five major components: purpose statement, core values, distinctives, objectives and goals. Together they comprise a strategic plan. The plan is to be developed and updated regularly according to the process outlined in this lesson. The strategic planning process is best done at least by the whole team.

STEP 1: PRAY

Planning should not be done without much prayer before and during the planning process. Spiritual work requires that we depend on God for wisdom and that we have the mind of Christ (Jas 1:5-7; 1Co 2:16).

As a team, pray for wisdom and clarity of vision from God. Ask God to guide and direct your planning time, to help you to listen to one another, and to have the “mind of Christ” in your planning. In addition, enlist several friends and supporters to pray for your team as you work through the process.

STEP 2: WRITE OR REVIEW YOUR PURPOSE STATEMENT

The purpose statement is the foundation of your planning. Review the region you have targeted for your ministry, whether a neighborhood, a village, a city, a county, or a country. Review also the kind of ministry which God has called you to do – church planting, prayer mobilization, literature distribution—based on your targeted region and your ministry.

Review the purpose statement you prepared earlier for your ministry. If you haven’t done this yet, then write your purpose statement. Your purpose statement should be only one or two sentences and should answer the question, “Why does our team (or group) exist?” and should reflect both your target region and your ministry.

Some examples of purpose statements are:

- “This team exists to enable evangelicals to fill Romania with reproducing congregations” (national church planting facilitation team).
- “This team exists to fill this county with reproducing churches” (church planting team).
- “This team exists to assist local prayer ministries in this city to pray together and to more prayerfully support the work of church planting in the city” (prayer team).

Have someone write out the purpose statement so that everyone can see it together. We will call this person the “recorder”. With your team take time to review this purpose statement and ask yourself the following questions:

- Is this statement in agreement with our core values and distinctives? If not, what do we need to change to make it agree?
- Is the purpose statement clear and concise?
- Does the purpose statement define our target region or people group we are trying to reach and the type of ministry we are called to do?

If necessary, make changes to your purpose statement in answer to the above questions. Keep the finalized purpose statement in front of the team to refer to during the rest of the planning process.

STEP 3: REFLECT ON CORE VALUES AND DISTINCTIVES

Core values are the fundamental, biblically based concepts that you are committed to and highly esteem. As the team determines what your core values are, the only way to be on safe ground is to base each value on Scripture. These values will help you clarify what you do and what you do not do. Any strategies which you develop that are not in line with your core values are either likely to fail or to be destructive.

Some examples of core values are:

- *Local Church*: We believe that the local church is God’s primary instrument for evangelism and nurture, i.e. the main method He uses for doing His work.
- *Multiplication*: A multiplication model, rather than an addition model, is the only church-reproducing model which can ever reach the goal of whole-nation disciple-making.
- *Servant-Leadership*: We believe servant-leadership should be developed by empowering and releasing gifted people.
- *Accountability*: As a team we believe we must be mutually accountable to each other, to a local church, and to our leaders. We believe that through our accountability to these groups, we can maintain a close relationship with our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.
- *Integrity*: We are committed to the following ethical values as we conduct ourselves in this work: excellence, honesty, integrity in finances...

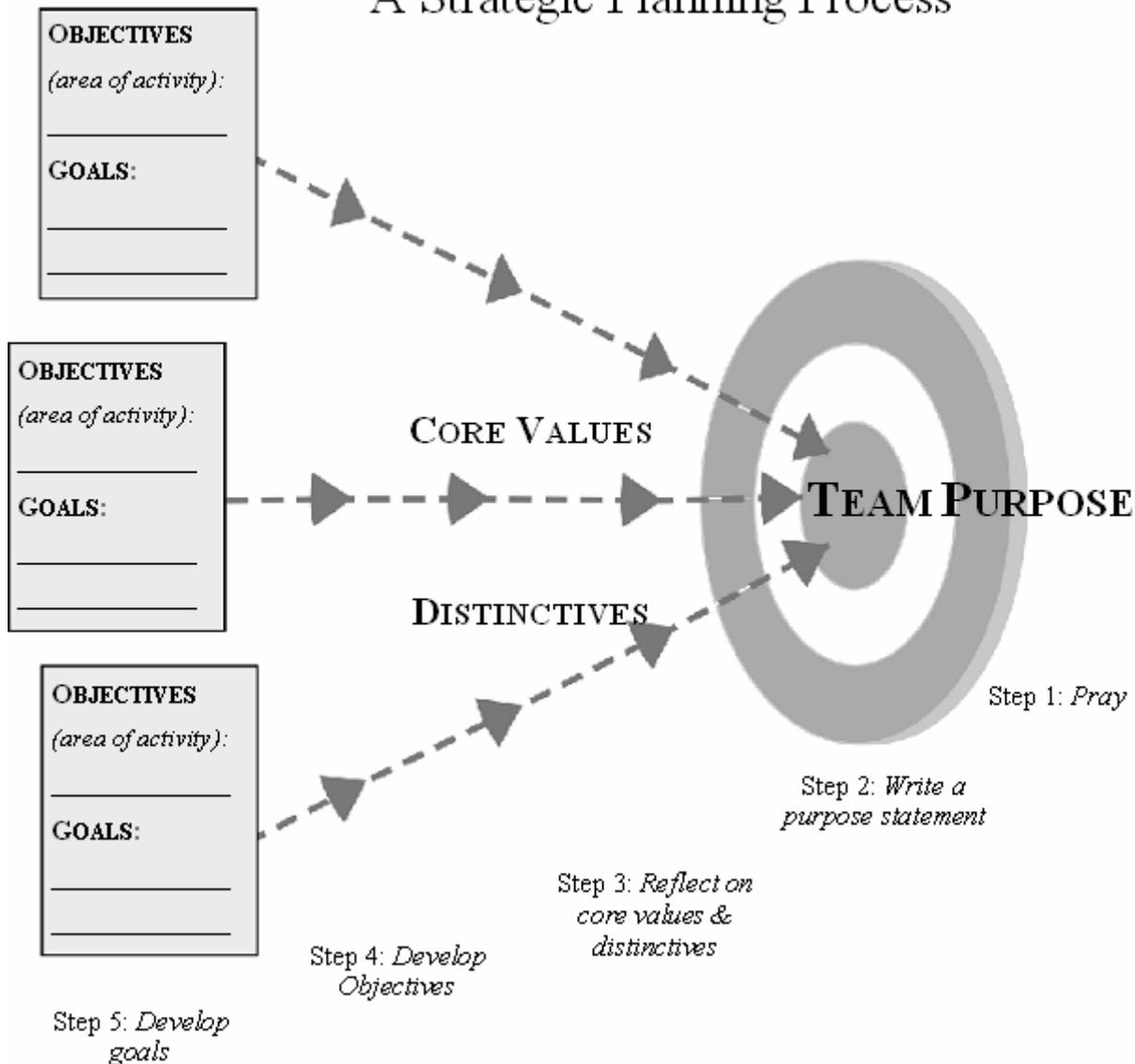
Distinctives are the things that make you unique. They help to define your identity. They reveal what you are known for and how you relate to others. They may provide boundaries that affect cooperation with others, positively or negatively. They should protect you from going off in directions away from your purpose.

Some examples of distinctives are:

- “We work only among Muslim people.”
- “We focus our efforts on training trainers of church planters.”
- “We seek to cooperate with all evangelical denominations and organizations working in our target area.”

Identify the core values and distinctives of your ministry team. This is a good activity for brainstorming. Have team members say what they think are the values and distinctives of the team. The recorder should write down every idea that is shared. Next, take a look at the list. Evaluate the values and distinctives listed. Group the responses which are similar. Do they reflect biblical values? Does the team agree that this is a value or distinctive of your team? Cross out or rework any values or distinctives which are not representative of your team. Have the recorder write out a finalized list of core values and distinctives on large paper so that they can be kept in mind during the rest of the strategic planning process.

A Strategic Planning Process



STEP 4: IDENTIFY YOUR OBJECTIVES

Once you have identified your purpose, your core values and distinctives, the next step is to identify your objectives. Objectives answer the general question, “What will you do?” What are the major thrusts of your ministry? What are the general directions in which your team will direct its efforts? Objectives are the general categories of activities you will be involved in as you work toward fulfilling your purpose. Some examples of objectives for a church planting ministry are:

- Research the target region and people
- Mobilize prayer for church planting
- Evangelize
- Train and mentor leaders for the emerging church
- Train and mentor other church planters
- Develop reproducing cell groups
- Mobilize other churches in the region for church planting

This is a good activity for brainstorming as follows:

- As a team ask, “What areas will we continue to concentrate our energies on over the next three years?”
- Have team members say what they think the team’s objectives are. The recorder should write down every idea that is shared.
- Next, take a look at the list. Evaluate the objectives which were named during the brainstorming activity. Do they agree with your purpose statement, core values and distinctives? Cross out or rework any objectives which do not help you fulfill your purpose statement or are not reflective of your values and distinctives.
- Prioritize this list and cut it down to no more than seven objectives. Most teams or individuals usually cannot work on more than seven different objectives at a time.
- Have the recorder write out a finalized list of objectives on large paper with space so that goals can be added.

STEP 5: SET GOALS

In goal setting, you actually define the specific steps you will take in a specified time period (three months, six months, one year...) to achieve your objectives. While objectives are general, goals are specific. Goal-setting helps you move from fire fighting to fire prevention – from simply responding to urgent needs to managing the most important needs. Defining specific, clear, measurable goals will allow you to think through the steps which eventually reach your purpose. A goal that is well written can be taken by any person and explained perfectly to someone else, even though that person had nothing to do with the writing of the goal. Good goals have the following characteristics:

- **Time Limit.** A good goal needs to have a definite time limit for its completion. The amount of time will depend on what you consider necessary for finishing the task. If you are doing strategic planning on an annual basis, the maximum time limit for completing your goals should be within the next year. Example: By the END OF JUNE...
- **Achievable.** A good goal will make the person “stretch” in order to accomplish the task. At the same time it will not put the task outside the reach of the person. If goals are unattainable, there will always be a hesitancy to even try to accomplish the goal. Example: PREPARE THREE INDUCTIVE BIBLE STUDIES...
- **Measurable.** A good goal will include a way to measure as to whether or not the goal has been reached. There are many ways to measure: by writing, by speaking, by performing some task, by observing certain things...If you do not have a measuring device, then there is no way to know if or when the goal is attained. EXAMPLE: LEAD THE PREPARED STUDIES IN MY CELL GROUP...
- **Clear Language.** A good goal will use clear, precise language to communicate the specific task to be accomplished. Many times words like “know” and “understand” are used in writing goals, but these words are open to many interpretations. For example, how many ways are there to “know” something? We know things by our senses, so there are at least five ways to “know.” If “knowing” is qualified by “how,” then it might be permissible to use. Again, how can you measure “understanding”? Words need to be chosen carefully to make sure they convey what was intended.

Example Goal:

By the end of June I will prepare and lead a series of three inductive Bible studies in my cell group on the theme of “The Great Commission and Church Planting in our City.”

It is quite common for there to be several specific goals for each objective. While your team might decide on four or five main objectives, you might end up with ten or more specific goals that will help you reach your objectives. You will need to determine how many goals need to be set in order for each of your objectives to be effectively met. You should answer the following questions as you work on your goals:

- What measurable thing(s) will we do this year toward accomplishing this objective?
- How will we accomplish these things?

- How will we measure our success?
- What will happen if this goal is not reached? (This will help you evaluate the priority of the goal.)
- What advice, resources, or training do we need to accomplish this goal?
- What obstacles or problems need to be overcome to achieve this goal? (This will help you to evaluate how realistic is your goal.)
- Who will work on this goal? When should it be finished? How will you know when you have accomplished this goal? (Unless someone takes responsibility for the goal, it will not get implemented.)
- Who can help us to be accountable for our goals?

The recorder should write down the team goals for each objective along with the projected completion date and the responsible party.

When you have completed the above exercise, you will have finished the strategic planning process. You now have in your possession a ministry purpose statement, a listing of your core values and distinctives, your overall objectives, and your specific goals. Use this “document” as a starting point for future strategic planning sessions with your team (group).

CONCLUSION

A strategic plan is useful only if it is seen as a working document and reviewed on a periodic basis. A team may plan to review goals weekly and establish new ones monthly or at least quarterly. Usually your purpose statement, core values, and distinctives do not change. They are the foundations of what God has called you and your team to do. Until that purpose is fulfilled, it remains the same. However, as you continue to work towards your purpose, and your understanding of it grows, you may find yourself refining your purpose.

Remember that no plan is perfect. It is a guide to help you stay on the right track. The best-laid plans are nothing if the Lord is not in your work. As the writer of Proverbs reminds us, *“Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make your paths straight”* (Pr 3:5-6).

Once a purpose/strategy is established, the team should review it often. Never assume that the plan is accepted and understood by every member of the team the same way. People on most teams tend to lose sight of the purpose if they are not constantly reminded of it by other team members.

It is important to remember that the resulting strategic plans are not unchangeable. Rather, they are a working plan of what you and your team see as the best activities to do, at this moment in time, in order to progress towards your vision. As you begin to implement the activities identified in your plan, you may recognize other issues or concerns which might cause a modification to your strategic plan. That is why it is important to review your strategic plan on a regular basis. A plan is only useful if it helps your team to live more purposefully and keep your ministry focused on the most important activities.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What are some other examples from Scripture, or from your own life, in which you have seen effective planning lead to effective results?
 -
2. What is the most important part of strategic planning?
 -
3. What are some of your personal values that you bring to your ministry team?
 -
4. What are ways in which people in your culture brainstorm about ideas to solve problems?

ASSIGNMENT

Do strategic planning with your church planting team or the leadership of your emerging church. Share your plan with your mentor and be prepared to share it at the next training session.

SPIRITUAL CHARACTER

Lesson 12: Forgiveness

We are redeemed sinners living in an imperfect world. At our best, we are going through the process of being transformed little by little into the image of Jesus Christ (2Co 3:18). In the course of a normal day, things may be said and done to us that are painful. Likewise we say and do things that offend others. Indeed, we need an ongoing love and forgiveness toward others. As we will learn in this lesson, forgiveness allows us to acknowledge the sin of others while blessing them by canceling the debt – following the example of our heavenly Father.

I. THE NEED TO FORGIVE - MINH AND HIS NEIGHBOR

Minh is having a hard time loving his neighbor Kinh because Kinh is so loud. Nearly every evening Kinh has friends over to chat and play games. They make a lot of disturbing noise. Minh has complained about this to Kinh – but Kinh pays no attention to him. In fact, after Minh complains, the group becomes louder. It seems as if Kinh and his friends are deliberately being loud to annoy Minh. Sometimes Minh can hear their conversations which are often filled with gossip and malicious talk about others (including Minh himself)!

What should Minh do about the noise? On the one hand, this is a petty issue. Other neighbors do not complain and many join Kinh for his evening gatherings. Minh thinks “shouldn’t I be able to overlook this?” On the other hand, Minh cannot concentrate on work that he would like to do, and often the noise is a problem when Minh is trying to sleep.

Question 1: What should Minh do? Look at the following possible answers. What do you think about the merits of each?

Minh’s Options	Comments
Be loud like Kinh	<i>In his anger this thought has occurred to Minh. But obviously it would not solve anything – on the contrary, it would make matters worse.</i>
“Bribe” Kinh	<i>Minh could make a deal like “if you can be quiet, I will let you use my car, I’ll take you to dinner... or whatever.” But this does not seem like it would work.</i>
Call the police	<i>Minh could do this and he has thought about it many times. But this does not seem like it would work.</i>
Ignore the noise	<i>He has tried this many times – he is simply unable to ignore it. The more he ignores it, the louder it seems to get.</i>
Join the party	<i>Minh does not enjoy this kind of social activity – he likes quiet evenings at home, reading. Besides, he has never been invited.</i>
Make a deal	<i>He could say “OK, you can make as much noise as you want on Wednesday, Friday and Saturday, if you keep it quiet on the other days.” But would this really solve anything?</i>
Pray	<i>Minh has prayed the Kinh would be quiet many times. But for some reason, God does not seem to answer this prayer the way in which Minh wants.</i>
Wear ear plugs	<i>Minh does not want to wear ear plugs in his own house. Besides, he has tried this and it just adds to his irritation.</i>

Obviously, solutions such as these are not the answer. Doing some of these things might help – but even when they help, they do not get to the heart of the problem. Minh is feels offended and angry when Kinh may or may not mean to offend. The bitterness that Minh carries over this issue is getting the best of him. He will not have peace in his heart or harmony with Kinh until he has dealt with the anger and bitterness deep in his own heart. But how does he do that?

Usually, when we are close to a person over a long period of time we build up a score of issues with them that we have not forgiven. When we do not forgive we focus on our pain and hurt. Such a focus often leads to more pain and hurt as bitterness takes over and we ironically become like the object of our bitterness! However, we can forgive when we focus on Christ's forgiveness of us. Such forgiveness fills us with joy and freedom as we become more like Christ—the object of our focus.

Like Minh, perhaps you have an issue with a neighbor, friend, spouse, relative or co-worker. Do you feel shorted, injured, used or offended by someone? As we proceed through this lesson think of such a situation in which you need to forgive someone. If you cannot think of anyone, consider that fact that a lack of forgiveness is often subtle, and manifests itself as a knee-jerk reaction to things that this person does to us. Is there someone whom you avoid or who is irritating to you?

Question 2: Who do you need to forgive?

II. THE CHALLENGE TO FORGIVE

A. Excuses for not forgiving

Question 3: Satan, the world's system and our own flesh teach lies that lead us to not forgive. What are some excuses we may have for not forgiving others? What are the answers to these excuses?

Note the excuses listed here.

Excuses we use to not forgive	Truth about forgiveness
<p><i>“If I forgive, this person will then take advantage of me, abuse me, and control me.”</i></p>	<p>Exactly the opposite is true. When we do not forgive, we distance ourselves and go out of our way to avoid people, or we begin to gossip about them. These are all indications of how the other person is starting to control us, and how we are actually in a kind of bondage to them.</p>
<p><i>“If I forgive, I am excusing the sin and ignoring the evil committed against me.”</i></p>	<p>Again, the opposite is true. Forgiveness is acknowledging and facing up to the real evil committed. When forgiving we do not say: "Hey, it's not a big deal." Rather, we say: "I forgive you," meaning that we will no longer hold their sin to their account.</p>
<p><i>“If I forgive, this person will become more deeply entrenched in their sin.”</i></p>	<p>Actually, the opposite often occurs. When Christ prays that God would forgive his persecutors (Luke 23:34), the centurion is converted (Mark 15:39). Likewise, Stephen prays for the forgiveness of his persecutors, Saul is converted shortly afterwards (Acts 7:60-8:1). God not only forgives, he also works through those who are forgiving. When we repeatedly forgive, we are no longer in bondage to the sins of others and we can love them genuinely. They notice! And this often leads to repentance.</p>

B. How Often Must I Forgive? (Matthew 18:21-35)

In Matthew 18:21 Peter asked Jesus a very interesting question: “how much should I forgive?” Note that in his question, he suggests an answer – seven times. The common teaching of the day was that you only had to forgive someone three times. Peter seemed to know that that was not enough for Jesus and so he suggests forgiving seven times.

In replying to Peter, Jesus answers in two ways (read Matthew 18:21-35). First, Jesus calls us to forgive seventy times seven. With this answer Jesus is telling us that he is not concerned about limits and calculations. Jesus calls us to forgive without limit.

Secondly Jesus tells a story. In the story two debts are described. While neither debt is trivial, 10,000 talents, the amount the wicked servant owed, is by far the greater of the two. According to Josephus, a Jewish historian, all the taxes collected from all of the provinces of Judea, Idumea, and Samaria in 4 BC amounted to 600 talents. So 10,000 talents is an enormous sum. It is an incalculable debt, amounting to the equivalent of billions of dollars by today’s standards.

The other debt is one hundred denarii. This is the amount the wicked servant was owed. Is this a significant debt? A hundred denarii constitutes about one third of a year's wages, since the standard pay was a denarius a day. Even though this debt is nothing in comparison with what the wicked servant owed the king, it is still a sizable debt on a human scale.

Question 4: What is so unusual about the behavior of the wicked servant (v. 28 - 30)?

There are many ways to explain forgiveness, but according to this passage, forgiveness means you cancel the debts that are owed you. This is a picture of what forgiveness is all about. The king in the parable checks his financial records. Does everything balance? No, but he takes the loss upon himself. Forgiveness means that you are willing to take the loss and wipe out the balance owed. The king forgives everything, with no conditions.

We may wonder: *"How could this servant be so cruel so quickly after such kindness was extended to him?"* We also have been forgiven a huge debt and yet we are not always so eager to extend forgiveness to others. When we have been offended, do we often force “payment” instead of offering forgiveness? If we are not living with the reality that God in Christ has forgiven our great debt of sin, we will do exactly as the servant did in the parable. We will say: *"I'm not going to take this anymore. It's payback time--never mind what God has done for me."* When we seek revenge, instead of mercy, we are like the servant in the parable.

III. FINDING COURAGE TO FORGIVE

A. The Gospel and Forgiveness

Forgiveness is important not just relationally, in order to get along with others, but it is important spiritually – in that the capacity to forgive is a reflection of our relationship with God. As Christians we can forgive because we have been forgiven. Likewise, when we find it difficult to forgive, it implies that we do not understand the degree to which we have been forgiven in Christ.

When we are wronged or injured by another person we naturally and inwardly think, *"I am right and they are wrong."* In doing so we cling to our own righteousness and demonstrate our blindness to our own shortcomings and sins. We simply don't want to admit our own inadequacies or our need for forgiveness.

In contrast to the *"I am right and they are wrong"* attitude, the gospel message provides a very different approach. In the face of the ultimate offense, mankind's rebellion against God, Jesus gave up His rights, took a very humble attitude (Phil 2:5-8) and suffered (1 Pet 3:18), forgiving us and making resolution possible.

What would it be like if we took this attitude with others? Wouldn't forgiveness be easier if we were more willing to take a humble position instead of protecting our own pride? This is the attitude Jesus has for us. His

example and work in our lives enables us to give up our "right to be right" and consider the needs of others above our own (Phil 2:2-3).

B. Rich enough to forgive

Imagine that you are very poor and a friend tried to take \$10 out of your hand. What will happen? Most probably, you will try to hold onto it. You are not going to let go of a \$10 bill. Now imagine that you were given a thousand dollars. In such a case, if your friend tried to take the \$10 bill, it will not be as big a deal. You might willingly open your hand and give it away, because now you are rich.

In a similar way, God not only wipes out our great debt, he makes us his children, gives his Spirit, and pours out on us every blessing in Christ. Our debt of sin has been forgiven, and in its place we have received the righteousness of Christ, making us so rich that we can afford to share this wealth and not hold other's sins against us against them.

This is exemplified by Stephen. Stephen was clearly wronged when he was stoned because of his faith (Acts 7). How could he forgive those who were persecuting him? The Bible says that he looked to heaven and saw Christ standing in heaven (verses 55-56). Stephen focused on Christ through whom he had been declared righteous. Out of this knowledge of the gospel, Stephen could pray: "*Lord, do not hold this sin against them*" (verse 60). Stephen gives us a picture of amazing power. Our response depends on who we are looking at. Will we look at the people who have wronged us, or at the person who has forgiven us?

IV. PRACTICING FORGIVENESS

Knowing and doing are two different things. We can know all about forgiveness and still not be able to do it. This is because forgiveness is not about the head, but the heart. By way of summary, here are several concepts that not only teach us how, but also give us the courage to forgive:

- When we forgive, we are not overlooking or excusing sin; on the contrary, we are acknowledging the sin that people have committed against us.
- To be able to forgive someone who has sinned against you, you need to understand how much you have been forgiven.
- We tend to become like the person we dwell on. In the case of forgiveness, we can dwell either on Christ through whom we are forgiven, or we can dwell on the person who has hurt us.
- To forgive, we excuse the debt, give up whatever we previously thought we had a right to and take the loss. This has the effect of freeing both us and the person who sinned against us.
- When we forgive from the heart we give up control and allow the Holy Spirit to convict, bless and lead in miraculous ways.

A. Example #1: Minh and Kinh

Question 5: How can Minh forgive Kinh his neighbor? How can he take the path to freedom and avoid the path to bondage that comes from a lack of forgiveness or from counterfeit forgiveness?

Minh must focus on his own wrong in the situation. This is not to say that Kinh is not behaving insensitively. But Minh must deal with his own sin (impatience, lack of love, etc) in order to love and forgive Kinh for his sin. This is very difficult because Minh has a legitimate complaint. But to focus on that is to judge and condemn Kinh who needs to be forgiven just as Minh has been forgiven. Forgiving Kinh is something that Minh will probably need to do repeatedly.

B. Example #2: You and _____

Think about a person who you have not been able to forgive or someone you have forgiven only on the surface. If it is hard to think of someone in particular, think about a person that you would prefer to not be around right now, or of someone who brings up feelings of anger, bitterness, shame, or fear. Be honest and take your time as you answer the following questions.

Question 6: *What do you find most irritating about this person?*

Question 7: *How exactly has this person opposed, offended, or sinned against you in some way? In other words, what is the debt?*

Question 8: *How have you kept a record of their wrongs in this situation?*

Question 9: *What "conditions" have you set for this person so that after they have met them you will be able to forgive them? In other words, what does your heart demand in order to release them from paying the debt? What specifically do you want them to do or say?*

Question 10: *Have you tried to get back at the other person because of what they did to you? How have you tried to get them to pay for what they did?*

Question 11: *How has your response to the offense kept you from Christ?*

Question 12: *Describe your debt. How much are you in debt to God? Describe how it is greater than you know, yet it is canceled and forgiven. Consider that the very things you hold against this person are also in you.*

Question 13: *How has your previous relating to this person reflected a small view of you own debt and a small view of Christ's forgiveness?*

Question 14: *Describe your sin in not loving and forgiving this person.*

Question 15: *Explain how the Gospel can enable you to be compassionate toward this person.*

Question 16: *Describe a few specific steps you can take, in relation to this person.*

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How is forgiveness like canceling a debt?
2. Why is it so difficult to forgive?
3. How can the truth of the gospel enable us to forgive?
4. What happens to us when we do not forgive others?

ASSIGNMENT

If you have not completed section IV "Practicing Forgiveness", part B, do so before the next training session. Write out your answers and share your experience with your mentor.

MONTH 10

Review of Month 9

From Lesson 9, “Training Cell Group Leaders”

- If you have not yet chosen an apprentice leader from within your cell group, pray about it and then do it. If no one seems qualified, select someone to disciple and develop into a leader.
- Begin to involve your apprentice in ministry with you, and actively delegate more and more ministry to him.
- From time to time, evaluate your apprentice, and ask your apprentice to evaluate you in regards to your ministry with the group.
- Pray for your apprentice leader.

From Lesson 10, “Skills for Leaders”

Write a report on the various factors in your leadership situation by answering the following questions. Give this report to your mentor and discuss it with him before the next training session.

1) Describe yourself as a leader

- What leadership style do you use the most?
- Which limitations do you see yourself as having? What can you do to compensate for these limitations?

2) Describe your group

- Describe their skills and abilities.
- What is their level of commitment to the task?
- Are there any interpersonal conflicts that need to be addressed?

3) Describe your task

- Are you planting a church among resistant or receptive people?
- Are you or members of your team “outsiders” or “foreigners” among these groups?
- Do you have enough information about your context? Do you and your group understand your task?
- Do you have a clear plan and strategy that takes the results of your research into account?
- Are there any unique spiritual dynamics that must be confronted?
- Are there any political pressures that are affecting the situation?
- Do you have the resources needed to complete the task?
- In what ways has God prepared you and your group for this task?

4) Conclusion

- As a result of what you have learned, what do you need to focus on?
- What leadership style would be most effective in your situation, and why?

From Lesson 11, “Strategic Planning”

Do strategic planning with your church planting team or the leadership of your emerging church. Share your plan with your mentor and be prepared to share it at the next training session.

From Lesson 12, “Forgiveness”

If you have not completed section IV "Practicing Forgiveness", part B, do so before the next training session. Write out your answers and share your experience with your mentor.

CELL GROUP MINISTRY

Lesson 13: Multiplying Cell Groups

I. THE GOAL OF MULTIPLICATION

The group was meeting together for the last time. Things couldn't have been worse. Their leader was leaving, the apprentice was unreliable, others in the group were squabbling and vying for positions of prominence, and one member was about to be exposed for embezzlement, fraud, and disloyalty. Defeat and fear permeated the atmosphere of the room as the leader stood to speak. He said, "*Don't let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God . . .*"

The leader was Jesus, the dysfunctional cell group was the twelve disciples, and the meeting took place just hours before His arrest, trial, and execution. In spite of the advanced deterioration of this group's morale during the multiplication stage, by the power of the Holy Spirit, it survived to multiply again and again. Within a generation, its numbers had increased exponentially to fill the Roman Empire.

In the same way, each cell group which is approaching the multiplication phase needs to consider Jesus' words: "*Don't let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God...*" (Jn 14:1).

No matter how difficult this transition may seem, multiplication in a cell group is for the greater good of the Kingdom of God. Our ultimate goal in cell group ministry is the fulfillment of the Great Commission. Our method of approaching that goal is through cell groups which evangelize, disciple believers, equip leaders, and reproduce. Without reproduction, this goal will never be reached.

It has been stated before that cell groups can be used as “building blocks” for a larger ministry strategy. Cell groups which reproduce themselves can be used to strengthen existing churches and start new churches. In this way, they can be used as a foundation for a church planting strategy. In the same way, multiplying cell groups makes it possible not only to see new churches started, but also to help develop and advance a saturation church planting movement in a region or nation. Cell groups naturally contribute to the small “grassroots” activities of evangelism, discipleship and leadership development which are necessary in order to see a movement of new churches started.

In many ways, multiplication is the culmination of many months of effort in a cell group. It is an important occasion for the group, and one which should be encouraged and celebrated. Although there are several things that the cell group leader can and should do to prepare the group for multiplication, perhaps the most important is simply to trust in God, that He will lead the one group to become two. By His power and the leading of the Holy Spirit, multiplication is a process which will happen over and over again in cell groups.

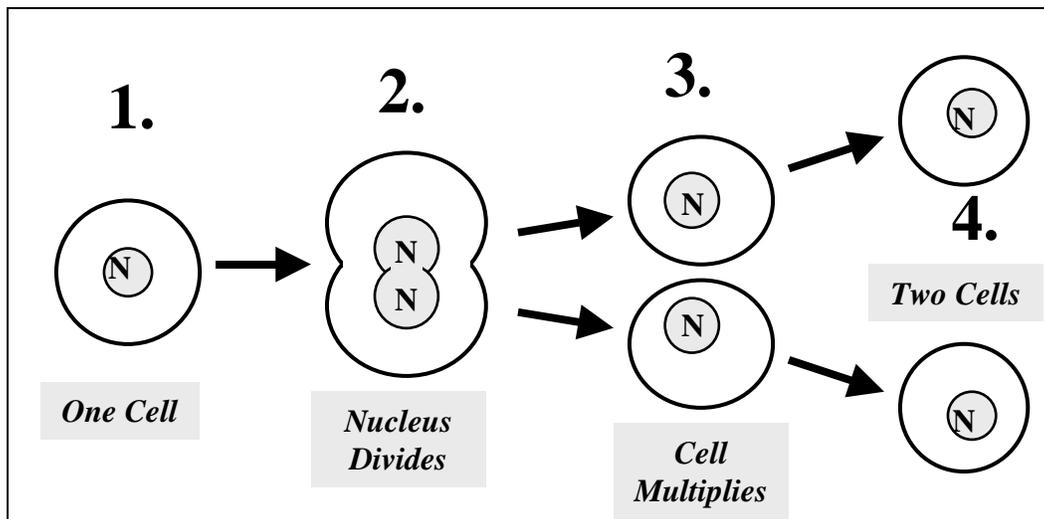
Question 1: Why is cell group multiplication important in the church planting process?

II. THE PROCESS OF “NATURAL” MULTIPLICATION

A. Biological Multiplication

In biology, cells multiply by a process of growing and duplicating themselves. Each cell has a nucleus (shown as “N” in the figure below), which controls the activity of the cell. As the cell is nourished and grows, the one nucleus begins to grow and develop into two nuclei. When the right amount of growth has taken place, the one cell multiplies into two, each with its own nucleus. This process of growth and duplication continues over and over again, as long as the cells are nourished and can grow.

Biological Cell Multiplication



Multiplication in cell groups also happens in a way similar to biological cell reproduction. Each cell group has a leader, who provides the right “conditions” for the group to grow and be nourished. If the cell group is not nurtured and developed (i.e. spiritual growth and evangelistic outreach), the group will not grow. The leader provides the example, teaching, and incentive to the group members to reach out to the people around them. Through the working of the Holy Spirit, these friends and acquaintances are brought into the group and have opportunity to learn about Jesus and receive Him as their Savior.

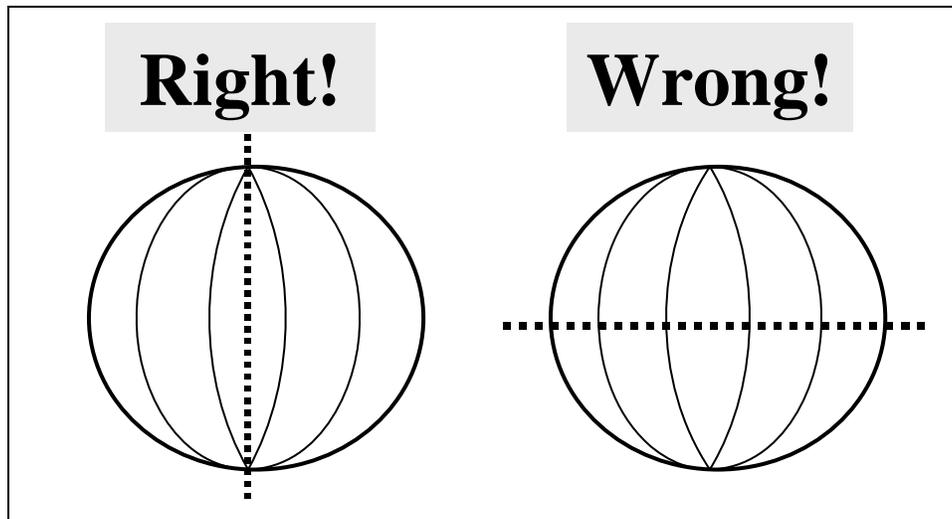
As the cell group continues to grow in maturity, the cell group leader also begins to work with an apprentice leader. This new leader learns from the words and actions of his mentor, and in many ways becomes an imitator (1 Co. 11:1) of the mentor. When the apprentice leader is mentally and spiritually prepared to lead his own group, the original cell group will multiply into two groups. Each group has its own leader, and can begin the process of growing and multiplying again.

God created biological cells with the purpose and ability to duplicate themselves. However, without the right conditions for growth and development, this will not happen, and the cells will eventually die. Cell groups also have the potential to grow, develop and duplicate themselves. In the same way as a biological cell, without the right conditions for growth, this will not happen in a cell group.

B. Natural Clusters

Imagine a cell group where the leader is holding two large, juicy oranges. He asks for two volunteers from the group to each peel one of the oranges and then divide it in half. However, they each must use a different method to do this. The first person must divide his orange in half crosswise, along its equator. The second person must divide his on the north-south axis, along the naturally occurring segments.

Dividing an Orange



You can imagine what will happen with each orange. A parallel can be drawn to what can happen in cell groups when it is time to form two groups from the one. A group torn apart, without regard for the naturally occurring friendships within the group, can make a big mess. If you split a group arbitrarily, by numbers, by geographical boundaries, or by some means other than natural relationships, you may end up with many injured group members.

However, if you identify naturally occurring clusters of relationships within your group and then divide the group by these clusters, the result will be much more beneficial. To encourage the formation of these clusters, start early in the group's life to experiment with different compositions. Observe how your members naturally divide into sub-groups of three, four, or five members. Note who gravitated toward whom, and who took leadership. Try this for three or four weeks to see if any specific clusters are naturally developing.

You may wish to plan for the formation of these sub-groups by drawing a diagram of the relationships. What groups of three, four, or five people are most alike? Who has children with similar ages? Similar jobs? Similar interests? Who has previously developed friendships or networks of relationships? You can allow these sub-groups to form on their own, or you can encourage certain people in the cell group to form a sub-group based on what you know about their personalities and interests. Clusters will be, in a sense, "mini cells." You will want to meet as a large group for most of the cell group meeting, but you can dismiss into clusters for Bible study, for prayer or for sharing.

Your apprentice leader should either naturally, or by your suggestion, begin to work with one of the clusters. If there are several clusters in your cell group, have your apprentice work with the cluster which seems to have the greatest potential for becoming a new "daughter" cell group. By being involved, the apprentice leader will develop closer relationships with these members and will be better prepared to lead them when it is time to start a new group. This also contributes to a better pastoral care within your group. Many people will talk more freely in a smaller group of three to five than they would before a larger group of ten or more people. Linking people into a cluster means that their absence will be noticed more quickly. They will realize that their presence is needed, and they will be touched by the others in such a way that they will become more committed to the group.

Clusters can also be used to help identify potential apprentice leaders. Experience has shown that in a small group of people, one person will always naturally emerge as the leader if no one has been assigned that role. As

a cell group leader is prayerfully determining who might become the apprentice leader, he or she can examine the clusters to see which members are naturally emerging as “leaders” of the clusters. These are people whom the leader should pray about and perhaps approach about becoming an apprentice leader.

Question 2: What kinds of things hinder cell group multiplication?

C. Steps to Multiplication

Multiplication in a cell group is intentional – the leader and members of the group must set this goal before themselves, and actively work towards reaching that goal. This is the only way that multiplication will be seen as a natural part of the life cycle of a cell group. If the cell group leader does not make multiplication a priority, the members of the group will not make it a priority, either.

1. Preparing Ahead for Multiplication of the Cell Group

The cell group leader should prepare the cell for multiplication throughout the life of the cell. In order to provide the right “conditions” for growth and multiplication of a cell group, the leader has several responsibilities:

- The leader must continually give a vision to the members that their one group will develop into two. This vision must start when the group starts, not several weeks before it is time to multiply. He should explain why multiplication is good and necessary to help fulfill the mandate which Christ gave us in the Great Commission.
- The leader must encourage the group to reach out to the unbelievers in their network of relationships. Without numerical growth, there is no need to multiply.
- The leader must provide an environment in the group where discipleship takes place between the believers. Without spiritual growth, the need to multiply may not be clearly understood.
- The leader must mentor an apprentice leader who will take the responsibility for leading one of the two groups. As the time for multiplication approaches, the apprentice must develop an overall goal for his new group, as well as a plan for at least the first several meetings. The leader should review this with the apprentice and offer advice or suggestions.
- There must be a planned date when multiplication will happen. The leader must hold the group accountable to completing the process of multiplication on or near that date.

2. Implementing the Multiplication of the Cell Group

Assuming that a cell group leader has done all these things, how should the cell group actually be multiplied?

- Discuss the upcoming changes with the group. People who have never before been in a group which has multiplied will be, in varying degrees, apprehensive about multiplication. They mistakenly believe that the strength of the group consists in who belongs to it rather than to Whom it belongs. Take their fears seriously and help them through. During the multiplication process, LISTEN, PRAY, & ENCOURAGE. Do all you can to keep discouragement or negativity from becoming the dominant force. Read and meditate on John 14-17 to gain spiritual insight on how Jesus handled the multiplication stage with his group of disciples.
- Determine who will lead which group. In some cases, when a cell group multiplies, the apprentice leader will become the leader of the “daughter” cell group. However, this depends entirely on the group itself, and it is just as acceptable for the current cell group leader to begin working with the new group, while the apprentice leader becomes the leader of the original group. This sometimes works well when the members of the new group are not as spiritually mature as are the members who stay with the original group.

- Decide who will join the new group and who will stay with the original group. The cell group leader needs to ask the group members to pray and decide which group God wants them to be a part of. He or she should not ask which leader they would like better. This can create competition, disunity, stress and an uncomfortable situation for everyone involved. The leader should not presume or choose which members will go with which groups. Any suggestions should be made carefully without even the appearance of coercion or manipulation. Rely on the Holy Spirit to arrange the groups the way He wants.
- Choose a meeting location for the new group. The new group needs to decide where it will meet. This might be in the home of the new leader or in the home of one of the new group members. It is important to decide on a location and to make arrangements to use it. The new group members need to feel a sense of stability, security and identity in the place where they will meet together.
- Plan to meet with the apprentice leader to continue to mentor him/her in the new group. The cell group leader must plan to spend time with his apprentice leader after multiplication happens. The first several weeks and months of the new cell group will be the most difficult for the new leader. Having a mentor close by to pray with and discuss problems with will be immensely helpful for the new cell group leader.
- As a group, decide when the last meeting date of the original group will be, and plan to make it a celebration! Review and give thanks for all the things God has done in and through the group. Pray for each other and for the future of both groups. Rejoice that through two groups, more people can be reached with the love of Christ. Show the group the importance of this step in helping to fulfill the Great Commission. Have a special “commissioning” for the new leader and group members – gather them together and pray for them, that God will use them mightily in their new group.

Each time a new cell group is started, there are naturally some doubts, fears and uncertainties. What if the new group is not as “good” as the original group? What will change? How will the relationships be different? It is important to remember that the new group will be significantly different from the old one. Don’t expect that everything will be the same as it was in the original group, because it won’t. The Holy Spirit desires to work through the lives of the believers in the new group in a unique and special way.

Perhaps most important is simply to trust that God is in control and that He will guide and direct both the old and the new groups. Jesus said in John 14:27, “*Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.*” These are words to live by, and especially during the time when a cell group has reached the phase of multiplication.

III. BARRIERS TO MULTIPLICATION

The topic of multiplying cell groups is of great interest among cell group members and leaders. Two dynamics in cell groups wage war one against the other. The first is the fact that multiplying a group is healthy for both the group and the kingdom. The second is the fact that, left to their own devices, very few groups ever would multiply. Multiplying is perceived as a potentially painful event, a split which severs relationships. People want to get together and stay together. They rarely realize that the group that focuses only on its own members and needs will grow stale or die within one or two years.

In any cell group, there are some common barriers which can prevent multiplication from happening. The following table describes some of these barriers, and offers suggestions to the cell group leader as to how he or she can overcome them. Of course, there may be other barriers or hindrances which are unique for your culture or context. If so, try to think about how you could possibly overcome those barriers so that multiplication can happen in your cell groups.

Barriers to Cell Multiplication

Problem	Suggestions
The group does not understand the importance of multiplication.	The cell group leader must not only give a vision for multiplication, but he or she must also explain <u>why</u> multiplication is so important. The cell group members must understand what benefits there are for the group and for the advancement of the Kingdom of God.
The group understands the need to multiply, but they are comfortable with each other and do not want to split.	<p>Pray that the Holy Spirit will give you wisdom in understanding your group and your unique situation.</p> <p>Stress the importance of multiplication and explain that it is the next step in the natural progression of the life of the group.</p> <p>Demonstrate how multiplication is being obedient to God’s command to “go and make disciples” in Mt. 28:19. Through multiplication, your cell group has an important and active role in helping to fulfill the Great Commission.</p> <p>Pray about dividing the group along natural lines, using the cluster concept.</p>
There is no apprentice leader.	<p>First, the cell group leader must spend time in prayer, asking the Holy Spirit to give him wisdom about whom to choose. Then, he must purposefully make this choice and begin to disciple and mentor the apprentice.</p> <p>Use clusters in your cell group to possibly identify naturally emerging leaders. Pray about these people as potential apprentice leaders for a new cell group.</p> <p>For guidelines on choosing an apprentice leader, review the Cell Group lesson from Month 9, “Training New Cell Group Leaders”</p>
There is disagreement about who goes with which group.	<p>If your group has several clusters, consider using one or more clusters to start the new group. Consider lines of natural relationships in the group.</p> <p>Ask each group member to pray and ask the Holy Spirit to make it clear to him/her which group to be with.</p> <p>Conduct an open and honest discussion in the cell group meeting to find out the reasons for the lack of unity in this decision.</p>
The cell group members feel the apprentice is not yet qualified to be a cell group leader.	<p>Wait to start the new group until the apprentice is ready.</p> <p>Involve the apprentice in ALL aspects of ministry with you.</p> <p>Have the apprentice do more and more of the ministry in the group. Have the cell group leader do less and less ministry.</p> <p>Set a new date for the apprentice to become a cell group leader and strive to develop him or her mentally, emotionally and spiritually before that time.</p>

There can be barriers to multiplication in any cell group, but if the leader thinks about the possible problems beforehand and works proactively to overcome the barriers before they become problems, many of them can be avoided altogether. The most proactive thing which the cell group leader can do is to continually keep the vision and benefits of multiplication before the group from day one.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How does multiplication in cell groups help to advance a saturation church planting movement?
2. What are “natural clusters” in a cell group? How can they be used to help a group move through the multiplication phase? What can happen when a group is ready to multiply and the members are divided arbitrarily, without consideration for the relationships in the group?
3. How can clusters be used to help identify potential new cell group leaders?
4. What is the most common barrier to multiplication in a cell group? How can it be overcome?

ENDNOTE

There is another method for multiplying cell groups which allows the original group to remain intact, while some (or all) of the group members start their own secondary groups. It is a strategy that a man named Cesar Castellanos developed in Bogota, Columbia and named “G12”. The premise is that a group has 12 members, each of which in time becomes a leader or his or her own group.

This method has advantages and disadvantages, and if you want to try this in your cell group ministry you are encouraged to research it more fully and adapt it to your situation and needs, rather than simply copying what Cesar and others have done. You can learn more from these and other websites:

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/G12_Vision

<http://joelcomiskeygroup.com/articles/coaching/understandingG12.htm>

ASSIGNMENT

- Begin to think about what needs to happen in each of your groups in order to reach the goal of multiplication. Write down five things that you will do in the next three months in order to move your groups closer to multiplication.
- Develop a plan for multiplication in your groups. Be sure to include your apprentice leaders in this process so that they will also be equipped to plan for the multiplication of their groups. Pray about and include in your plan a multiplication date for each group. Find someone that will hold you accountable to implementing this plan for multiplication.

SOURCES

- Portions of this lesson were quoted with permission from an article entitled, *Multiplication* by Dan Smith (Small Group Network, 1996. <http://smallgroups.com>).
- Logan, Robert. *Multiplication of Cell Groups*. Old Tappan, NJ: Fleming H. Revell Co., n.d.

Lesson 14: Corporate Leadership Skills – Supervising Cells

A team of three evangelists (Quang, Lan and Thanh) has been working in a city of about 35,000 people for the past three years. They have each begun several cell groups, and some of these groups have multiplied several times over. If one were to look at the number of groups meeting and the numbers of people who have been saved, it would seem that their ministry has been successful so far.

However, as the groups continue to grow and multiply, Quang, Lan and Thanh are becoming more and more frustrated. Each of them has had problems and questions trying to develop new apprentice leaders, and there is no one for them to turn to for advice. They are all so busy that they rarely even see each other, and it seems that they have all drifted into their own separate ministries. When Quang, Lan and Thanh first started working in the city, Quang had a vision for starting several new churches using the cells. Lately, though, everyone is so busy with his or her own groups that no one talks about that anymore.

What Quang, Lan and Thanh don't know is that several of the newest groups are experiencing problems that some of the more experienced leaders could help with, but no one has told them or asked them for help. Two of the groups are both planning to hold evangelistic outreaches in the same exact area of the city, while large areas of town remain without any kind of witness for Christ. Quang is glad that the cells are continuing to grow and multiply, but it seems to him that somehow they could accomplish more if they could find a way to work in harmony one with another.

What Quang doesn't realize in this scenario is that there is an administrative aspect which is missing from his cell group ministry. Someone needs to provide supervision for the cells in order to organize and coordinate their efforts as they reach out to their city.

Unfortunately, for many people involved in ministry, the word "administration" brings to mind images of boring paperwork and unnecessary interruptions. Sometimes "administration" even means authority, hierarchy and control, and therefore is something that people want to avoid in their ministries. However, administration that is properly developed and applied can help to make the best possible use of God's resources and can enable ministries to be very fruitful.

Administration is an essential aspect of cell group ministry, and it is **absolutely necessary** in order to bring about a church planting movement through the use of cell groups. Administration in the form of a supervisory structure is a necessary component of a larger ministry vision, especially as the cell groups begin to grow and multiply.

Question 1: What kind of help have you needed as a cell group leader?

I. SUPERVISION OF CELL GROUPS

In a general sense, a "supervisor" is someone who oversees the work of another person. He or she is responsible to make sure that the work is done well and on time. In a ministry of cell groups, there is a need for "supervisors" to help the cell group leaders with the "work" that happens in a cell group. These supervisors do not "control" and force cell group leaders to do things their way; instead, they provide insight, wisdom and practical advice to the leaders, so that the cell groups are effective in their ministries.

A. Importance of Supervision

No matter how cell groups are used in ministry, consideration must be given to how the cells will be supervised in that particular ministry context. There are several reasons for this:

Coordination: Groups which are supervised have a leadership structure which is able to coordinate the efforts of individual groups in light of an overall ministry strategy. As the cells minister individually, there is

coordination so that the efforts of each group contribute towards the accomplishment of a larger ministry task. Coordination is the result of being able to see the "big picture" of what is (or could be) happening outside the individual cell groups.

For example, let's say that the goal is to evangelize a whole town or village and start three new churches. If the efforts of the cells are coordinated, the groups are able to spread throughout the town and not "overlap" each another. Research can show the natural affinity groups and geographic zones in town, and each cell group can draw a "target area" where it will focus. In this way the cells are able to be an effective witness throughout the entire town. As the time comes to start the new churches, coordination between the cells provides a balanced and reasonable approach to grouping the cells into churches.

Guidance: When some type of supervisory structure is in place, each cell group leader has someone to whom he can turn with questions, problems and difficulties. There is a structured environment in which the cell group leaders can learn from each other, as well as learning from more experienced leaders. Instead of struggling with problems or questions by themselves, they have someone to turn to for help and advice.

Cell group leaders find themselves constantly ministering to the needs of the people in their groups, but no one ministers to them. One of the most important aspects of supervision is that it provides care and nurture for leaders of cell groups. One practical way that this can happen is to create a "leadership" cell group, in which the cell group leaders come together to be ministered to and to learn from one another.

Accountability: Each cell group will have its own goals that contribute towards an overall ministry focus. The leaders of the cell groups need someone to whom they are accountable to meet those goals. The goals of each group can be periodically evaluated and adjusted, if necessary. This is especially helpful with new groups and leaders, to help them pray and think about God's will for their group and to help them set realistic goals for the group. Rather than "waiting for things to happen," a cell group leader who is held accountable will strive to help his group accomplish that which God has set before them as a goal.

Integrity: One of the advantages to ministry in groups is that new believers are disciplined and new leaders are developed within the cells. However, a lack of maturity mixed with excessive zeal can sometimes be a dangerous combination. It is possible for a cell group to get off track and begin to misinterpret and/or misapply the Scriptures. A supervisory structure can provide the "checking" which needs to happen in any cell group so that exaggeration, extremes and even heresy do not become a problem. A group which is left to itself can end up with faulty interpretation and teaching of God's word.

B. Supervisory Structure

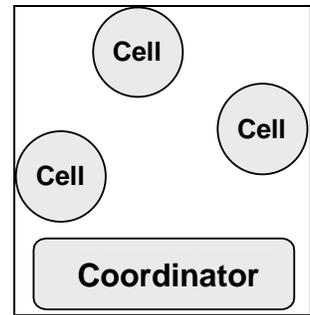
No matter how cell groups are supervised, the basic concept remains the same: there must be a structured approach to coordinate and help the cell group leaders as they strive to develop the people and ministries in their cells. The supervisors hold the cell group leader accountable to tasks and goals in the group, and observe the teaching and spiritual development of both the leader and the members in the group.

A typical supervisory structure for cell groups usually consists of two levels: Local Church Leaders – *Pastors and Equippers* (see Month 9, lesson 7, Mobilizing leaders) work directly with cell group leaders. In this lesson we will call these leaders **Coordinators**. We will call the next level of supervision **Overseers**. These are those who work primarily with the Coordinators. These leaders correspond to the Regional Church Leaders – *Movement Mobilizers* as described in lesson 7. Both Coordinators and Overseers have specific roles and responsibilities to help to develop the cell group leaders and the ministries within cell groups.

1. Coordinator

Since the role of a Coordinator is primarily to guide and teach cell group leaders, a Coordinator should spend time as a cell group leader before being appointed to this position. Cell group leaders need to have someone who will mentor them if their ministry is to be successful. Following are areas in which a Coordinator needs to be involved in the life and ministry of a cell group leader:

- Problems in the group - The Coordinator meets with the cell group leaders on a regular basis. In some ministries it is as often as once a week, and other times it may be only once a month. This may be an informal meeting, or the Coordinator may choose to create a "leadership" cell group. During these meeting times, the cell group leaders are free to ask questions, discuss problems, and learn from one another in their cell group experiences.
- Personal spiritual growth - The Coordinator should also make it a point to spend time individually with the cell group leaders and their families, to get to know them better and to better understand what is happening in the life of each leader. These should be informal times of sharing and fellowship, such as having a meal together or maybe just tea/coffee in the home of the leader.
- Developing apprentice leaders - One of the most difficult areas of ministry for the cell group leader will be the development of his apprentice leader. Most new cell group leaders have never worked actively to develop another person as a leader, and they will have plenty of questions and problems in this area. The Coordinator can share practical ways in which he or she has developed apprentice leaders in previous cell groups.
- Planning and accountability - The Coordinator is responsible to help the cell group leaders develop goals and plans for ministry and to hold them accountable to achieving those goals. This includes drawing a "circle of accountability" with each group to help them understand where they will be working (in what geographical area), and to what segment of the population they will reach out. The Coordinator must also help the cell group leaders to develop a plan for multiplication and to carry out that plan. In addition, each cell group leader should have individual plans for the spiritual development of each member of the group, and plans for evangelism and other group activities. Reviewing and adjusting these plans with the cell group leaders is essential to the growth and success of each cell group.
- Practical ministry skills - The Coordinator should also provide ongoing training and teaching for the cell group leaders, to continue to equip them for fruitful ministry. The Coordinator should strive to provide teaching that will meet the needs which currently exist in the lives and ministries of the cell group leaders. The teaching should provide practical ways to help with real life problems and situations that the leaders face.
- Encouragement - It is a good idea for the Coordinator to visit the cell groups from time to time, and he or she should have a clear understanding of what is being studied and taught in the groups. Every ministry context is different, but the Coordinator should keep track of how many members are in each group, how many visitors come to the groups, where the groups are meeting, and any unresolved problems which the leaders are currently facing.
- Prayer - The Coordinator must spend time in prayer with the cell group leaders and should also pray for the cell group leaders in his own personal prayer time. He or she should constantly be looking for ways to help the leaders, so that their ministries are successful and so that they are growing in maturity and Christ-likeness.

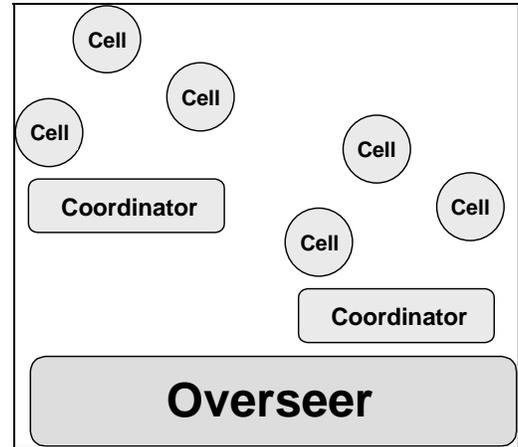


Because of the significant amount of time and energy that a Coordinator must devote to the care and development of each cell group leader, he or she should be responsible for no more than four or five cell groups.

2. *Overseer*

The role of an Overseer differs from a Coordinator mainly by the fact that an Overseer does not interact directly with the cell group leaders – he works primarily with the Coordinators. The Overseer should be well experienced in cell group ministry, having been a cell group leader and Coordinator himself. The Overseer is interested in the life and ministry of each Coordinator, as well as the overall ministry direction of the cell groups. The Overseer is a mentor for the Coordinators in the same way that the Coordinators are mentors for their cell group leaders.

The Overseer should meet with the Coordinators on a regular basis, no less than once per month. During these meeting times, the Coordinators can report on the progress and activities of each of the cell groups for which they are responsible. For purposes of record keeping, the Overseer may choose to develop some type of written form(s) that each of the Coordinators can fill out with information about the cells.



One of the most important functions of the Overseer is to monitor and develop the ongoing coordinated effort among the cell groups. The Overseer must keep the "big picture" of ministry in mind, and he or she should make sure that each Coordinator clearly understands the role of each of the cell groups in that plan. For example, the goal of one particular cell group ministry is to start two new churches in an area of town. Two Coordinators work with independent cell groups, while a third Coordinator has some independent cell groups as well as some cell groups that were started in an existing church. It is the responsibility of the Overseer to help the Coordinators understand how all of the cell groups can work together to form these two new churches and what steps need to be taken in order to see that happen.

When there are problems in the groups, or in the life of a Coordinator, the Overseer is always available to listen, to pray, and to give counsel. He or she should maintain a time of regular prayer for each Coordinator, as well as for any urgent prayer needs within the groups.

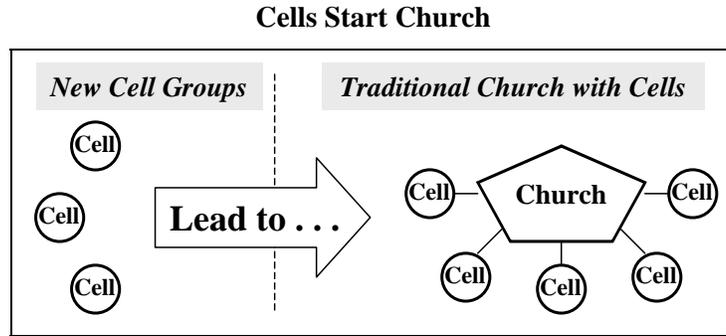
Some cell group ministries choose to physically gather all the cell groups together on a regular basis (perhaps once a month) for worship, fellowship and/or teaching. Sometimes these gatherings are referred to as "celebration" times. If these gatherings take place, an Overseer (or Coordinator, if there is no Overseer) will be responsible for leading the time together, and he may ask one or more Coordinators to help with the worship or teaching.

II. SUPERVISORY STRUCTURES FOR DIFFERENT MODELS OF CELL GROUP MINISTRY

Many times, contextual realities of a cell group ministry will determine the form that the supervisory structure will take. Following is a brief review of each of those models, along with the types of supervisory structures that might be used in each situation:

A. Model 1: Cell Groups That Start a Traditional Church with Cells

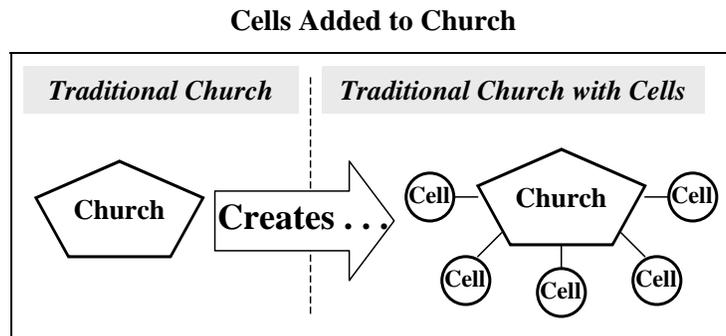
In this situation, one or more initial cell groups grow and multiply until they are able to start a new traditional church. This church will meet in a central location with a traditional worship service appropriate for the local context and culture. The church will continue to use a ministry of cell groups for evangelism, fellowship, discipleship and continued growth of the church. It may also choose to develop traditional ministry "programs" such as Sunday School, women's ministry, an outreach to children on the weekends, etc.



In this case, a supervisory structure will be needed long before the church is started. This model would require at least one Coordinator to oversee the ministries of the individual cells and to help the leaders coordinate the effort of starting the new church. It is interesting to note that after the church is started and the cells continue to grow and multiply, that the Coordinator might be called a "deacon" or "elder" in charge of cell group ministry.

B. Model 2: An Existing Church Begins to Use Cell Groups

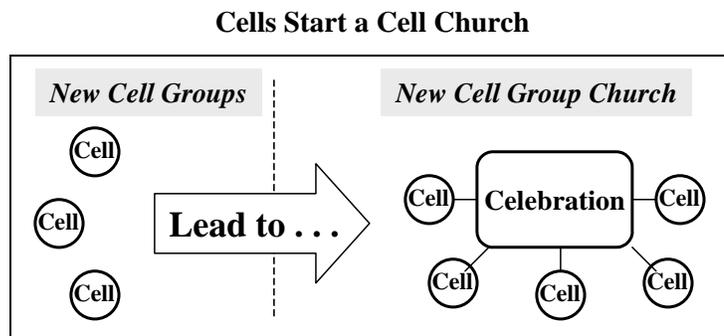
It is possible for an existing church to begin using cell groups for fellowship, evangelism and discipleship. The existing leadership in the church must decide how many groups are needed/possible based on the number of members in the church and the number of people who could be trained to be cell group leaders. In time the church will begin to grow as the cell groups grow and multiply.



Typically, the supervisory structure in this situation uses existing church leaders to fulfill the roles of Coordinator and Overseer. The deacons or elders might be the Coordinators, and the pastor (or pastoral team) may be the most logical choice to fulfill the role of an Overseer. As the groups grow and multiply, most often cell group leaders will begin to fulfill the role of Coordinators and eventually Overseers.

C. Model 3: Cell Groups That Start a Cell Group Church

A cell group church differs from a traditional church in the sense that there is neither church building nor regular Sunday morning worship service, and the church does not exist to create and maintain "programs" within the church. The church is comprised of the cells themselves, and all the functions of a church happen in each cell, including baptism and communion. The cells come together on a regular basis (e.g. once a month) for a "celebration" meeting. This is a time of encouragement, fellowship, worship and/or teaching. The cells all consider themselves to be part of one, large church.

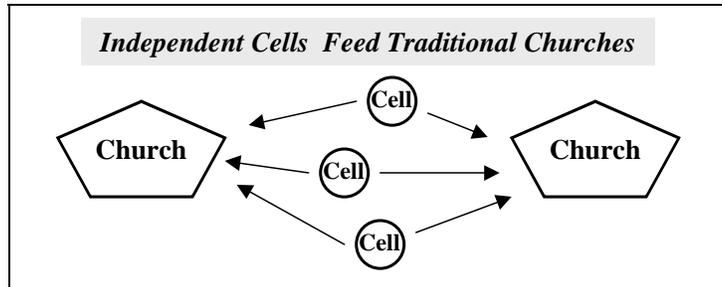


Many times, the supervisory structure for a cell group church is simple and hierarchical. Every five cell groups has a Coordinator, every five Coordinators has an Overseer, etc. Such a structure is efficient and strong able multiply effectively and rapidly.

D. Model 4: Several Cell Groups Grow, Multiply and "Feed" Existing Local Churches

It is not a requirement that cell groups directly start new churches. It may be more strategic to build up and strengthen existing local churches which in time will start new daughter churches. Cell groups are started independently of the existing churches. As new people are brought into the cell groups, they are encouraged to begin attending a local church as well. Often they will continue to be a part of their cell group as well as attend a church.

Cells Feed Churches



In this situation, one of the cell group leaders can fulfill the role of a Coordinator, in order to help organize the efforts of the groups to build up the churches in that area. If, in time, one or more of the existing churches desire to use cell groups in their church, a different supervisory structure will need to be considered and used.

III. APPLICATION FOR YOUR CELL GROUP MINISTRY

The titles which are chosen for each person in a supervisory structure such as "Coordinator" and "Overseer" are not important. In your particular ministry context, you can choose and use whatever titles you feel are appropriate and understandable. The most important thing is that there are people who are performing the functions of Coordinators and Overseers in any given supervisory structure. These are the people who are needed to help the cell groups accomplish the goals that God has set before them.

Your context will determine who actually fulfills these leadership roles. If new cell groups are being started independent of an existing church, often the cell group leader with the most experience fulfills the role of the Coordinator once the groups begin to grow and multiply.

Perhaps you are using cell groups in a traditional church in order to help the church to grow (and eventually start new, daughter churches). In this situation you need to use wisdom and discretion in deciding who should fill the roles of Coordinator and Overseer. It is always preferable that these people have been leaders of groups themselves and are well-experienced in cell group life. However, in a traditional church, problems can quickly arise if existing church leaders are assigned to these roles but they themselves have never been a part of a cell group ministry. Much prayer and discernment should be used if you are in this type of a situation. If you have no choice but to use "cell-inexperienced" leaders in these positions, do as much as you can to help them understand the concepts, advantages and distinctives of cell group ministry. In time, leaders from within the cell groups can assume these positions of leadership within the supervisory structure.

Unfortunately, one of the first things we think of when we see any kind of hierarchical structure is the element of control. It's important to understand that a supervisory structure is not needed in order to *control* the ministries of the cell groups. Instead of controlling the cell groups, each leader in the hierarchy of the organization should be doing all that he or she can to equip, empower and *release* the cell groups to minister in whatever way the Holy Spirit is leading them. A cell group movement under the direction of the Holy Spirit is actually very "uncontrolled" in terms of human intervention. It is the faithful obedience of God's people to be completely given over to His use of their lives, time and talents as they minister in and through the cell groups.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Explain the need for some type of supervisory structure when working with cell group ministry. Why not let the cells do whatever they want? What are the advantages of having a supervisory structure in place?

2. In your own words, briefly state the administrative functions which should happen in any developing cell group ministry.
3. If you are currently involved in a ministry of cell groups and there is no one yet fulfilling the role of a Coordinator, whom could you approach about becoming a Coordinator? Would you consider fulfilling this role at some point in the future?
4. How is the role of an Overseer different from that of a Coordinator?
5. Is it possible for Coordinators and Overseers to continue to be leaders of cell groups?

ASSIGNMENT – SUPERVISING CELLS

- Develop a simple plan for the type of supervisory structure that is necessary in your particular cell group ministry context. Think of the titles you would use for the roles of Coordinator and Overseer. Even if you have only a few cell groups at the moment, who could fulfill the role of a Coordinator for these groups? As the Holy Spirit continues to work and your groups grow and multiply, how will you decide who future Coordinators and Overseers will be? Where will they come from, and what types of training or experiences will they need in order to prepare them for this type of ministry? What type of supervisory structure do you need to sustain and promote the growth that God desires to see happen in your cell groups? What kind of supervisory structure would best complement the model of ministry that you are working with? Draw in your plan a diagram of the model you are using and how the supervisory structure which you have chosen fits into this model.
- Review your plan for a supervisory structure with your mentor or with the trainer of this lesson.

CHURCH PLANTING SKILLS

Lesson 15: Worship

One of the primary purposes of the local church is to exalt the Lord. Corporate worship is commanded and demonstrated by God's people in the Bible. It is a testimony of God's reality in our midst.

Unfortunately, for many people public worship is just a ritual or a duty to be performed and endured, rather than an inspiring experience. Throughout the world, churches that are growing and multiplying are those in which people want to come to the worship service because it helps them have a meaningful encounter with God and His people. Little church growth happens when people attend worship services out of a sense of duty or because they are doing God a favor.

It is important to develop a philosophy of worship that guides the planning and preparation of your worship services. A philosophy of worship is simply a statement of why and how your church or cell group plans to conduct worship. It should be based on biblical principles and include the important biblical functions that relate to worship. It will serve as a guide to help you prepare truly God-honoring, scriptural, and uplifting times of worship. It will also help you avoid simply copying past traditions that can be stale or uninspiring.

I. THE PURPOSE OF WORSHIP

The corporate worship service is the time when all of the members of the church come together to worship God. As your newly planted church begins to hold corporate worship services, it is important to understand the function of worship. You need to choose relevant forms of worship which fulfill those functions and draw people into an encounter with the living God.

Corporate worship celebrates the centrality of God in the life of the church. God is worthy to be worshipped. He is in ultimate control of the universe. He has a pure love for His creation and His creatures. He has also called us to be a part of His family here on earth. All of these things are sufficient cause for great joy and celebration. Worship, then, is our joyful, grateful acknowledgment of God's absolute superiority and moral goodness. In worship we use all of our being—mind, will, emotions, and body—to convey something of that profound joy which is inexpressible in terms of ordinary conversation but can be comprehended by the spiritual part of who we are.

A. To Give God Praise and Thanksgiving

Throughout the Scriptures, God's people are commanded to give praise and thanksgiving to God. We also see many examples of biblical characters paying homage to their Creator, from Abraham in the book of Genesis to the apostle John on the Island of Patmos.

Several different terms in the original languages of the Bible describe praise to God (*Halal* in Hebrew and *proskuneo* in Greek) and demonstrate that true worship is honest emotion from the heart and is directed to the Lord for His praise and honor. It is also clear that there is and should be a variety in worship—in music, instruments, and other forms. The following passages command us to worship God because of who he is:

- Ps 33:1-5
- Ps 103
- Ps 106:1-3
- Ro 15:5-11

B. To Give Service to God

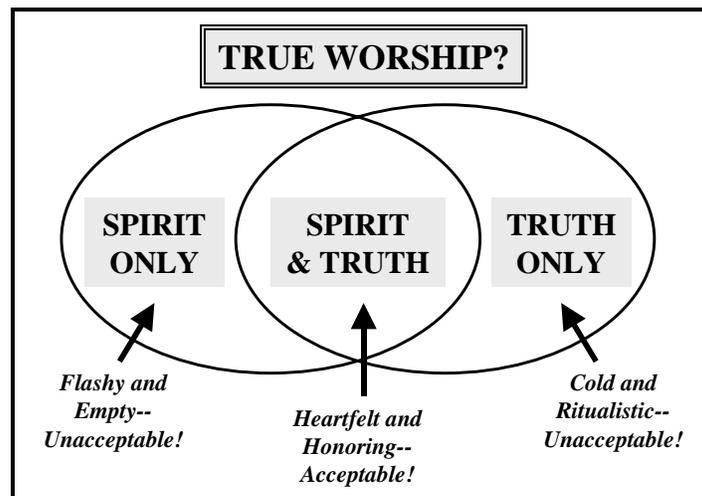
True worship is impossible apart from the total surrender of one's life to God and the living out of that surrender in acts of service and ministry. In other words, our life, our actions, our activities are all to be worshipful to God. Key passages used to describe this function of worship in the Bible are:

- Dt 10:12-13
- Ps 100:1-2
- Ro 12:1-2

II. UNDERSTANDING WORSHIP

Jesus' Perspective on Worship

In His discussion with the Samaritan woman (John 4), Jesus revealed another truth about worship of God. He stated that God is not so much concerned about *where* we worship Him (place), but *how* we worship Him (attitude)—*in spirit and in truth*. By *how*, Jesus was not referring to the *forms* of worship. He was indicating the importance of our emotional and intellectual involvement in the process, rather than relying on a place or a ritual as the Samaritans and Jews were doing in that day.



The only acceptable worship must include both components. If we worship in spirit only, we run the risk of worshipping an idol or misrepresentation of the one true God because we know nothing of Him. This does not please God. On the other hand, if we worship in truth only, our worship is cold and lacks a sense of love and intimacy with God. This kind of worship does not please Him either. *Rather, God wants us to understand the truth with our minds and worship Him with feeling from the depths of our heart.*

Question 1: What kinds of worship feels most meaningful to you?

Components of Corporate Worship Services

Throughout Church history, corporate worship services of local churches have expressed biblical worship through the following components:

- *Songs, hymns and music* – singing of the Word, and songs of celebration, praise and thanksgiving (focus our emotions and inner being on God).
- *Sermon* – preaching of the Word (focuses our service on God, by calling us to obey Him).
- *Bible reading* – public reading of the Word of God (focuses our minds on God by bathing it in the truth).
- *Prayer* – communication with God (prayers of praise, adoration, confession, intercession).

- *Sacraments* - The Lord's supper, Baptism
- *Tithes and offerings* - giving of material possessions to the Lord
- *Special events* – special music, poetry reading, drama, sharing of testimonies, etc.

The forms of these components vary widely from church to church, according to denominational tradition and local culture. For example, some churches celebrate the Lord's supper weekly; others celebrate it on the first Sunday of the month. Some churches meet on Sunday mornings for corporate worship; others meet every evening or twice a year. Worship music varies widely too.

Question 2: *What are the components of worship are people in your fellowship familiar with?*

Determining Appropriate forms for Worship

Throughout the Scriptures, there is a variety of forms of worship. What factors should you consider as you plan your corporate worship services? This is an important issue for you and your emerging church leadership to think through. The forms you choose for worship will vary widely from one culture to another. Even in the same city, people from various age, educational, ethnic, cultural and denominational backgrounds will express their corporate worship to God in different ways. The forms of worship should allow people to express both the facts of their faith in God (truth) and the emotions and feelings of their relationship to the Lord (spirit).

The forms should allow people to draw nearer to God. The key to planning a worship service, therefore, is to find out how the people in your target area most naturally express love, joy, confidence, and deep relationship. These are the signs of true worship. Worship must never be stilted, cold, or expressed in a way that is contrary to the nature and feelings of the believer. It should honestly and clearly express our feelings for the Lord, and our thoughts toward Him.

III. WORSHIP LEADERS

Skilled worship leaders are a gift of God for the Church. They may lead worship in cell group meeting or in a celebration service when several cell groups meet together for cooperate worship. For all these occasions worship leaders need to be identified, empowered and released into ministry.

The job of a worship leader is to plan, inspire and lead worship. Unfortunately planning worship is often done carelessly. But proper planning of the worship service can increase the effectiveness of the congregation's ability to worship their Creator. Picking a theme, determining the songs/music and special events, and determining the flow of the worship service are all important aspects of creating an effective worship environment.

Worship leaders should meet the minimum spiritual qualifications of any recognized leader in the church (cell group leader, etc.). Worship leaders need to be aware of the dramatic element of what they do. Their purpose is to lead worship in such a way that they do not draw attention to themselves but to God.

In addition to the spiritual qualification of a recognized leader in the church, some other qualities of good worship leaders include the following:

- Be a worshiper
- Have musical ability
- Have spiritual sensitivity
- Be characterized by genuine humility

IV. CORPORATE WORSHIP AND CHURCH PLANTING

The church planter may choose to lead worship for a time, but as soon as gifted individuals are identified, they should be trained and released into this ministry. In this way, too, the members of the church begin to take ownership in the responsibilities of that newly planted church.

As we have seen earlier in these materials, God's ultimate desire is to have his glory known throughout the earth. Therefore, corporate worship is an important function of the Church. Public worship is more than just private worship done in a public place. The Old Testament and particularly the Psalms are full of examples of God's people worshipping Him together. In the New Testament, many of the problems addressed in the epistles were related to the practice of corporate worship (e.g. 1 and 2 Corinthians). Believers are exhorted not to forsake the habit of meeting together (Heb 10:25). Corporate worship is not entertainment. *The members of the congregation are not an audience – they are participants.* Some churches make the mistake of treating corporate worship services as if they were theater performances done by specialists. The congregation is the "audience" and the worship leader and pastor are the "actors on the stage." Corporate worship is to be entered into by the entire congregation.

Corporate worship glorifies God, provides a forum for displaying unity in the Body of Christ (Jn 17, Ac 2), and strengthens the body of Christ through the exercise of spiritual gifts (1Co 12:7ff, Eph 4:12,13). This is a testimony to the world of God's presence in the midst of His people. Though attending worship services is not a primary means for evangelism, God does use corporate worship as one means of drawing sinful people to Himself. However, this worship must be honest, from the heart, and not just a routine or ritual.

The quality of worship services does seem to have an impact on church growth. Between 1994-1996 the Institute of Church Development in Germany performed a worldwide study of characteristics of growing churches (*Natural Church Development*, 1996). They surveyed over 1000 churches in 32 countries on five continents. The study showed that one of the key characteristic of growing churches was inspiring and joyful worship services. Participants in growing churches looked forward to attending the services because they had a meaningful encounter with God and His people and were encouraged and built up in their faith. They came away from the service desiring to be more obedient to God—to love and serve Him more deeply and to share Him with others.

CONCLUSION

Corporate worship of God is one of the primary functions of the Church. Remember that our task as church planters is to bring glory to our Father and savior. God is worthy to be worshipped. Jesus stated that true worshippers worship God in spirit and truth.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Why is it important for God's people to gather for corporate worship?
2. What are some reasons that "inspiring" worship services contribute to church growth? What are elements of an "inspiring" worship service?
3. What does it mean to worship the Lord in the splendor of His holiness? (1Ch 16:29).
4. Are there modes of expression used frequently in your culture that could be incorporated into your worship service (e.g. poetry)? How might you use the modes of expression in a worship service?
5. What should be the role of the pastor in planning a worship service? What should be the role of the worship leader?

6. Describe the flow of a worship service that was particularly meaningful to you? What elements of the service were most effective? What can you learn from this service to help you in planning worship services for your church plant?

ASSIGNMENT - PLAN A WORSHIP SERVICE

Use the following steps plan a worship service with your church planting team. Share your experience with you mentor.

Step 1: Choose a Theme

What will be the theme of the worship service? Special days, such as Pentecost Sunday, Christmas, or Easter or some other holiday may provide a theme. Oftentimes the main idea of the sermon provides a theme. Consider a sermon on Ephesians 5:15-21. The main idea of this passage is: *"God wants us to be filled with the Spirit because it is wise and results in joyful living."* The theme then for the worship service could be: *"Be filled with the Spirit."*

Step 2: Select Songs/Music and Special Events

What songs and hymns will you use in the worship service? Select ones which relate to the theme and which are both contemporary and traditional. Also, be sure the tempo of the music is varied—both reflecting celebration and contemplation. Will you have any special music, such as a voice or instrumental solo? Will there be a drama illustrating an aspect of the sermon? Will you have any testimonies? Be sure the testimonies you select relate to the theme.

Step 3: Lay Out the Flow of the Worship Service

Have a definite starting and ending time. Include every aspect of the worship service – songs, sermon, special events, prayer, Bible reading, etc. Consider the sequence of these events. For example, should the sermon come before or after the prayer time? Should the Lord's Supper be celebrated in the beginning, middle or end of the service? Is there a balance between sitting and standing, between listening and participating, etc.? Note that some denominational traditions have patterns of worship which essentially dictate the order of the worship service.

Step 4: List Needed Equipment

Make a list of all equipment you will need for the worship service, such as overhead projector, overheads of songs, hymn books or song sheets, microphones, any special equipment for drama, etc. Determine who will be responsible for gathering and setting up of the equipment before and during the service.

Step 5: Determine Rehearsal Dates and Times

Decide when you will rehearse worship service. Be sure that all participants are notified and able to attend the rehearsals.

Step 6: Take Time to Pray for the Worship Service

Ask the Lord to guide and direct the worship service. Pray for people's hearts to be prepared to worship the Lord. Pray for unbelievers who may attend that their hearts would be open to the Lord. Some churches have prayer teams that pray for the worship service while it is happening. Other churches have prayer teams who come to church early and take time to pray for the service and quietly pray for those who are entering the place of worship.

Step 7: Evaluate the Worship Service

After the service take time to evaluate it. How were the flow and the atmosphere of worship? What worked? What needs to be changed? What should be used again? Did God meet your congregation in a special way? Were any people particularly touched during the worship service? Did anyone get saved? Incorporate what you learn from your evaluation into future worship services.

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Lesson 16: Effective Communication

Ministry is largely a communication task. A pastor may be talking a lot – but are people understanding him? A missionary may travel a great distance, enter a culture physically, and yet still be on the other side of the world in terms of understanding and being understood. Effective communication is what it takes for a minister of the gospel to get the message across.

I. THE COMMUNICATION PROCESS

Communication is the transfer of meaning through the use of words, gestures and expressions. It is normally a complex process in which there is not just one message, but many messages, ideas and emotions all being sent and received consciously and unconsciously. Furthermore, the receiver and messenger will switch places and adjust their messages accordingly. However, even with this complexity, communication has three primary parts.

A. The Message

The message is what is to be communicated. It is impossible to communicate any message without putting it into understood words, gestures, symbols or expressions. When two business men in India talk they send messages back and forth to one another using words, gestures and expressions common in their culture. They understand one another easily. However, a Chinese man nearby may not understand the messages at all because he does not speak the language or share the same culture.

B. The Messenger

The one who wishes to communicate information is the messenger. When a person is communicating in a new culture, he must **encode** the message using words, gestures and expressions that are understood in the language of the addressee. The message may be encoded in casual conversation, a sermon, a lesson or a formal meeting.

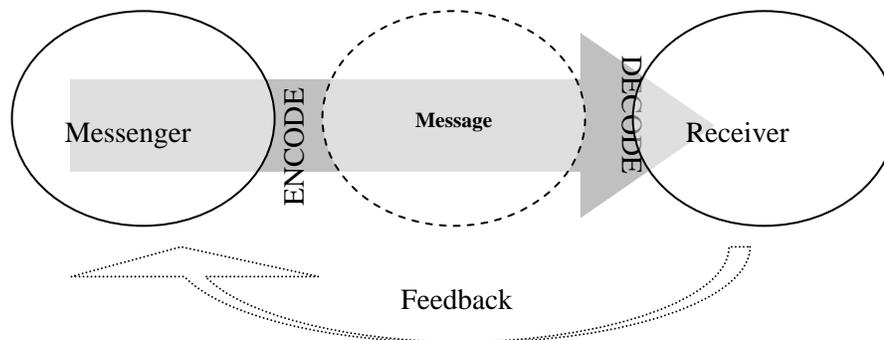
The evangelist, church planter, pastor, or any other Christian servant is not the author of the message. He or she carries a message from the Lord which is already clearly communicated in a variety of ways in the Bible.

C. The Receiver

The receiver is the person for whom the message is intended. The receiver must **decode** the message according to his understanding of words, gestures and expressions in order to determine the meaning. If the message is not clear to the receiver, he might send **feedback** in the form of a question or a quizzical look back to the messenger so that the messenger can resend the message. Normally this happens naturally, effortlessly.

Effective communication should be oriented toward the receiver's language and culture. Often Christian servants require their audience to learn a new vocabulary in order to understand the message. Preachers do this when they use theological words that a non believer would not understand. This is 'messenger oriented' communication. It limits the gospel message to those who learn the new language. 'Receiver oriented' communication makes the message clear to more people.

The Communication Process



II. WAYS WE COMMUNICATE

Communication takes place when messages are transmitted through words, gestures and expressions. In fact, whether we are speaking or not, we are always communicating something. No one is able to not communicate. Whenever we interact with one another, or the fact that we don't interact, we send multiple messages. Here are some of the ways we communicate.

A. Spoken language

Most cultures have their own spoken language. It is important to study and be able to communicate in the language of the target people. Communication takes place best between people who speak the same language because they can encode and decode the words the same way.

It is still important to study the language of the target people even if there is another common language, such as a trade language, that you can communicate it. This is because the language – its grammar, vocabulary, and style reveal a lot about the way people think and feel.

No matter what language you communicate in, remember that speech has different styles and forms. In the Bible, Jesus used a variety of forms of speech. Sometimes his speech was very clear and direct and sometimes he spoke indirectly, communicating his message by using stories or asking thought provoking questions. In all this he communicated in a way that was most appropriate for the occasion.

B. Non-verbal expressions

Verbal speech may be culturally meaningful – but nonverbal expressions may ruin the message that you want to communicate. For example, eye-contact can mean very different things in different cultures. If you look directly at a person when you are sharing the gospel, what are you communicating? It may be disrespectful in one culture, a sign of trust and friendship in another. To communicate effectively you should know what this means for your target people group.

C. Media

The media is the form in which the message is delivered. Will it be printed in a book, spoken in a sermon, dramatically acted out as a play, recorded as a film? These are all ways in which messages are communicated. Some of them may be strange to your target audience. For example some cultures are not technologically advanced enough to have movies in their language. Christian movies in such a case may have the effect of stirring up curiosity and attract them to the message – or the film media may be so interesting that it becomes a distraction from the real message. Research and trial and error will reveal the difference.

III. COMMUNICATION GAPS

The biggest problem with communication is assuming it has taken place. Communication has taken place only when the meaning has been adequately transferred to the receiver. A lot of talking does not mean that communication has taken place. If messages are sent but not received, or are misunderstood, then we have what can be called a communication gap. Communication gaps may be difficult to overcome.

When Paul and Barnabas were in the city of Lystra, evangelizing the Lycaonian people, they were misunderstood and thought to be the Greek gods Zeus and Hermes incarnated (Ac 14:8-18). This was a very serious communication gap. Once Paul learned of the misunderstanding he did his best to correct it, identifying with the audience by claiming “we are also of the same nature as you” (Ac 14:15).

Some communication gaps are not so serious. Some are unavoidable and easily forgiven. Many are even funny! As a missionary, you should not be afraid of miscommunicating. It will happen as you learn the language and culture of your target people. However, there are some common attitudes or assumptions that are bound to bring serious communication gaps. These attitudes should be avoided:

“*Just tell them.*” Saying the ‘right words’ does not mean that the receiver has heard the meaning. Aim for the right response – conviction of sin or a change in behavior, for example - and you can be confident that the message has been communicated.

“*It made sense to them back then and there.*” Thinking that a message communicated in a certain way will work everywhere, all the time, ignores the wonderfully dynamic world God has put us in. In the Bible Paul was very astute to explain the gospel in ways that were appropriate to the audience. (1Co 9:20-22)

“*They can learn my language.*” In cross-cultural situations some missionaries never attempt to explain their message in the language of the receivers. They make the target people learn their language, and other require converts to learn special church words that are foreign to the people. This ignores the incarnational model of Jesus. He became a man in order to reach us (Ph 2:6-7).

“*Say it loud sound – say it often.*” Some Christian leaders think that a lack of response means that he has not preached long enough, or loud enough, so he doubles his efforts. In reality no one understands him. Instead of increasing his efforts, he should change his approach.

IV. KEYS TO COMMUNICATING FOR LIFE CHANGE

Your goal as a communicator of the gospel is not only understanding, but acceptance, of the gospel by your target group. As you communicate you want to avoid communication gaps and focus on building bridges of understanding and acceptance.

The key to effective communication comes from God’s redemptive work in the world. After all, the greatest communication gap in the history existed between God and man. And, how did God bridge that gap? Ultimately, he became a man (Jn 1:14, Ph 2:7), identified with mankind, lived an exemplary human life, and died as their savior. The cross-cultural evangelist of today can learn from this model. He cannot die as a savior as Jesus did, but is called to give up his life, to live selflessly for others (Mt 16:24).

The following points are all keys to effective communication:

The messenger should gain enough trust to communicate. Trust goes along way in understanding and acceptance. In cross-cultural communication the messenger comes from another culture. Stereotypes and assumptions about “foreigners” means that trust might take a long time to build.

The message should sound natural in their language. Words, expressions and gestures usually serve the communication process best when they call least attention to themselves. The means of communication should seem natural – so not as to distort or distract from the message.

Genuine love communicates more than words. In communication love seeks the best for the receiver no matter what the cost is to the messenger. No matter what else we may be trying to say, as messengers of the gospel, God’s love working in us IS the message. You can say the right words, but if there is no love behind them, they mean nothing (1Co 13:1). On the other hand, you may say the wrong things, but if it is motivated by love, it is likely to be forgiven by your hearers (1Pet 4:8).

The messenger should seek feedback from the receivers. Are you being understood? Never assume you are. Seek feedback from a variety of people to learn what you are communicating.

V. ENCODING THE MESSAGE

In a cross-cultural situation there may be little common language and understanding between the messenger and the receivers. Therefore the messenger should study the receiver’s culture carefully in order to know how to communicate with them. This is an ongoing process. The following questions will help the messenger encode the message:

- What kinds of perceptions will the receivers have about me? Do they trust me?
- What kinds of perceptions will the receivers have about my message?

- What media are appropriate for these people?
- What kind of vocabulary should I use? What kind of vocabulary should I avoid?
- How can I know that the message has been understood? How can I gain feedback?

You may not know the answers to all of these questions all the time. That is alright. The important thing is that you try to find the answers. Your sensitivity to their understanding might communicate more than the words you use. Expect to be misunderstood from time to time knowing that you are only human and that the Holy Spirit is at work in the hearts of those he is calling to himself.

CONCLUSION

Communicating effectively is a challenge that requires careful research, awareness and skill. It is likely to stretch you mentally and emotionally. It is also the task that God has called us to. Better than that, he has promised to be with us in the work of taking the gospel to all the nations (Mt 28:18-20).

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Describe the communication process.
 -
2. What is a communication gap?
 -
3. How can you know you have communicated effectively?
 -
4. How can the media impact the message?
 -
5. What does love have to do with communication?
 -
6. What is the greatest challenge that you face in trying to communicate the gospel to people in your region?

CROSS-CULTURAL MINISTRY

Lesson 17: Studying Culture

The gospel is to be proclaimed in “all the nations” (Matthew 28:19-20). Every ethnic people group, language group and tribe should have opportunity to hear and accept the gospel. This is our task! Should we expect everyone to learn our language, to adopt our culture, to move to our neighborhoods in order to receive and understand the gospel? Obviously, the answer is “no”. Instead we are called to take the gospel to every cultural group.

Culture can be understood as “*the integrated system of learned patterns of behavior, ideas and products characteristic of a society.*” Although cultural groups may be separated by physical distance, the differences between them is far more than that. It is also more than a matter of language. In fact, two groups of people may have the same language, live in the same vicinity and yet have very different cultures. This is because culture is a way of life. It consists of language and location, but also includes clothing, worldview, social structure, work, unspoken values, traditions, and beliefs, etc. How in the world can we reach people of other cultures? In this lesson we will look at how we can learn about other cultures, so that we can share the Gospel with them in such a way that it is understandable and relevant to them.

I. UNDERSTANDING DIFFERENCES

Every culture is different and must be approached uniquely. To have an impact we must strive to always be “learners” whenever we are involved in cross-cultural church planting. There are no formulas to follow which will guarantee success in a different culture. We need to understand some of the basic principles of culture, and then allow the Holy Spirit to guide us as we minister cross-culturally.

Ethnocentrism

When people come into contact with practices, behaviors and beliefs that are noticeably different from their own, they often express ridicule, arrogance, or disgust. To be comfortable with your own way of life and condescending or even hostile toward other cultures is a tendency for all people. Unfamiliar activities in another culture are often viewed as being not just different, but inferior, less sensible, and even “unnatural.” This is because we tend to believe that our way of doing things is the “correct” way, and everything else is either wrong or somehow inferior. This attitude is called “ethnocentrism.”

For example, a typical North American woman considers her dog to be a close friend and essentially a member of her own family. This is part of her culture. In the Muslim culture, dogs are generally considered to be dirty animals that are likely to be kicked if they get in the way. In still other cultures, dogs have multiple functions, including being a source of food for people.

One may ask “who is right”? “Which way to relate to dogs is best”? Such questions miss the point. Each way of relating to dogs may be fine if it is meaningful within the culture and does not violate any biblical standards of morality. Ethnocentrism prevents understanding and leads to mistrust. When we see differences in other societies, we need to give up our own ethnocentric judgments and take on a culturally “neutral” attitude. That is, we try to learn about and interpret the various aspects of the culture we are studying without using our own culture as the standard for what is “normal” and “good.”

Ethnocentrism can be a problem for church planters who are working in a different culture, especially if they adopt a “superior” attitude towards the people they are working with. Conversely, it can also be a problem if the target group sees church planters or their message about salvation as “incorrect” or “inferior” to what they have already.

Question 1: Think about your own culture—which ethnic group is the object of most jokes? What is the overall opinion in society about this ethnic group?

When you begin to learn how to understand other cultures, you will find that your initial reactions of superiority and even disgust will be replaced with a deeper interest, respect, and appreciation for the culture you are studying. For example, a person who had initially thought that Filipino houses looked “stupid” later admitted that Filipino villagers were “smart to build their houses up on stilts so that they wouldn’t get flooded during the rainy season.” This person learned not to judge the appearance of these houses based on his own understanding of what a “normal” house looks like. Instead, he began to see the reasons behind this particular design in the Filipino culture.

Question 2: What ethnocentric values do you see in your own life? Who would you consider to be inferior to you and why? Who would make you uncomfortable if you were to invite them to your home for a meal?

II. THE INCARNATIONAL MODEL

Perhaps the best way to discover how to learn a new culture is to look at the life of Jesus on earth. After all, Jesus moved from the world of heaven to the world of earth – in order to reach those on earth. He did this by taking on the physical body and nature of a man. He became “flesh” (Jn 1:14). This ‘becoming flesh’ is called the ‘incarnation’ by theologians.

For Jesus to come incarnate ‘in the flesh’, he had to be born as an infant, of a woman. He had to grow up, learn to speak, submit to the instruction of his parents, learn a trade, and take a place as a mature adult in society. However, he did not come to earth as a mature adult. Instead, he was born as a child and he grew to become a mature adult (Lk 2:52). Yet, during all this time – he was God. While he humbled himself in this process, he did not stop being God, in order to become a man (Ph 2:6-7). Jesus was 100% God and 100% man. Note that he was man without sinning (He 4:15).

In a similar way, a cross-cultural missionary practices incarnational living in his target culture. He may be Korean, German, Brazilian, American, or Kenyan by birth and upbringing. But his objective is to become as much a part of his new culture as possible. He starts out as an outsider, a cultural child. But as he learns and adapts to the ways of the new culture, he becomes more like it. His identification with the new culture may also require that he avoid practices of his old culture. As Jesus ‘made himself nothing’ to leave heaven and become a man, so the missionary may feel himself to be less Korean, German, Brazilian, American, or Kenyan as he takes on his new culture.

The Apostle Paul described the incarnational model well when he said, “*to the Jews I become like a Jew, to win the Jews. To those under the law I become 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 means I might save some.*” (1Co 9:20-22). The goal then is to become like the people you are trying to reach – to live incarnationally – in order to draw them to Christ.

Question 3: What inhibits many missionaries from taking on the incarnational model?

III. TIPS FOR UNDERSTANDING A NEW CULTURE

Those who study culture use many different methods to help them understand what they see and hear: they observe, talk with people, collect life histories, analyze artifacts, study documents written by the group, and collect information about songs, sayings, and proverbs. Church planters should constantly ask questions to find out how people in a target culture describe and explain the places, times, and events that occur in their daily life. What is important to them? What do they value? What are their superstitions and beliefs about God?

Learning the language of another culture is one of the single best things you can do to understand and be effective in that culture. Language and culture are closely interrelated. The more you learn the language of a different culture, the more you will learn about the culture itself. Presenting the Gospel is not just telling the story—how we live our lives and interact with the people God has called us to often speaks louder than words. Being able to communicate in a significant way in the heart language of another person enables them to hear, see and understand the Gospel perhaps for the very first time. As converts are made, knowing their language will enable you to disciple and equip these believers and ministry leaders to reach their own people for Christ.

The following tips may help you learn to live in your new culture. Remember, understanding takes time. Do not expect too much from yourself too soon. Discouragement is a normal frustration in the process. Do not let it keep you from engaging in the new culture.

Active Participation

The best way to really get to know another society and its culture is to live in it as an active participant rather than simply an observer. Physically and emotionally participating in the social interaction of your target society will give you insight far more valuable than any second hand information or observation can give you. Play the games, enter into the celebrations, eat the food, and try to speak the language. All these things can help you understand the culture and worldview of the people you are called to reach. At the same time such participation, can be physical and emotionally stressful.

Sanitation may be poor or non-existent, the food may be unsatisfying, and there may be minimal privacy for personal hygiene. However, the trust and familiarity which results usually cannot be achieved in any other way. In effect, you become an “insider” within that culture. To be on the “inside” means you attempt to understand the people of that culture on their own terms. You need to experience events in that culture as if you were a part of it. You should be involved in the group’s activities, learning to behave and see the world from their perspective. Once you begin to look at a culture through the eyes of the people in it, you will grow more adept at understanding the activities, rituals, artifacts, and interaction between people. (A word of caution is necessary here. As a Christian, you always need to evaluate activities, behaviors and attitudes based on Scripture. You are only able to be an “insider” to the extent that it does not lead to sin.)

Becoming an “insider” is not always easy. If church planters come as single visitors to a relatively isolated community, it is likely that they will be viewed with some suspicion. A man may be looked at as a potential enemy or “spy” from the outside world and considered a potential threat to the wives, sisters, and daughters. A single woman may be viewed as a person of questionable moral character who might corrupt the women of the community. A husband and wife team is likely to be more acceptable in these cases because their familiar relationship would calm some of the fears of community members about the visitors' intentions. They are more likely to be viewed as non-threatening. If they have children, they are even more likely to be seen as fitting a “normal,” peaceful pattern.

Question 4: What aspect of a new culture (food, clothing, language, etc.) makes you most uncomfortable as you consider becoming part of it?

Ask Questions

You may be better educated and more sophisticated by most standards compared to the people of your new culture, but in terms of understanding this new culture, they are the experts. You are a student and you must first learn as a student before you can have an effective ministry.

Asking questions concerning things you observe that seem unusual to you is one of the best ways to learn. Activities that look haphazard to you may have a very real purpose in the culture. Try to find out why people do what they do. Why do marriage ceremonies carried out as they are? How do people celebrate birthdays? Why are their homes laid out as they are? How do they understand what it means to be “on time?” What role

does religion play in their daily lives? How many children do parents have, on average? How do younger people relate to older people?

Use sensitivity when asking questions. Remember that their culture makes sense to them, and they may assume that it should make sense to you as well. Likewise, they may not know the answers to your questions. After all, culture comes from deeply held beliefs and values shared by people within that culture. Since the beliefs and values are shared, verbalizing them is rarely necessary. Try to develop relationships with a variety of people so you can get a broad perspective on the culture of the people. Genuine friends in the new culture can become ‘cultural parents’ explaining the way of life and sharing the nuances of the language in ways you could never discover otherwise.

Have the Right Attitude

Exploring a new culture can feel risky. To try a new food, explore a new region, practice a new language or ask a question that may sound dumb, may make you feel foolish. But remember and expect that you will make many cultural mistakes. It has been said that before you can master a language – you have to murder it. It is often the same in a new culture. You may make a fool of yourself ten times before you ever learn all of the nuances of proper greetings. If you can laugh at yourself during these times, you will be able to maintain a good attitude.

Remember too that genuine love covers a multitude of cultural blunders (see 1Pet 4:8). You will be frustrated with the culture and at the people. But we are called to love. And, if you love, though you may never fit in the culture perfectly, you will likely be accepted and find meaningful relationships. Love leads to understanding, builds bridges and brings people together.

CONCLUSION

Learning a new culture takes you from the known to the unknown. Like Abraham, who was called to a land he had never seen, so we who work cross-culturally are called to ways of life that maybe unfamiliar to us. This requires faith for us just as it did for Abraham (see Heb 11:8-9). With the right attitude, trial and error, one day you will gain confidence and understanding in the new culture.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What is “ethnocentrism?”
 -
2. What is the “incarnation?” What does it have to do with missions?
 -
3. Why should a church planter study culture?
4. Read “Meditations of a Missionary”. What challenges you most from this reading?

MEDITATIONS OF A MISSIONARY

1 Corinthians 13 paraphrased for missionaries

Though I speak in the dialect of the people I serve and can preach with the eloquent power of a fiery evangelist; though as an agriculturist I can raise high-grade river rice; though as a teacher I can deliver learned lectures, but do not have love, my message is empty.

And though I have great insight into culture and spiritual needs and am able to see what should be done; though I have all the confidence that I need to raise large funds, and inspire great work, but do not have love, I am good for nothing.

And though I share my possessions and give money to the poor, but do not help my brother and sister to become strong, independent followers of Christ, I achieve absolutely nothing.

Love, if it is genuine in the life and work of a missionary, is patient and constructive; it does not seek for position and prestige. *Love tries to identify itself with people and is never arrogant and ethnocentric.* Love seeks to train local leaders and is glad to see a competent believer from a 'less enlightened' culture in charge; love does not cherish inflated ideas of its own importance; it is never anxious to impress.

Love that is genuine does not belittle. It does not compile statistics of another's mistakes. Love seeks to bear joy and sorrow, failure and success, in helpful ways. Love is not easily provoked when there is a difference of opinion or when cultural misunderstandings arise; and when rumors are spread, love believes the very best. Love is not touchy; it never hides hurt feelings. Love never barricades understanding; it rejoices in sharing the truth. Love does not divide people racially. It does not stereotype or look down on others because of their culture.

Love keeps an open mind; is willing to attempt new methods and ways of doing things. Love does not consider the past so precious that it limits new vision. Love gives courage to change old ways when necessary; is flexible in adapting tried and trusted forms from the missionary's culture to fit the new cultural context of the particular unreached society. Unless we are prepared to adapt and change, we shall have defenders of an old system but no new voice; institutional caretakers but no truth seekers; we shall have preachers but no prophets.

Love that trusts like little children never fails. Large international mission agencies may close; heavy contributions from foreign sources may cease. Foreign fathers of the spiritual kind may leave. But love that has no other desire but to trust, never fails.

We are in a period of change and transition. The Western Mission era is ending. And where is the person who knows where we are going or what will happen in the world of mission and evangelization? Here on earth, we can only vaguely comprehend.

When Christian missions were yet at the stage of childhood, the methods of proclaiming Christ's gospel were simple and sometimes naive. Authority was in the hands of a few. But now as missions grows toward maturity; we must put away childish dependence. There must be planted deep within the soil of every people, a new, vibrant, indigenous church of the Master; one that is self-supporting, self-governing and self-propagating, and self-theologizing.

But whatever happens, whatever direction the winds of change may take, there is this certainty: Our Lord has not, and will not leave Himself without a witness. Though everything may look confused, baffling and sometimes hopeless, through His creation and redemption He is perfecting His plan.

Be sure of this: many things will pass away; but labor wrought by hands which have shared with those in need, and proclaimed the gospel of Christ, who died and rose again and lives as Lord of life, will never, never pass away. In this life there are only three enduring qualities: Faith, Hope and Love; these three. But the greatest of these is Love.

SPIRITUAL CHARACTER

Lesson 18: Conflict Resolution

Unless you live all alone on a remote island, you have experienced conflict. We live in an imperfect world as redeemed sinners. The Scriptures tell us that "...no one living is righteous before you (God)" (Ps 143:2). At our best, we are imperfect, going through the process of being transformed little by little into the image of Jesus Christ (2Co 3:18). While that transformation is taking place the following is common.

- Friends are not always what you want them to be
- Marriages have bad days
- Neighbours argue about noise
- Kids rebel, parents mistreat
- Co-workers can turn on one another
- Bosses can be unfair, subordinates insubordinate.

It may be easy to ignore conflict, but in reality it is not wise. Conflict, if not dealt with tends to get worse. If we don't work at resolving conflict we will end up destroying each other. As Paul says to the Galatians, "*If you keep on biting and devouring each other, watch out or you will be destroyed by each other*" (Gal 5:15).

Furthermore, conflict reveals a lot about our relationship with God. Our desire is to find the courage to love others as Jesus loves us. As we will see in this session, God has given us the responsibility and the method for dealing with conflict. The more you know are able to deal with conflict properly the more you will be able to help others in the "ministry of reconciliation" (2Co 5:18).

I. AN EXAMPLE OF CONFLICT

How can we be helped when we are confronted?

How do you respond to conflict? Consider the following ways

• Avoidance?	<i>Run away!</i>
• Denial?	<i>What conflict? Where?!</i>
• Gossip?	<i>Find allies – new friends!</i>
• Attack?	<i>Punish them!</i>
• Fix them?	<i>Win them over! Control the situation</i>

Question 1: What is wrong with these approaches?

Example: An lied to his co-worker Hoa in order to get Hoa to do a project that An needed done. It worked. But when Hoa found out he was hurt. He felt he had been disrespected and manipulated by An. Eventually, Hoa found the opportunity to confront An about the offense.

Question 2: How do you think An reacted? How would you react?

In reality An denied he did anything wrong. He rationalized his actions away – explaining that he had no choice in the situation and furthermore he thought that Hoa was out of line for being offended. Basically he explained that he was right and that Hoa was the wrong one.

Question 3: How do you think Hoa feels when this is all over? How would you describe their relationship?

Question 4: What is wrong with An' reaction to the confrontation?

Does the story of An and Hoa seem common to you? This story and the reactions listed previously look good or normal at first. But they are clearly not the right way. We know this because they do not bring the two together. Rather Hoa and An are led apart. Both are left saying feeling fully justified in their actions, but bitter toward the other person. Both feel hurt.

II. A PLACE FOR CONFRONTATION

Some conflicts can be easily resolved by confessing the error, asking forgiveness of the other person(s), and making appropriate changes. Other conflicts may require confrontation. When we as Christians talk about confrontation in this lesson, we are talking about *humbly approaching another person with whom we are in conflict with a spirit of love and a desire for reconciliation*.

How do you feel about confrontation? Normally, we think of confrontation as something 'negative.' The following assumptions are common:

- Confrontation is always destructive.
- When involved in confrontation, the most important thing is to win.
- Power wins out at the end of the conflict and confrontation.

None of the above statements are true. But because we often think they are true, they keep us from dealing with relationship problems from time to time.

Question 5: What kinds of false assumptions make confrontation difficult for you?

There tends to be three kinds of people when it comes to confrontation.

A. Peace-fakers: “love without truth”

Peace-fakers are people who are afraid of confronting. In the midst of a serious problem with a friend or coworker, they do their best to put on a happy face and claim “things are OK”. Even when asked about a

specific problem, they find it difficult to tell the truth. The following are common reasons that peace-fakers avoid confrontation.

- Fear of being wrong
- Fear of losing the fight
- Fear of rejection
- Fear of what others will think
- Fear of being confronted in return

Question 6: Can you relate to any of these fears?

Avoiding confrontation leads to shallow relationships as well as a lack of growth and change. Refusal to confront others at church, home, or work can actually be harmful. Maybe you have been taught that it is best to keep silent, but when that happens, anger builds up inside and begins to eat away like cancer. Ephesians 4:26-27 advises us to *"not let the sun go down while you are still angry."* If we do, we *"...give the devil a foothold."*

The fears that keep people from confronting (like the ones listed above) show a greater concern about reputation and personal feelings than close relationship. If, however, a person thinks about the Gospel, then he or she understands that Jesus is the one who gives everything we need. The fears listed above should not be issues. Our security and reputations are in Christ. We are driven by the desire to minister and love, not by fear, punishment, or by looking good.

If you struggle as a peace-faker then understanding your position in Christ can give you confidence to confront others lovingly, honestly and boldly and to become a peace-maker.

B. Peace-breakers: *"Truth with out love"*

Peace-breakers are people who confront too often! They make their opinions known quickly, with authority and often. They may do this in an effort to help—but it often serves only to create conflict. Peace-breaking can come from an attitude of superiority. Thinking you are always right and anyone who thinks differently than you do must be wrong is one way to be a peace-breaker.

For peace-breakers to become peace-makers, they need to:

- 1) *be slow to speak, making sure they have all the facts.* The truth is that every conflict has at least two points of view. Assumptions are deadly in conflict. Never assume you know it all. Assume only that you really do not know the whole story. Listening and asking questions are crucial here.
- 2) Peace-breakers need to *look at their motives when they are inclined to confront.* Is the desire motivated by pride or by a loving desire to minister? Perfectly pure motives are no where to be found, but it is very important that peace-breakers ask God to expose their motives before talking to others about their problems.
- 3) It is best to *begin with encouragement when confronting* another person about their weakness. There must be things that are good about them, and you need to temper what you are saying with some good things as well. Encouragement is good for the heart (Pr 15:30; 25:11).
- 4) *Learn "to bear with others in love".* The gospel enables peace-breakers to do this! (read Col 3:13, 1Pet 4:8 and 1Cor 13:4).
- 5) *Consider what you done that has contributed to whatever problem you are dealing with.* Remember the log and the speck (Mt 7:3-5). When we take a deep look inside, we are likely to be convicted ourselves. This gives us less to confront others about – or we are able to confront with humility.
- 6) *Be very careful when you are "right."* What is wrong with being right? Nothing, except that it often gives an inner sense of superiority that justifies being the judge, jury and executioner of others. It also

provides an excuse not to love. But when you recognize that you have been wrong – then you know that you need Christ – just as the other guilty ones do. This makes you humble and able to restore in love.

C. Peace-makers: “Truth spoken in love”

God calls us to be peace-makers. Peace-fakers and peace-breakers tend to skirt around the truth and avoid the root issues. We are to speak truthfully to each other because we are all members of one body (Eph 4:25). Lying as peace-fakers do does not lead to reconciliation and neither does the self-righteous accusation of peace-breakers. It is the truth spoken in love that sets people free. (Eph 4:25)

In writing to the church he planted in Ephesus, Paul describes the conflict that had existed between the Jews and the Gentiles as well as the reconciliation that is available by the cross (Eph 2:11-16). We see in this passage, that the very nature of the Gospel itself shows us how to love one another even in conflict.

When in conflict with another person we naturally think, *“I am right and the other person is wrong.”* There may be some truth in this position. There are wrongs and some will be directed at us. But this attitude rarely leads to reconciliation. In so focusing on the wrong that has been done to we overlook any wrong that we may have done.

In contrast to the *“I am right and the other person is wrong”* attitude, the Gospel message provides an example of a very different approach to conflict. In resolving the ultimate conflict between mankind and his Creator, Jesus gave up His rights, took a very humble attitude (Phil 2:5-8) and suffered (1 Pet 3:18), making resolution possible. Instead of saying *“I am right and you are wrong”*, Jesus said *“I’ll be wrong, so that you can be right”*. Jesus did nothing wrong, yet he was crucified as a common criminal. Salvation is available to us precisely because he took the blame for our sin (2Cor 5:21).

What did God do?

- He loved – 1 John 4:9-10
- He humbled – Phil 2:8
- He suffered – 1 Pet 3:18
- He invited – Eph 2:17-18
- He forgave – Eph 1:7

What would it be like if we took this attitude with others? Would not conflict be easier to resolve if we were more willing to take the humble position instead of protecting our own pride? This is the attitude Jesus has for us. His example leads us to a life in which we can give up our "right to be right" and consider the needs of others above our own (Phil 2:2-3).

Question 7: Do you tend to be a peace-breaker or a peace-faker? In what ways can you learn to be a peace-maker?

III. RESPONDING TO CONFRONTATION

Suppose you are confronted about some way that you offended someone else. How would you react? How should you react? Without Christ, we are likely to react with denial, defensiveness or a counter attack. But the following will help you respond to confrontation in a way that is God-honoring.

1. Consider that you are blind concerning your sin (Jer 17:9).

We all sin without knowing it. This is why David, when he was attacked, though he felt innocent enough to call on God to punish his enemies, also left room for his own punishment if he deserved it (Ps 7:1-4). As someone explains your sin to you whether it sounds accurate or not consider, the fact that you could be blind concerning it.

2. Don't defend yourself

It is hard for us to admit our own inadequacies or our need for forgiveness. When we do this we cling to our own righteousness and demonstrate our blindness to our own shortcomings and sin. Remember if you are wrong in a matter defensiveness will not help you. If you are right in the matter defensiveness is not necessary.

3. Be willing to take the fall, the blame or the loss.

It is not about winning. Are you willing to be wrong? Unwillingness to even consider your fault in the situation is a sign of self-righteousness and pride.

4. Recognize your richness in Christ

Can you take the blame even when you cannot see the sin? The richness of Christ's righteousness, which is ours as a gift, affords us the opportunity to explore the depths of our sin. Applying the gospel to any conflict means you can explore the conflict safely knowing that Christ's righteousness guarantees that when there is guilt - there can be forgiveness. Remember that there is no condemnation (Ro 8:1). The gospel frees us from accusation (Col 1:22).

CONCLUSION

Understanding the Gospel should make it easier to deal with conflict. We know our life is safe in Christ and we know that we still struggle with sin. Seeing sin is not a big surprise to those who understand the gospel. Sometimes it is painful to see how our sin hurts others, but seeing it and repenting of it brings more glory for Jesus, and that's what we want. The Gospel means that conflict is not lethal, nor is it unexpected. It is a means of growth in the grace Christ provides.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Why do people hesitate to confront others?
2. What happens when we do not confront others?
3. What does the gospel have to do with conflict?
4. In what ways should believers in the gospel handle conflict differently than non-believers?