

Vietnam Edition

Practical Training for Saturation Church Planting

**Book 5
Multiplying Churches**

**Practical Training for
Saturation Church Planting
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PRACTICAL TRAINING FOR SCP

BOOK 5 – MULTIPLYING CHURCHES

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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 11

Review of Month 10

THE BIG PICTURE

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

In the introduction of Book One we described the “church planting cycle” by which the lessons in this course are organized. Up to this point you have completed Book One focusing on foundational issues, Book Two involving evangelism, Book Three emphasizing the establishing of new believers in cell groups, and Book Four about training leaders. By this phase, it is assumed that the church planter has evangelized, disciplined and gathered many people into cell groups and trained leaders to lead the groups and begin still others.

Finally, in Book Five you will study the process of multiplying 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 will 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 have planted a church. Is this the case in your ministry? Discuss this with your mentor.

ASSIGNMENTS FROM MONTH TEN

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

From Lesson 13, “Multiplying Cell Groups”

- Begin to think about what needs to happen in each of your groups in order to reach the goal of multiplication. Write down five things that you will do in the next three months in order to move your groups closer to multiplication.
- 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.

From Lesson 14, “Corporate Leadership Skills – 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.

From Lesson 15, “Worship”

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.

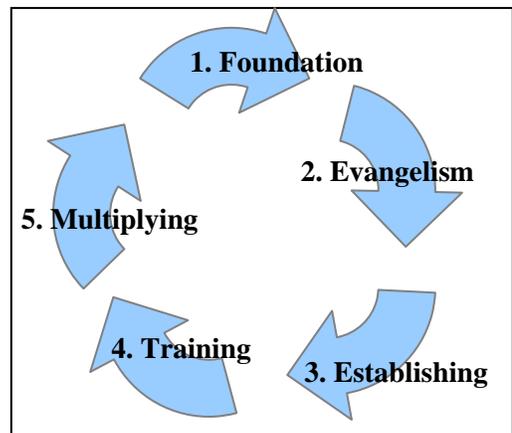
SCP VISION

Lesson 1: Church Planting Cycle

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

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

The “Church Planting Cycle” functions much like a blueprint for the process that you have been in since beginning this course. In some ways this lesson will be a review. We will revisit what you have done and been doing in order to put all your ministry efforts in context and see where it leads. In other ways, this lesson will focus on the future. We want to focus on multiplying the church planting process through more people in more places.



I. PHASE I—FOUNDATIONS

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

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

A. Key Scripture Verse

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

B. Activities and Goal

Activities:

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

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

C. Key Issues To Consider In This Phase

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

II. PHASE II—WINNING

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

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

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

A. Key Scripture Verse

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

B. Activities and Goal

Activities:

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

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

C. Key Issues To Consider In This Phase

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

III. PHASE III—ESTABLISHING

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

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

A. Key Scripture Verse

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

B. Activities and Goal

Activities:

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

Goal: Gather converts and all participants for celebration services.

C. Key Issues To Consider In This Phase

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

IV. PHASE IV—TRAINING

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

By trusting in the Lord, church planters must have enough confidence in others to prepare them to lead ministries of the church. God has gifted every believer, and all have a responsibility to serve. If the church planter does not take the time to delegate responsibility, provide training and release others into ministry, then the church will not grow beyond his capacity to pastor and minister to others. Eventually he will be stretched beyond his limits, and new believers simply will not be able to find a home in the new church. People in the church can also grow disillusioned without significant responsibility for ministry to motivate them to stay involved. They gradually become spectators instead of participants in the life of the church.

A. Key Scripture Verse

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

B. Activities and Goal

Activities:

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

Goal: Train leaders and church workers to train others.

C. Key Issues To Consider In This Phase

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

V. PHASE V—MULTIPLYING

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

Rather than multiply, many are tempted to focus on maintaining or adding to what they already have. Leaders may become satisfied with the size of the church, and not press on to do the work of multiplication. However, the goal of church planting is not just one new congregation, but multiplying churches in each and every region. A church planting movement can be described as the planting and growing of churches in a particular region in an unusually rapid fashion under the direction of the Holy Spirit. Church planting movements are characterized by the unity, training and mobilization of the whole body of Christ, and common vision and goals.

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

A. Key Scripture Verse

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

B. Activities and Goal

Activities:

- Coach leaders to form church planting teams.
 - Research new regions where you feel led to start ministry.
 - Reach out cross-culturally to new ethnic groups in the population.
 - Plan and conduct strategic evangelistic efforts.
 - Set regional and/or national goals.
 - Establish and appoint leaders for the organizational part of the ministry.
-

Goal:
Churches multiplied to saturate the region, nation and beyond.

C. Key Issues To Consider In This Phase

- What research needs to be done? Who will do it? What regions or peoples are still unreached? Are there potential leaders among them that can be trained?
- What goals need to be set and published? Who is heading up the prayer effort to support this ministry?
- Who assigns and oversees all new ministries? Who will train them in continuing education?

- Are there other ministries/agencies that could be included in this effort? Who should invite them to join forces? What special contribution will they make to the overall mission effort?
- What kinds of training are needed for the movement? How will it be supported?
- Is the movement self-propagating, self-supporting, and self-governing? If not, what needs to be done to make sure that it is?
- Who are the leaders with “apostolic” giftedness for the movement? How do we work together with them? How can we encourage and support them? What are their needs?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What seems like the most difficult phase for you and your church planting situation?
- How does the church planter’s role change over the course of the process?
- Why is it important that the church multiply itself?
- Are there ministry efforts in your region (evangelism, discipleship, and training) that are not part of the church planting cycle? How could these ministries become part of the church planting cycle?

ASSIGNMENT

Together with those you are working with in your church planting ministry, answer each of the following questions. At this point, you may not be able to realistically answer all of them. However, answering them the best that you can will be very good preparation for multiplication:

- What research needs to be done? Who will do it? What regions or peoples are still unreached? Are there potential leaders among them that can be trained?
- What goals need to be set and published? Who is heading up the prayer effort to support this ministry?
- Who assigns and oversees all new ministries? Who will train them in continuing education?
- Are there other ministries/agencies that could be included in this effort? Who should invite them to join forces? What special contribution will they make to the overall mission effort?
- What kinds of training are needed for the movement? How will it be supported?
- Is the movement self-propagating, self-supporting, and self-governing? If not, what needs to be done to make sure that it is?
- Who are the leaders with “apostolic” giftedness for the movement? How do we work together with them? How can we encourage and support them? What are their needs?

CHURCH PLANTING SKILLS

Lesson 2: Next Steps – Planting More Churches

Perhaps by now a church has been or will soon be established. This means an important goal has been achieved. However, as we have learned this is only one step in the process. The goal of the Great Commission is not the planting of *one church*, but rather the *multiplication of churches* throughout the world, with each of them making disciples who are wholly obedient to the Lord.

This lesson addresses the role of the newly planted church in a church planting movement. It also discusses ministry options which the church planting team needs to consider as part of the next step of ministry in working towards a church planting movement within that team's city or region.

I. THE NEW CHURCH: PLANTING DAUGHTER CHURCHES

As a church reaches its initial goal of establishment, it has some serious decisions to make. The first concerns how the new church will reach out and begin *one or more other churches*. Hopefully, through your work, the newly planted church is a "pregnant" one—ready to work toward planting other churches. As we understand God's purpose, the vision should be for a movement of Church planting extending to geographic areas and/or entire people group(s).

The newly planted church has a role to play in helping to fulfill the Great Commission in its local community, in nearby unreached communities, and in other parts of the world. This requires the leadership of the newly planted church to prepare the congregation for church planting, to raise up and send out church planters and missionaries from its own membership, and to work with other local churches to help them to fulfill their God-given mandate of evangelizing the lost.

A. Keep The Vision Alive

The vision that inspired the newly planted church may die if people become satisfied in that church. But re-asking that question, "What does God want to do among this people group or in this region?" can rekindle the desire for more churches. We know that God wants everyone to hear the Gospel. Churches who know their purpose are committed to planting churches among entire regions, nations, and people groups.

When you look beyond the local church, you can see the larger picture. Paul's vision to reach the province of Asia was geographic (Acts 19:10). You can also have vision for reaching a particular people or ethnic group. In Galatians 2:7-8, we see that Peter worked with the Jews and Paul worked with the Gentiles. In Romans 11:13 Paul boldly declares, "I am an apostle to the Gentiles." What area has God called you to reach? What people groups living in that area must be reached with the Gospel?

The leadership of the church needs to constantly keep before the people the purpose of the church, and the role and responsibility of that church in fulfilling the Great Commission. As the leadership of the church equips believers for the work of ministry, they will grow spiritually and practically, developing ministry skills and vision. This should lead to ministries of outreach among the unevangelized.

The Gospel will have a greater impact, in the long run, when the whole body moves forward together. Some people catch a vision more quickly than others. Those with vision need to keep encouraging others to move ahead. Those who move slower can add stability to the movement. As they understand the importance of church planting in seeing the Great Commission fulfilled, these "process thinkers" can help make sure that every step forward is a serious and sound one. It takes both kinds of people working together in order for a church to continue reaching out into new areas with the Gospel.

Question 1: What are some ways that you can continue to promote the vision of saturation church planting in your new church plant?

Work with your congregation to think through the responsibility of your church in the world. Define your “Jerusalem, Judea and Samaria and ends of the earth”. Encourage members of the congregation to learn about different parts of the world, the need for evangelism and church planting, and the work of missionaries. If you have a Sunday school, encourage the teachers to incorporate lessons about the world and missionary life as part of the curriculum.

B. Send Out Church Planting Teams

The church planting model you use to plant other churches will determine how you will train workers, fund projects, recruit outside help, etc. If you have been using the cell group model, then planting daughter churches is quite simple. As cell groups multiply, they can send out a strong new group which can, under the guidance of the leadership, transition to a new church which reaches people in a different target area. Some churches maintain about 15 active cell groups and whenever five new cell groups develop, they send them off under the cell group leadership (including the zone leader) as a new church.

The following recommendations can help with most any model:

1. Pray for and look for those whom God is calling to church planting.

Prayer is one of the most powerful tools God will use to stir up vision among His people for ministry to the world. A new church should pray for world evangelization and specifically that God would raise up laborers for the harvest for church planting work.

The Church is God’s primary instrument for world evangelization and church planting is a task which belongs to the whole church. Therefore, we can expect that God will want to set apart members from our own congregations for the work of church planting just as He did in the early church (Acts 13:1-3). Look for people in your church who sense that God wants them to be involved in church planting. The apostle Paul often spoke about his calling (Ro 1:1, 1Co 1:1, 2Co 1:1, Gal 1:1,15-16). This awareness of "being called" by God keeps a person serving when there are no objective reasons to continue or when the feelings say, "I quit!"

This "call" to ministry includes:

- a growing vision for ministry;
- a testing of one's character, vision and ministry;
- affirmation by one's local church, one's elders, one's ministry team, and other church planters;
- the empowering of the Holy Spirit for putting the calling into effect (1Ti 4:15, Eph 3:7, Col 1:28-29).

In addition to the above qualities, look for a willingness to sacrifice for the sake of the Gospel. Church planting is hard work on the front lines of the battle for the Kingdom of God. Most of the original apostles died as martyrs for the faith. Church planters will make sacrifices. This does not always mean dying a martyr's death, being shipwrecked or imprisoned, but it could mean being misunderstood, giving up personal comforts, etc. The apostle Paul spoke about the willingness to relinquish personal rights in order to reach people for Jesus (1Co 9).

Question 2: What are some of the sacrifices that will have to be made in your region as the Gospel continues to advance? How can you prepare people ahead of time to be ready to make these sacrifices?

2. Determine where to send out the church planting team.

Pray and seek the Lord’s guidance as to where you should send out church planters and church planting teams. Research both the geographic area and the people groups living in the target area (see Lesson 5, "Research:

Information for Strategic Purposes” in Book One.) Use your research results to determine the training needs of the members of the church planting team, to mobilize the congregation for prayer, to find financial support, and to develop evangelism and church planting strategies for that target area.

3. Mobilize the resources of the church for involvement in church planting.

Planting churches happens best when the resources of the church are mobilized for that cause. These resources include the people who will be on the church planting team, finances to support the church planting team, materials, transportation necessary for the church planting ministry, and short-term helpers. Get as many people active in the actual church plant as possible, even for short time periods. Members of the congregation can serve the church planting team by prayer walks, music, evangelistic activities, and social ministries. This will not only help carry the burden of the church planting team, but will help to increase the vision for church planting and reaching the lost among the members of the sending church.

4. Train, care for and mentor the church planting team.

Determine the training needs of the church planting team. Do they need church planter training, cross-cultural training, or vocational training? Most of the required training can be gotten informally, but some formal training may also be required depending on the needs of the people in the target area. Once the team has been fielded, it is important that they have regular visits by someone in church leadership with pastoral gifts. This will help to keep the church and church planting team stay accountable to each other. This will provide the team with spiritual and practical help in working through interpersonal issues and concerns which will arise as the team serves and works together. In addition to pastoral care, it is important that the church planting team have a mentor or several mentors who can help the team work through the different phases of the church planting process.

Question 3: What types of training are necessary for a new church planting team from your church? Does it need to be formal, or can it be informal? How much of this training can you do yourself in your existing church?

II. THE ORIGINAL CHURCH PLANTING TEAM: PLANTING NEW CHURCHES

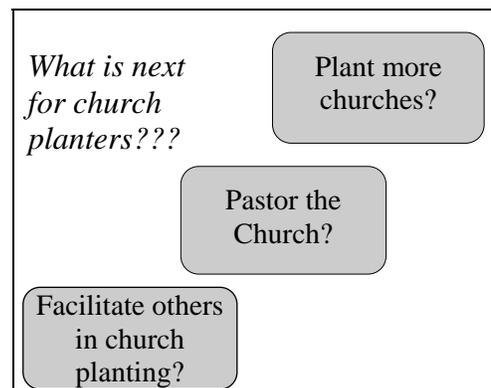
Should a church planter continue to work as an "apostolic" or "pioneer" church planter by moving on to start another church, or should he stay and pastor the new church? The answer will depend partly on his gifts. Is he called to be a pastor or to be an apostolic/pioneer church planter? Pastoral ministry occupies itself chiefly with the work and people of one local church. Apostolic/pioneer church planters are front line evangelists who move from place to place and may establish several churches during their lifetime. This decision concerning future ministry also depends on his sense of the Lord's will for him. This is determined through prayer.

Consider the following possibilities:

A. The Church Planting Team Moves On

The church planter(s) turns the church leadership over to others and then returns to the sending church or moves on to plant a church in another location.

When church planters have apostolic gifts they will want to plant more churches. They should be encouraged to do so if the Lord wills. Pioneer church planters, as spiritual parents, share in the responsibility for the spiritual lives of those who are part of the new church and therefore should take departure very seriously. To start the church and leave it prematurely is like a parent abandoning a young infant. The apostle Paul had an ongoing relationship with the churches he had planted,



writing letters and giving advice when problems arose. He also initially appointed the elders who led those newly planted churches, ensuring that there was ongoing care of the church. This must be one of the considerations when deciding the next ministry step for the team.

The most significant question in this option is, "To whom will the leadership of the church be given?" Church planters must prepare the church for future leadership. Leadership often can be found in the new congregation itself. It is wise for the newly established church to develop and recruit leaders from those who have had some part in the church's life from the beginning. Or, if a pastor or leader is chosen from outside the church, he should have good pastoral gifts, as well as the same kind of vision and faith that you have instilled in the church.

People do not shift allegiance easily or quickly. There should be a time for bonding between the appointed church leadership and the people. It is good to have a gradual plan to walk the new leadership into a close relationship with the congregation, rather than to making abrupt changes which may be like throwing them into ice cold water.

B. The Church Planting Team Remains To Pastor The New Church Plant

The church planter(s) stays in the new church and becomes the pastor of the new church.

The primary consideration here is, "Does the church planter have pastoral gifts?" If a pioneer type of leader stays on as pastor but does not have pastoral gifts, the members of the church may fail to receive the nourishment and nurture that they need.

A church planter might stay in the new church to organize, train and lead new church planting teams to go out from the church. If this leader is also able to raise up new leaders to pastor the new churches, great opportunities exist to advance the Gospel through further church planting. This kind of pastor will usually not only pastor the new church but will develop other church planters and a church planting ministry from within the new church.

C. The Church Planting Team Becomes A Facilitation Team

The church planter(s) facilitate others for church planting in the region.

Facilitation means helping people see their role in filling towns, cities and nations with churches, and showing them that *they can do it* as God shows them how. Facilitating others is a necessary strategy for advancing the Gospel in an entire region. This includes giving vision for church planting and then training, equipping and mobilizing those who are envisioned. A facilitation team is a group of people who work together to give people a vision of what God wants to do through them and then to help those envisioned in the fulfillment of that vision. They are involved in the following activities:

1. Promote the Vision

The role of a facilitation team is to continuously share the vision of "What does God want for this region, city, nation or people group?" Promoting the vision (or vision casting) includes preaching and teaching on the purpose of the Church, the role of leadership in the church, and the nature of the Great Commission task. Churches and believers need to constantly be reminded about God's priorities, desires and passion to reconcile lost people to Himself. As people respond to this vision, the facilitation team then needs to be able to help them to act on that vision.

2. Begin Organized Prayer Efforts

Prayer links our efforts to God's efforts. Church planting is spiritual work and requires spiritual labor. As people respond to the vision of seeing their nation, region or city filled with churches, the facilitation team can begin to call these people together to pray for the fulfillment of this vision. This may be two or three individuals or a group within the church, people from different churches who have the same vision, or whole churches praying together. The goal is to have an ever-enlarging circle of people praying for church planting.

3. Train and Mentor People for Church Planting Ministry

One of the best ways to facilitate church planting among other churches is for the newly planted church to become a training center for the region. By hosting training events, the church leadership has the opportunity to influence others toward a church planting movement. The church planters being trained are sent out by the churches and denominations from which they come.

4. Develop Church Planting Partnerships

Often, local churches feel they do not have the resources to fully train and support church planters themselves. But they still have a responsibility and need to participate in the fulfillment of the Great Commission. The facilitation team can help churches to form partnerships and together support and send out missionaries and church planter to work among a particular people group or in a particular region. This allows for especially smaller churches to participate more fully in the Great Commission than they might be able to on their own.

Question 4: What are some of the advantages and disadvantages of the three possibilities listed above? Which of these possibilities would work best in your church plant? Why?

CONCLUSION

As the newly planted church is established, it must understand its role in a church planting movement. It should have a desire to reproduce itself through the training and sending out of church planters from its midst, and through prayer for world evangelization. The church planting team has to make decisions concerning its future role and the transition of leadership in the newly planted church. The growth and multiplication of the new church and the team's involvement in a church planting movement are important considerations in the church planting team deciding their next steps of ministry.

Facilitation is a key means for helping to encourage church planting movements. A facilitation team is a group of people who work together to give people a vision of what God wants to do through them and then to help those envisioned in the fulfillment of that vision. Its role is to cast vision, resource, train and encourage believers in every way to become involved in a church planting movement. Facilitation is necessary for region-wide or nationwide church planting movements to occur.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What role in the church planting task should you now assume?
- Does the church you are planting have a vision for a daughter church? If not, what steps will you take to pass on that vision?
- Describe the differences between an apostolic/pioneer church planter and a pastor in terms of calling and giftedness.
- What sacrifices will you have to make to see churches multiplied?
- How can you help facilitate others in either your sending church or in the new church to be church planters?

ASSIGNMENT

- With your church planting team and mentor, pray and consider what should be your next steps in church planting ministry.
- Identify one or two potential church planters in your newly planted church. Spend time talking with them about their vision and mentoring them in preparation for church planting work as part of a church planting team.

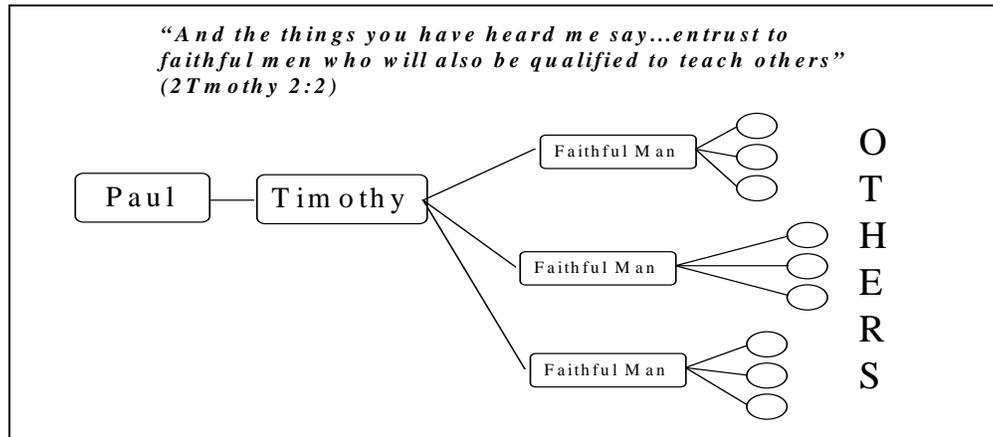
Lesson 3: Training As Part Of A Church Planting Movement

I. TRAINING AS PART OF A MOVEMENT

For saturation church planting to happen, new churches have to be planted everywhere! Someone must plant those churches, and therefore there must be enough church planters to do this task.

According to 2 Timothy 2:2, what Paul taught Timothy was not just for Timothy. He was supposed to pass it on to others. Timothy was responsible to find and teach faithful men, and these faithful men were responsible to find and teach others. Paul, Timothy, faithful men, others...four generations of teaching! This is how multiplication takes place.

Training as Part of a Movement



This means that not only is it important to train every believer, but each one of them should also begin to train and disciple someone else. This training takes place more in the context of personal relationships rather than in a formal institution. As each new believer is disciplined, he or she begins discipling an even newer believer, and the process continues.

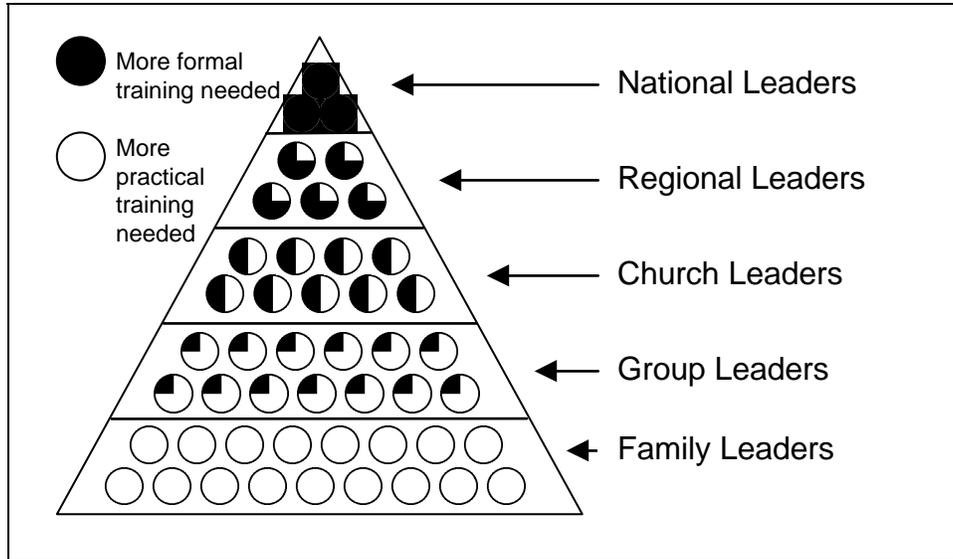
Similarly, in order for a church planting movement to develop and continue into succeeding generations, church planters must continuously be training others. Just as the apostles became leaders and teachers of others, some church planters also need to train and mentor other church planters.

How do you know if you should be involved in training church planters?

- Has God used you in touching people’s lives?
- Is one or more of the subjects in the training interesting to you?
- Do you want others to learn what you have learned in your training?
- Are you completely convinced that God wants new churches to spring up?
- Are you willing to try with the Lord by your side?

While formal theological education has an important role in the Church, it is not for everyone. However, the process of a more mature believer training a less mature one *is a process for everyone*. The amount of formal training needed for each next higher level of leadership increases, even as the number of leaders decreases. The figure below shows this relationship.

Training for Church Leaders



The Church needs many family leaders, but these need little formal or theological education. Rather, they need helpful, practical training that they can use right away in their family relationships. The family leadership role is informal but very real. This leadership influence is strong, even among younger leaders (1Ti 4:12). National church leaders at the other extreme, however, should have a considerable amount of formal training in the areas of theology, ministry, administration, finance, etc. Fortunately, fewer national church leaders are required so that the Church is not excessively burdened with their training.

It becomes increasingly difficult to provide training as we move to higher levels of leadership. In many parts of the world, the Church is simply not able to provide the training needed for leaders at regional and national levels, so leaders may need to travel abroad. In any case it is important to at least be aware of the needs for leaders at these levels so that provision can be made as the needs arise.

Every church planter is also a trainer, always equipping others to learn and minister in their many roles from evangelism through local church leadership. To further the potential of church multiplication it is always important to be identifying and training others in the important role of starting new congregations. Others need to be getting the training you are getting in this curriculum regardless of the form of the training process.

Question 1: If you have not yet begun to train someone else using this material, think and pray about how you can begin doing this. List 2-3 people with whom you can start.

Question 2: What types of practical, informal training are available to group and family leaders in your region?

II. FOUNDATIONS FOR TRAINING CHURCH PLANTERS

Church planter training does not "just happen." It takes hard work and much prayer to challenge local churches to send people for training, prepare materials for the training, and then actually train and mentor these new church planters. The following section describes some foundational activities that a church planter needs to be involved in so that church planter training continues and is passed onto others as part of a church planting movement.

A. Motivate Prayer

A church planting movement is an act of God. Prayer shows that we expect God to work and wait for Him to do His part in making unbelievers receptive and getting believers to participate in the task. Rally prayer support within and outside the nation. Pray and encourage others to pray for workers for the harvest, conditions for the harvest, and people groups who would turn to Christ as commanded in Matthew 9:38, 1 Timothy 2:1-5, and Romans 10:1.

B Raise Vision

Give people a vision concerning God's will for their nation, region, city or town. Help them to embrace a vision that everyone hear and see the Gospel in a culturally relevant way through the witness of a living church in their community. Help them work toward planting churches that will multiply, grow, and saturate the nation in God's time as He gives conditions, freedom, and workers for the harvest.

Sharing vision with others can be done in a variety of forms: one-on-one through personal networks of influence, in small group settings, or in large group settings, as God gives you opportunity.

C. Meet with Leaders And Pastors

Visit leaders and pastors. They are the ones with the authority and influence to sponsor and encourage people to get involved in church planting. Also, they are the ones who will know which members in their churches or organizations have the potential to be effective church planters.

When you meet with pastors and leaders, tell them boldly, "We train church planters" and ask them, "Do you know someone in your group with an interest in church planting?" Discuss with them the benefits of church planter training and how they can be involved in and oversee the expansion of the church!

D. Produce and Disseminate Literature

Various types of literature can help promote and accelerate church planting in your region. You should begin creating and printing your own literature that deals with topics related to church planting movements and church planter training. Literature brings legitimacy to what you are doing and carries your work beyond your circle of influence. It also speeds up the multiplication of leaders.

The training manuals you have received during the church planter training sessions will begin to serve this purpose. Media such as newsletters, magazines, radio, e-mail, and video are all valid ways to disseminate information about church planting. The production quality of your literature or media does not need to be "state of the art", but it should be of similar quality to the existing media and literature in the country.

E. Find Leaders

Find other like-minded leaders who will embrace the saturation church planting vision. These are usually leaders with a youthful vision, unencumbered by a great number of ongoing responsibilities, and rising in their leadership skills and role.

F. Network with other training programs

In addition to church planter training, other types of training are essential in order for a church planting movement to continue to advance. Training on such topics as saturation church planting, prayer movements, evangelism, how to train and send out missionaries from your local church, spiritual warfare, youth ministry, outreach to children, etc., are all important for the growth and development of a church planting movement in a country. One of your roles in church planter training might be helping to connect the church planters whom you are training with other training resources they might need in order to help their church planting ministry succeed.

G. Expect Results

It may seem obvious, but church planter training should produce churches. From the beginning it is important to expect nothing less than God working through those who are involved to build His Church through them. Make sure that a clear objective of planting new cell groups and churches is the foundation for organizing your church planter training. When there is an expectation of new churches and cell groups, those who begin to participate will find their place as prayer warriors, organizers, financial backers, encouragers, helpers, and church planters. They are all necessary components of a church planting movement and the training should help them find their place and work toward planting churches.

Question 3: Which of the above activities are you already involved with? Which of them do you need to begin doing?

III. THE PROCESS OF TRAINING CHURCH PLANTERS

A. Begin Training

You can train church planters by responding to an invitation or by setting up and organizing training sessions with your team. When you are invited to do the church planter training, it is better to let the host dictate the approach, protocol, and logistics. If you are hosting the training, you can experiment with different forms. However, make sure that you determine the content of the training material and who will be the trainers. You can use these materials in whole or in part, and supplement with other materials as necessary in your context.

Do not be discouraged by the results of your first round of training. It takes time to find the best trainers and environment for training. Learn from your mistakes and continue to press on with the training. God may surprise you with the results of a "difficult" training session.

B. Discover New Trainers

Use the training sessions to discover new trainers from among your trainees. Get *them* to do training as soon as possible. Model for them what they need to do with others, and have them begin teaching some of the lessons while you observe. Don't wait until you have completed training with a particular group of church planters before asking some of them to help you with the teaching. As you watch them teach, you can give them advice on how they can improve as trainers.

It will take time for your new trainers to completely understand everything in the materials, but the more they teach, the more they will learn how to equip others to start new churches. Make sure you give them a vision to eventually find their own new trainers to equip in the same way that you have equipped them.

C. Decentralize Training Sites

Develop a geographic strategy for the training. Find strategic zones in the country or region where there is receptivity to church planter training. People from that area can carry out the training for church planting themselves. To do this, you must find leaders from the training who are active in church planting and want to mobilize others in their own zones. Help them to establish training in their zone. Encourage them to find and equip leaders from the local region. This will help the training multiply and will be a positive step towards a movement.

D. Pass On Leadership

Walk others into leadership and oversight of the church planter training movement. Keep finding other people with a vision to fill the land with churches and give them opportunities to lead in church planter training. Try to back out of your leadership and develop gradual but definite steps to pass it on to others. Be a mentor to them, helping them lead as they grow in their vision and capability to implement that vision through training other

church planters. Encourage them to reproduce your mentoring with others they train, multiplying towards a movement.

E. Develop Funding Structures

Develop a funding structure for the work. As the movement grows you will need to fund the production of materials, travel costs, and at times, financial support so that leaders can minister full time. A healthy mix of local giving and outside funds should work together to support the needs of this work. Deliberately foster internal giving. It is very important to raise local and in-country funds. Church planting movements around the world are sustained by local giving. This means you will need to teach on the subject of stewardship, and train others to do the same.

IV. MENTORING CHURCH PLANTERS

Training church planters is not just a matter of seminars. Mentoring is a valuable and necessary supplement to seminars. Mentoring is simply a purposeful relationship when someone with more life experience guides and directs another to accomplish his or her goals and objectives with greater personal effectiveness. A mentor, then, is a person who affects and influences the development and growth of another person toward certain ends. The mentoree, the person being helped, is guided so as to reach his potential, to maximize his gifts, talents and abilities, and to do his best. The Christian mentor strives to help the Christian mentoree reach his God-given potential and to accomplish God's goals for his life, for the glory of God!

The mentoring of church planters is vital. Reports from those in church planter training seem to indicate that where mentoring takes place, more churches are planted. Conversely, where no mentoring takes place, often there are few resulting churches.

The goal of mentoring is empowerment. Empowerment is the sharing of appropriate God-given resources at the right time, resulting in progress or development in the mentoree's life and work. The benefits of having a mentor include:

- Promotes genuine growth and change (2 Timothy 1: 7-8).
- Provides a model to follow (1 Peter 2:21).
- Helps you reach your goals sooner (Romans 16:1-2).
- Plays a key role in the maturity process (Hebrews 13:7).
- Benefits others through you (2 Timothy 2:2).

The mentoring process should be linked to the practical training for church planting and be intentional from the start. It involves a clear agreement on the relationship and includes the following when meeting: review, refocusing, resourcing. Mentors need to constantly develop their own skills of listening, asking questions, taking notes and giving wise counsel.

A Godly life and growth in Christian character is the essential outcome of mentoring for the long term, while the short term should produce local churches planted! Thus a model of training can be 'caught' for the future.

Question 4: How is mentoring a church planter different than training a church planter? Is it possible to train without mentoring?

Question 5: What would mentoring look like in your context? List five practical ways that you can mentor your church planters/trainers:

CONCLUSION

One of the most valuable things you can do as you come to the end of this training to pass the training on to others. Do not hesitate to propagate the training you are now completing and be careful to identify and mentor other potential church planters who could benefit from your zeal and growing experiences. Just as Timothy was asked by Paul to pass on what he had learned, so it is now your responsibility to pass on what God has taught you.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- How does insistence upon *formal* training inhibit the growth and multiplication of churches?
- Why is training such a key part of what a church planter does?
- Why should church planter training be decentralized?
- Why is mentoring an effective part of church planter training?

ASSIGNMENT

Prayerfully choose a location where you could begin church planter training. Talk with church leaders there and develop a plan to begin training. Begin training church planters according to your plan.

Lesson 4: Signs Of A Movement

A movement is a social phenomenon. One way to describe a social movement is to say that, “What was once rare is becoming more common.” It involves a growing number of people who are convinced about a common cause, an opportune time, and leaders who desire to make radical changes to the *status quo*. Special leaders emerge to inspire, motivate and lead their respective groups toward that cause. Movements motivate new events and activities. Simply put, it means that something that only a few people did is now being done by more people. It means that something that people did rarely, they now do commonly. It has enough of an impact on a group of people that it even changes their thinking, but not without conflict in the process.

The democratic movement in Eastern Europe that began in 1989 is an example of a secular movement. As a vision for political change swelled in the hearts of common people, revolutions came in a swift, spontaneous, and dramatic way that few could have predicted. The spread of the Gospel in the New Testament, the Protestant Reformation, the Wesleyan revival and contemporary church planting movements are all examples of spiritual movements.

The clear goal of this church planter training is to help a church planting movement get underway in your region. When there is a movement of God in a nation, believers will have a renewed passion for the Gospel that should lead them to the spread the Gospel through spontaneous planting of churches and cell groups.

I. SIGN 1: A SPECIAL TIME

When the time is right, God moves and accelerates what He’s doing in a nation. God is never early and He is never late—He always does what must be done at exactly the right time.

For a movement to happen, there is a delicate sense of timing. Within a nation or ethnic group, events, conditions, and expectations come together in a certain moment of history to form the foundation of a massive movement. In the Bible, timing is so important that God Himself ordained the time for movements. In the book of Exodus, it took four hundred years for the people of Israel to be ready to move out of Egypt, but what a movement it was! Two million people walked out of a devastated Egypt as the cloud led them by day and the fire by night. Daniel noted that God’s time of seventy years had come as he prayed for Israel to move back to the promised land from captivity under the Persian Empire (Da 9:2). As God heard Daniel, many Jews began returning to Jerusalem. They rebuilt the temple and the city walls and the desolate city came to life once again.

Galatians 4:4 says that, “*At the right time God sent His Son...*”

In the New Testament, timing is also a factor in starting and mobilizing the church. The disciples of Jesus were told to wait till they received the Holy Spirit. They waited until Pentecost (Ac 1:4; 2:1). The church was begun on that day, and a great movement in Jerusalem followed. Home meetings spread across the city, teaching God’s Word. Believers also met publicly. In addition to teaching, there was fellowship, eating together, and people praying with one another (Ac 2:42-47).

Another great movement of the Church recorded in the New Testament is the great advance of the Gospel in Asia Minor. Acts 19:10 states that, “*everyone in Asia Minor heard the word of the Lord, both Jew and Greek.*” God’s timing was so critical in that movement that God would not even let Paul enter the region a few years before! Acts 16:6 describes Paul and his companions as “*having been kept by the Holy Spirit from preaching the word in the province of Asia.*”

It appears that timing is extremely important. God brings people to a point of receptivity to the Gospel, which is the message of a church planting movement, and mobilizes the Church to preach that same Gospel and plant more churches. A receptive population and a mobilized Church combine to form great advances of the Gospel. These movements will also leave their mark on history. If it is not God’s time for a *massive* movement, do not be discouraged—You can still join in where God is moving even in a small way. Like the parable of the mustard seed demonstrates, God starts great things from a very small beginning.

Question 1: What evidences do you see in your target area that God is working? How can you join in there with a vision for a church planting movement—even if it is a tiny, seemingly microscopic mustard seed beginning?

EXAMPLE:

Argentina had always been known for the pride of its people. After losing at war to the British in 1882, the nation was humbled. This brought on a special timing for the advance of the Gospel because more people recognized their need for God when they experienced such a national tragedy. Within five years, the “*Vision of the Future*” cell group church planting movement swelled to 100,000 people.

Look at what God is doing and where He is working in your region and join in working there toward a church planting movement.

II. SIGN 2: EMERGING LEADERSHIP

Many times in history when it seems that the kingdom of darkness is certain to overcome the forces of righteousness, God calls leaders who “understand the times” and know what God’s people should do. At just the right time, not too late and not too soon, God works powerfully through these leaders to bring the kingdom of darkness to its knees. So it was with Moses, David, Nehemiah, John the Baptist, the Apostle Paul, Martin Luther, John Wesley and others.

EXAMPLE:

The 18th century preacher, John Wesley, was such a leader. They called him “the most useful Saint in the British Empire” (Miller p. 63). The revival led by him and George Whitefield in England began at a spiritual low point when churches seemed powerless to impact society for Christ. Wesley’s ministry resulted in the conversion of hundreds of thousands and had a social impact that helped avert a revolution like the one in France. The Wesleyan revival spilled over into America, and led by Jonathan Edwards and Francis Asbury, resulted in saturation church planting of Congregational and Methodist churches.

Movements are all about leadership. For a saturation church planting movement to happen, leaders must come forward. They must promote the vision, develop new leaders, and convince existing leaders to support and join the movement. As the movement takes momentum, new leaders start emerging to carry it forward.

Like a rowboat heading upstream in strong current, these leaders will usually face some opposition. Usually, when directing a change in the *status quo*, those who lead a movement at its very beginning are more radical. This radical element can be like a new stallion in a herd of horses, challenging all of those who have been in the herd a while—they cause friction. Hooves may fly as leaders rear up and react! People will react to what leaders in a movement stand for—some positively, some negatively.

Movements can actually gain momentum from opposition as the resistance forces leaders to modify, solidify, and develop their sense of direction and convictions. Hopefully, if leaders of Christian movements hold radical opinions that are not biblical, they will modify their directions and convictions toward a biblical position.

Some leaders cast vision and ideas (such as the prophets, from Isaiah to John the Baptist). They demand change, but motivate it by reaching deep into the longing of people’s hearts for God to work among them. As they proclaim God’s intentions for His people, they work to convince them to depart from the *status quo* and follow God’s plan. *A church planting movement needs leaders who will plead the cause of saturation church planting to other leaders who may be reluctant to accept this vision.*

Question 2: As you spread the vision for a saturation church planting movement in your region or country, what types of opposition do you expect to face from other leaders in your area?

The Apostle Peter did this excellently in a public sermon as he focused on the hopes and dreams of the Jewish heart. He quoted his and their Scriptures from the prophet Joel. His message provoked their longing for God to send His Spirit to once again bring a prophetic word. But instead of speaking about the Spirit coming upon some distant, exalted prophet, he overwhelmed their expectations by quoting Joel and saying that their own sons and daughters would prophesy! What could be described as a spiritual movement followed (Ac 2). But opposition also followed his message. *A church planting movement needs leaders who draw out the longing in peoples' hearts for God to work through them, advancing His Gospel by multiplying churches in the land.*

Paul was a leader who took action. If Christ was not preached somewhere, he would go there to do it (Ro 15:20-21). He set an example for others in ministry. In spite of hardships, persecution, and even destitution, (2Co 11:23-27) he planted churches! Others followed him in this example (2Ti 2:3). This is obvious, but must be said: *A church planting movement needs leaders who will lead teams to plant churches!*

Barnabas was a leader who developed other leaders even when they were considered a risk to the cause of the Gospel. He stood beside Paul when there was great doubt over whether his conversion was sincere and genuine (Ac 9:26-27). While Paul was alone in Tarsus, Barnabas called him over to Antioch and released him into his teaching ministry (Ac 11:25-26). It was from his ministry at Antioch that Paul went on to become a recognized apostle and church planter.

Barnabas also faced opposition when Paul refused to take young Mark with them again after he had failed on his first trip. Barnabas split from Paul to restore Mark to useful service (Ac 15:36-39). After time, not only did Paul himself say that Mark had become useful, but he became as a son to Peter and even wrote a Gospel! See for yourselves in 2 Timothy 4:11, Colossians 4:10, and 1 Peter 5:13 and read them aloud.

EXAMPLE:

J. Christy Wilson was the first person in 1500 years to plant an evangelical church in modern day Afghanistan. He has inspired many other Christian leaders for missions, both on the foreign mission field and in pastoral ministry. He himself does not lead any organization. Bill Bright, leader of one of the largest missions and evangelism organizations in the world, says that Dr. Wilson has deeply influenced him as the most spiritual man he has ever met. Dr. Wilson prays for hundreds of people every week, simply that God would use them. He encourages people, he believes in their spiritual gifts and he uses his own heavy influence and powerful connections to give them every opportunity to use them. As a pastor, professor, missionary, friend and counselor, he helps others see how God will use them and encourages them to work for the Lord before others notice them. Often, he will stand by and publicly speak well of someone, who although controversial, is serving the Lord and being used by Him.

One can pass the fire of a torch to another unlit torch without dimming one's own light. Lighting the torches of new leaders so they may also lead helps a small flicker in the night turn to a great blaze which can be seen a long way off. In the same way, equipping, or 'facilitating' others into leadership makes a movement grow. Acts 19:1-10 describes how in Paul's last ministry before he was imprisoned, he developed other leaders by beginning with twelve men in Ephesus. Paul himself stayed in the city, but those he trained reached all of Asia Minor with the word of the Lord. He describes how he worked with them during that time in Acts 20:17-38. Paul lit their torches! *A church planting movement needs leaders who will influence and develop other leaders who will keep the movement expanding.*

Leaders in a movement hold people accountable to the truth when it is overshadowed by traditions. Peter, Barnabas and Paul appealed to the ethics and conscience of other leaders to convince them regarding Gentiles and the Jewish law. They told the apostles and elders how God had used them to bring uncircumcised Gentiles to Christ. From this argument, they convinced the apostles and elders to write a letter freeing Gentile believers from obligations to Old Testament ceremonial law (Ac 15:6-7,23-29).

Question 3: What are some of the traditions in your area which might hinder a church planting movement?

Question 4: Do you see new leaders emerging in your context? If not, what can you do to help them to develop?

III. SIGN 3: PEOPLE GET INVOLVED

When a movement is underway, people continue to get involved in aspects of the movement in growing numbers and growing levels of commitment to the common cause. For a church planting movement, *the common cause is to fill the land with churches that preach the Gospel!* This means that more people will need to be involved in all the aspects of starting new churches. More people will become fully committed church planters. More people will help with special skills like music, evangelism, research, and in any other way that will be a help to plant churches. More people will be part of the sending team by regularly praying for church planters and their ministry.

EXAMPLE:

In Romania, the beginning signs of a **prayer movement** are evident. From Alba Iulia, Romania, a group of three women began praying for each other and their husbands. They progressed to pray for their churches, their region, for the nation and for new churches to be planted. This fellowship grew to over 30 groups with approximately 150 women involved in prayer. It spread to Bucharest where a prayer brochure for Romania was produced and used all over the nation and outside of the country. In Sibiu, two churches which are not of the same denomination pray together. In Cluj, there is a monthly women's prayer gathering open to all churches. Often, unconverted women attend, and some even become believers through this fellowship.

The invisible, empowering relationship that we have with God through prayer is the intimate link with Him who gives birth to and drives on a movement. That expression of a movement of His Spirit is signaled as multiplying groups of believers come together to meet with Him in prayer. First a few, then more and more gather for prayer, until the movement of His Spirit sweeps across a nation.

The very nature of a movement is the reason *why* it attracts more and more people. People are convinced and committed to the common cause, and pass on their conviction and commitment to others. People are committed to a church planting movement because they are convinced that it is God at work among them.

EXAMPLE:

The Deeper Life movement in Nigeria grew out of a Bible study in the home of William Kmuye, then a university professor. It has grown to more than three thousand congregations from that one Bible study. People sensed that God's presence was among them through the serious study of His word. Although growing rapidly, the Deeper Life Movement is committed to biblical practices, sound doctrine and quality leadership training through cell group ministry.

Question 5: How do people see God working in your region? What types of ministries are growing? How can you begin to involve more people in the church planting task?

IV. SIGN 4: NEW FORMS

When a movement is underway, it's not only professionals and ordained leaders who serve in ministry, but ordinary believers discover that God wants to use them, too. A movement gets people involved at every level. Leaders emerge with a passion for ministry. People become active in serving God in all sorts of ways that they may have formerly thought only professional or well-established Christians could do. For example, not only seminary-trained leaders may preach and teach, but also believers in the church whom God has gifted for this ministry.

EXAMPLE:

Someone asked a church planting pastor of the Assembly of God in Brazil where he attended seminary. Since very few of the Assembly of God leaders have ever attended any formal theological education he looked at the person who asked him with surprise that he would even ask. His answer was, "Why, the seminary of the street!" Such a great church planting movement needs leaders and their leaders are trained through practical ministry experience.

What happens next? As more people start working in the ministry of the Gospel they will discover more successful, interesting, or unique styles of ministry that help others get involved also. For example, in a church planting movement a certain song may become popular because of how it touches the hearts of those who hear and sing it, or because of how it turns people to the Lord. Other trends that may appear in a church planting movement include evangelism methods that are successful, cell group meetings, and even preaching styles.

EXAMPLES:

The Lord's Army, a cell group movement which preached the Gospel from the Romanian Orthodox church, experienced great growth from the 1930's to the 1950's. While most music in the evangelical churches was imported and translated (often badly), the Lord's Army movement began producing praises to God in music born on Romanian soil and coming from the Romanian soul. Evangelical believers in Romania from other churches use this music to praise the Lord today.

A group of "hippies" from Calvary Chapel started making music, founding Maranatha Music and producing songs that have been translated all over the world. Two of those songs are *Seek Ye First* and *As the Deer*.

The Icthus cell group church planting movement out of England has made the *March for Jesus* a world event. The song *Shine Jesus Shine* also comes from this movement.

V. SIGN 5: SPONTANEITY AND EXPANSION

When a massive movement is underway, no one person or organization can control it. It simply gets too big for any one person to organize. However, leaders in a movement can get together and influence the direction of a movement. It is completely unrealistic to think that separate denominational and independent churches will join together to become one denomination for the sake of a church planting movement. The differences are too great for them to be the same entity. But they can unite together as separate organizations toward the common cause of advancing the Gospel through church planting! That happens in a saturation church planting movement.

It is very possible for leaders from different denominations to get together and plan to fill their nation with Bible preaching churches, whether Pentecostal or Baptist (and others too)! Therefore, a movement cannot by nature be organized, but people and structures in a movement can be directed toward the cause of church planting.

EXAMPLE:

In a meeting that brought major denominational leaders together to discuss advancing the Gospel in Brazil, the president of the Assemblies of God, Jose Wellington, read Psalm 133, "Behold how good and how pleasant it is for brothers to live together in unity!" This meeting started the process which led to the Brazilian AD 2000 delegation and interdenominational good will.

A spiritual movement is always unpredictable. Movements by their very nature are inherently dynamic. Participation in a movement of God is often uncertain. We carry on and advance within chaos, simply trying to manage that which we can and leaving the rest to God's sovereign care. Never knowing if there will be enough money, never certain that God will open the doors we envision or expect Him to open, never certain if there will be other people to join us, never certain if our strategies are 100 percent implicated in His movement, we advance in faith and confidence in His loving kindness.

A good test to see if what is happening is a movement of God or a human program is to ask, "Can a person control this?" Humans have obvious limitations. A movement of God must exceed and surpass human abilities and expectations. Can a person make another's heart receptive? Can a person convict another of sin? These are things the Spirit of God does. It is highly unlikely that what the human mind programs and controls is a movement of God. Get involved in ministry that will only succeed if God is in it. Avoid being involved in a "good" ministry that you know will succeed through your own human efforts.

Question 6: If a movement begins to spontaneously grow beyond what we can control, should this be cause for concern? Who is ultimately responsible for the outcomes of such a movement?

VI. SIGN 6: PEOPLE AND STRUCTURES ARE MOBILIZED

Rapid growth requires new structures, more leaders and new ways of communicating. As a church planting movement gains momentum and new forms for ministry emerge, Christians will also begin to be mobilized at all levels to be involved in planting churches. Existing structures like local churches, denominational leadership, Christian organizations, and even schools will begin to find ways to participate in and help the church planting task. Sometimes new structures are formed for helping existing ones cooperate toward a church planting movement. Literature and communication media need to emerge to take the movement farther. The following things may happen when people and structures mobilize:

When existing leaders such as pastors, denominational officials and other key Christians see that the church planting movement is clearly the will of God, they will encourage the structures they lead to help.

EXAMPLE:

The Discipling a Whole Nation (DAWN) ministry brought together church leaders in the Philippines in 1973 for prayer and planning. Each denomination set their own church planting goals, for a sum total of 50,000 new churches by the year 2003. They are on target today as God has honored both their faith and unity!

When previously inactive Christians see that the church planting movement is of God, they will often begin to join in by prayer, financial giving, and even going and working! Informal training will take place to help ordinary believers participate in very practical ways, and some of that training may find its way into Bible schools and seminaries as well.

Literature and other communication media will inform, instruct, and inspire people *en masse* concerning the main ideas and themes of the movement. This is an essential element to help different groups in a movement grow together in the same direction. Media, especially literature, also legitimizes. Literature and media can help people to take the movement that produces them seriously. They also help a movement to spread beyond our imagination. Literature and media also reach geographically where the leaders and participants in a movement never could. The New Testament epistles are an excellent example of literature that grew out of a church planting movement. They are still informing, instructing and inspiring church planting movements today! Do you think first century Christians imagined that Paul's letters would be instructing and inspiring believers around the world almost two thousand years later?

CONCLUSION

How do you find out where Jesus is actively working? He will always be found dwelling in His people. The first place to look to determine how God is at work is to check where He lives! How is God working in your midst? Some of the signs of a movement may be evident in your region if you begin to look for them.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What can you do now to help lay the groundwork for a church planting movement in your region?
- How is God working at this time in the place you will serve Him for church planting? How can you stir the longing in people's hearts for God to work?
- Of the kinds of leaders in a movement, what kind of leader are you?
- What kind of literature is needed to accelerate a church planting movement?
- How would it be possible to have a consultation or congress toward a church planting movement in your region or country?

SOURCES

- Miller, Basil. John Wesley. Minneapolis: Dimension Books, 1943.

Lesson 5: Vision And Telescoping—Taking The Gospel Into The World

The church must obey the great commission by making disciples *of its own nation and of all the nations*. This specific lesson will work from Acts 1:8 which compels the church to be Jesus’ witnesses in Jerusalem (locally), Judea (regionally), Samaria (cross-culturally), and to the ends of the earth (new cultures, languages, and places).

I. DEFINITIONS OF VISION AND TELESCOPING

For local churches to effectively participate in the Great Commission, they need **vision**. Vision is the ability to see beyond what is to what could be. Spiritual vision for reaching the world for Jesus Christ is the ability to see nations, regions, and peoples of the world as places and peoples where the Gospel will advance by means of evangelism and church planting.

A vision is only a nice idea unless it becomes a reality. **Telescoping** is a metaphor which describes the various types of penetration into the world (geographic and cultural) which the church must make in order to fulfill the Great Commission. The church extending and reaching out is like a telescope that extends and increases, bringing objects which are further and further away into sharper focus. Each type of penetration will require local churches to take concrete steps of sacrifice and commitment to advance the Gospel. Local churches need to be taking the Gospel to people in their communities, nations and overseas.

II. LOOKING WITH A VISION FOR GOD’S HARVEST

Jesus calls the church to have vision for His harvest of men’s souls. Jesus also used the harvest metaphor in Matthew 9:38, commanding his disciples to pray that there will be enough workers for this great harvest. On the day of Pentecost, Israel was celebrating the wheat harvest. With the coming of the Holy Spirit on that day, the harvest vision transformed when the church was born. Instead of rejoicing over the wheat harvest, the church proclaimed the glory of God to the nations in their own languages, harvesting men’s souls— three thousand the first day! These people coming to Christ, the new meaning of God’s harvest, made them a part of the new church.

Could we use *church planting* terminology and say that what happened on Pentecost was the first New Testament church plant? The church that started on Pentecost has reproduced itself over a million times throughout every inhabited continent on earth! The harvest must still go on however, as several million more churches must be planted. Jim Montgomery, in his book, *DAWN 2000*, says that about seven million more churches need to be planted to reach the whole world. The vision we have is to preach the Gospel, plant churches, and bring people into the church as followers of Jesus Christ. The church obtains vision for God’s harvest by "opening her eyes" and "looking at the fields" of the world. Vision is the beginning of the church’s adventure to fulfill the Great Commission.

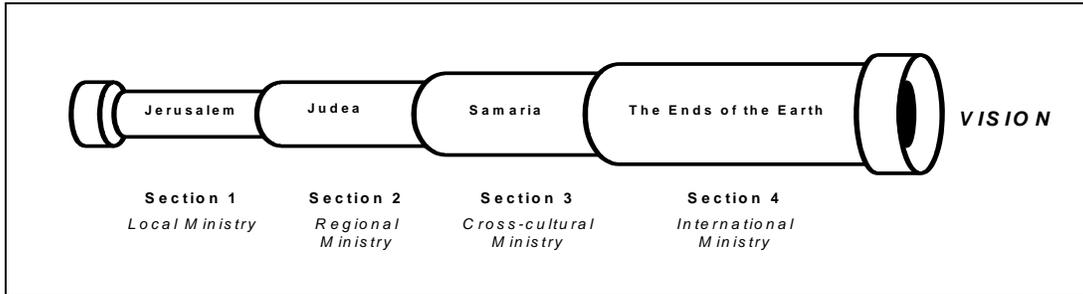
III. TELESCOPING FOR GOD’S HARVEST

Acts 1:8 describes the progressive growth of the church from Jerusalem to the ends of the earth and even provides an outline for the book of Acts.

ACTS 1:8:	"Jerusalem"	"Judea"	"and Samaria"	ends of the earth
Meaning	the local city	the region	the neighboring region	the world
Outline of Acts	Acts 1-8 (Ac 5:28)	Acts 8-12 (Ac 8:5)		Acts 13-28 (Ro 15:19)
Biblical example	"Thessalonica" 1 Th1:6	"Macedonia" 1 Th1:7	"and Achaia" 1 Th1:7	"everywhere" 1 Th1:8

In the old days of shipping, an able navigator could extend his vision further by using his telescope. As he extended his telescope, far away places that he could remotely see with the naked eye became nearer and clearer to him. Applying this analogy to the fulfillment of the Great Commission, picture a telescope with four extending sections. Notice in the figure that each section of the telescope relates to Jesus' command to his disciples in Acts 1:8: "...and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

Penetrating The World With The Gospel (Telescoping)



A. Section 1: Local Ministry

Opening the telescope to the first section, we can look at the local ministry of the church. The disciples who first heard this command obeyed it locally by filling Jerusalem with their teaching about Jesus (Acts 5:28).

As one of the first assignments of this training program, you identified a "target area" where you are now seeking to plant a church. Your church planting ministry has focused on a village, a town or a neighborhood of a city within that target area. Once your church is established, it will continue to minister to the people of that local geographic area. This is that local church's "Jerusalem."

The nature of your Jerusalem will determine how you reach out to them. Very few cities are homogeneous. Most cities are comprised of people of varied age, education, culture, ethnic background, language, etc. It is unlikely that one single church can respond to the wide range of needs that this situation presents. Also, many cities are so large that travel to and from a central location hinders attendance. Our task is a local church within access of everyone. The presence of one local church in a city seldom means the task is complete. The multiplication of the church to reach others is the best method to complete the task.

Our mandate is clear. We are to reach out to the lost. It is not the responsibility of the lost to come to us. With God's help, a growing local church will begin to pray about the lost in their city that have no witness, and actively be a witness for them.

Question 1: How many churches do you think are needed in your "Jerusalem"?

B. Section 2: Regional Ministry

Opening the telescope further to the second section allows for the church to see beyond its own local context into a wider geographic area. This principle corresponds to being a witness in Judea as described in Acts 1:8. This kind of outreach mobilizes the body of Christ to plant a new church in another nearby geographical area, where the culture and language are likely to be the same as that of the members of the local church. This kind of outreach would result in a "daughter" church.

Every church from its beginning should already consider that its purpose is to reproduce. In nature all living things sooner or later plateau, and even die, while their fruit or offspring lives on. The principles are similar in church ministry. In a sense the true 'fruit' of a church is not a new convert, but a new church. The most effective way for a church to have a regional impact is through reproducing itself, planting daughter churches.

Example

In Brazil, over a twenty year period one church filled a geographical area with 200 congregations. These churches sent a missionary to Albania. As he was teaching on multiplying churches to church planters there, he said, "Our church growth was slow compared to others, but even so, when we plant a new church immediately that new daughter church plans to plant other daughter churches as soon as possible. Our churches know their purpose is to plant new churches from the very beginning." It is this kind of thinking and purpose that can mobilize churches from their beginning to be ministry minded within their own congregation and beyond.

When the church has the desire and the faith to fulfill the vision for telescoping by planting daughter churches, it will have to take some necessary steps. It takes a greater commitment and sacrifice among the members of an existing church to plant a daughter church. These steps would include training workers, sending them, raising funds, and most importantly, continuing in prayer toward completing the vision through telescoping.

C. Section 3: Cross-Cultural Ministry

The opening of the telescope to its third section can be compared to witnessing in Samaria. This describes advancing the Gospel cross-culturally. Although the Samaritans were not geographically far from the Jewish believers in Jerusalem and Judea, they were a different culture and ethnic group. They had many different customs and traditions as well as their different religious practices. Although Jews were antagonistic to the Samaritans, Jesus loved them both! The early disciples (Philip in particular) took the Gospel to Samaria as they worked to fulfill the Great Commission (Ac 8:4-25).

The church is responsible to reach out cross-culturally to different people groups. We can reach out to nearby ethnic groups for Jesus, even when political and ethnic tensions may exist. This will often require that those whom the church sends out take cross-cultural training, learn the language, and study the people's culture where they will plant the church. It is this extra effort that will often cause the new work to grow and reproduce.

Question 2: Are there any ethnic groups in your region which are different from you culturally while still speaking the same language? How far would you need to travel before being able to minister cross-culturally to one or more of these groups?

D. Section 4: International Ministry

Opening the telescope to its complete length refers to the ends of the earth mentioned in Acts 1:8. This is extending the ministry of the church to people who are distant geographically, culturally and linguistically. The best early church example of obedience to this command is found in Acts 13 and following when Paul and Barnabas (later others) were sent out to have a cross-cultural and international church planting ministry.

By praying, giving, and sending missionaries to the ends of the earth, a local church completes the entire telescoping process. It has ministry happening at all levels—"Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria and the ends of the earth."

Our task is not completed until the Gospel has penetrated the whole earth, presenting the message of salvation to every person. It is not "natural" to be concerned for the lost condition of strangers. However, this is God's desire, and our responsibility. As the new group is transformed into a church, it is not finished with its work. Rather, it has just taken the first step in an exciting and rewarding journey for the Lord.

It is important and biblical to pray for people groups (Ro 10:1; 1Ti 2:1-2; Eph 6:19) and churches should be praying from the beginning for the Gospel to advance to "all the nations" (Mt 28:18-20) and for workers for the harvest. Do people in your church have this vision? Are there people praying for the nations?

From this missions vision it is also possible to telescope through financial giving to missions. The Philippian church gave financially to Paul's missionary and church planting outreach (Php 4:17-19). In this way a church

can telescope through financial support of missionaries who are working in a faraway place even if they are not from that congregation.

EXAMPLE

Luis Bush (who led a movement in Latin America for churches to send missionaries), and others traveled throughout Latin America proclaiming the vision for missions as part of the COMIBAM (the acronym stands for “Ibero American Cooperation in Missions”) movement. The cry rang out, "Latin America, from a mission field to a mission force!" At this time, Latin American countries were going through economic hardship and many could not see how it was possible to send missionaries to other countries if they were struggling financially. Luis used the example of Abraham, whose body was good as dead but his faith was alive. It was his faith that brought the promise of a son. In this way he compared the financial powerlessness to Abraham’s body saying, "In Latin America, we don’t have the money- BUT WE HAVE THE FAITH!" Church after church accepted the missionary call and since COMIBAM in 1987, thousands of missionaries have been sent by churches in Latin America. They have had the faith and God has provided the money!

It is a great and joyful experience when a church sends missionaries to the world from its own and its best. A congregation more deeply owns and identifies with God’s love for the nations when sending someone out who is dear to them. Not every church may be able to support a missionary on its own. However, it is possible to partner with other local churches to send out missionaries from your own congregations. By sending out its own missionaries, the members of the local church are able to feel both the joys and the hardships of advancing the Gospel among an unreached people.

IV. SPIRITUAL POWER AND AUTHORITY

From planting a church in a local target area to planting one at the ends of the earth. the church does so under the authority of Christ and with the power of the Holy Spirit. When Jesus gave the Great Commission to His followers, He began by saying, "All *authority* in heaven and on earth has been given to me" (Mt 28:18). He ended by assuring them that, "I am with you always, to the very end of the age" (Mt 28:19). Sandwiched in between these promises is the disciples’ task—to make disciples of all nations.

Shortly before returning to heaven, Jesus promised His disciples, "But you will receive *power* when the Holy Spirit comes on you" (Ac 1:8). The result of receiving this power was that the disciples would be witnesses of Christ to the ends of the earth. Both the authority and the power of God are given to His children to enable them to make disciples to the very ends of the earth. The rest of the book of Acts shows how the believers went out under this authority in spite of being warned not to do so by earthly authorities. They were determined to obey God rather than man. As they did so, under the power of the Holy Spirit, the word of God spread throughout the whole region.

As believers, we too have the authority of Christ who lives in us. We have the power of the Holy Spirit. We can reach out to our neighbors and beyond with confidence, knowing that God will give us all we need to disciple the nations.

CONCLUSION

Vision and telescoping are characteristics of an obedient church. Vision looks to the future to fulfill the great task the Lord has given His church to expand the Gospel to the ends of the earth. Telescoping is a picture of the obedient church, obediently penetrating the world. It is a picture of the local church taking concrete steps (praying, giving, and going) to reach out both geographically and culturally to see the "glory of the God cover the earth” (Is 11:92:14). A local church does not need to completely reach its neighborhood before it begins praying and working towards planting other churches and sending out missionaries to other parts of the world. This should be happening simultaneously in the life of a local church. In addition, it is important that newly planted daughter congregations, as modeled by the mother church, should also have a desire to penetrate the world with the Gospel. From one location it is possible for a church to make a significant impact and contribute to a movement that will fulfill the promise of Acts 1:8.

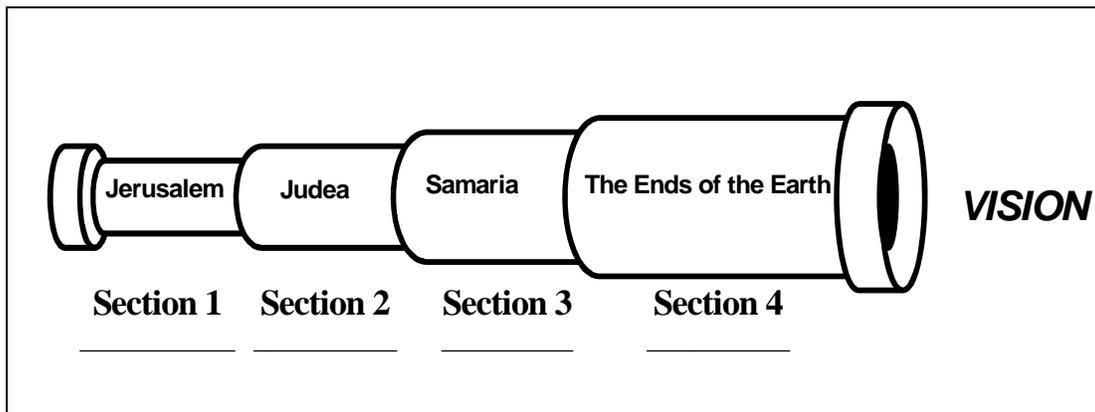
DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What are hindrances to vision and how can you overcome them?
- How can you promote vision and telescoping in your new churches?
- Why is one church rarely enough to reach a whole city for Christ?
- How far have you opened your own telescope? How far open is the telescope of your church?

ASSIGNMENT

Using the telescope shown below, begin to share vision with your church(es) about reaching out more and more with the Gospel. For each section of the telescope, write your "Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria and ends of the earth." In what sections is your church actively working? If there is a section of the telescope in which your new church is not involved, what can you do to promote this?

Telescoping For A Local Church



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- Montgomery, Jim. DAWN 2000: 7 Million More Churches To Go. Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 1989.

CROSS-CULTURAL MINISTRY

Lesson 6: Contextualizing The Gospel

Bringing the gospel to a new people group involves understanding their culture and presenting the gospel in a way that makes sense to them in their world view. We never change the gospel (Gal 1:8), but we must change the way we explain it according to the understanding of the people. This process is called “contextualization”. In this lesson we are going to discuss how to do just that.

I. SENSITIVITY TO THE CONTEXT

The Gospel is the good news that salvation has been fully purchased by Christ and is available to every person who trusts in Him. It is a wonderful message. However, the way we present Jesus to the lost can greatly affect whether or not they take the time to taste and see that the Lord is good (Ps 34:8).

Contextualization begins with an understanding of Form and Function (see lesson 1, “Form and Function” in Book Two), but goes further to the next logical step. The principles of Form and Function help us distinguish between the *purpose* of church activities and the *methods* that we use to accomplish them. Contextualization involves *evaluating* which forms are the most effective at accomplishing functions *within a specific cultural group*. In other words, contextualization is the skillful application of Form and Function principles in cross-cultural ministry. Contextualization begins with evangelism, but is also important in discipleship, church planting and developing theology.

Question 1: Explain how contextualization is different than simply understanding form and function in a church.

Diversity in the Body of Christ

Jesus prayed that His disciples would become “one” (Jn 17:11, 21-23). But what did He mean by “one?” Clearly, we are “one” in the sense of being unified, of having a common faith, a common bond, and a common future (Ro 15:5; Eph 4:3, 13; Col 3:14). We are to consider one another and to act for the common good (Php 2:1-4). However, “one” is not equivalent to “the same.” Within the unity of the body, God has created great diversity for His glory and pleasure (1Co 12). All of history is moving toward God’s goal of having people from “every tribe and language and people and nation” fall before Him in worship (Rev 5:9; 7:9).

Would you enjoy a choir with just one voice? A song with one note? An orchestra with one instrument? A painting in one color? How dull and boring! In light of the incredible variety of the world that God has created, why would we think that He wants believers to look and act alike? For the church planter working with another culture, accepting diversity can be challenging, but extremely important. We are not trying to make everyone part of “one nation”, but to bring “all nations” into a relationship with their Creator (Ge 12:2-3; Ps 67: 2-3).

II. CONTEXTUALIZATION OF THE GOSPEL

When we contextualize for evangelism, we choose methods that clearly and effectively communicate the Gospel in ways that are as intelligible and acceptable as possible. We must carefully adapt the *presentation* without changing the core content of the *message*.

A. The Gospel Message

Contextualization of the Gospel should never involve changing the message itself. There is only one true Gospel, and God is the author (Gal 1:11; Eph 4:5; 1Th 2:8-9; 2Ti 1:11). The Apostle Paul dogmatically stated that anyone who preaches a different Gospel should be cursed (Gal 1:6-12; 2Co 11:4). In 1 Corinthians 15, he explained that the Gospel consists of two key facts: First, Christ died for our sins—the proof being His burial (1Co 15:3-4). Second, Christ rose from the dead—the proof being His appearances (1Co 15:4-8). This simple statement summarizes the wealth of truth found in the Passion and the Resurrection. Christ's death for our sins assumes that we understand that we were lost sinners, and that only the blood of Christ could appease God's wrath. This part looks back at our forgiveness through Jesus. The fact that Christ rose assures us that He is the Son of God with the power over life and death, and gives us confidence that we will indeed spend eternity with Him. When Paul spoke to the Ephesian elders, he explained that this message of repentance and faith was what he preached to both Jews and Greeks (Ac 20:21).

A true Gospel message cannot neglect either of these two key components. The Cross must be preached even if it is offensive or foolish to the hearers (Ro 1:14-16; 1Co 1:17-24; 1Co 2:2; Ro 3:9-11). We must not suggest that any other religious act or god has any merit before the Lord (Jn 14:6; Ac 4:12; 1Ti 2:5-6; 1Jn 5:11-12). Those who change the Gospel *message* in order to please the hearers are false teachers—not servants of God (Gal 1:10; 2Ti 4:2-5).

B. The Gospel Presentation

Although there is only one Gospel, there are many ways to deliver it to the lost. Mothers know that it is easier to get a child to take medicine with sugar or honey. Wise Gospel preachers follow their example. They find ways to encourage the lost to taste the Gospel that cures their separation from God. They adapt the *presentation* of the message. Some of the things that we must carefully consider as we minister in cross-cultural situations include:

- the language and form of speech used
- the relationship of the speaker to the hearers
- the attitude, expressions and body posture of the speaker

There are many examples of contextualization of the Gospel presentation in the New Testament. Although the Apostle Paul was unwilling to compromise on the message of the Cross, he made every effort to become “*all things to all men so that by all possible means I might save some*” (1Co 9:22). When he spoke to the Athenians, he began by recounting his study of their religious alters and objects (Ac 17:22-23). At Ephesus, he began with their knowledge of John's baptism (Ac 19:1-6). In Jerusalem, he switched his language from Hebrew to Greek (Ac 21:37-39) to Aramaic (Ac 21:40-22:2). Before the Sanhedrin, he appealed to his former status as a Pharisee (Ac 23:6). In his trials before Felix and Agrippa, Paul used very respectful and educated language (Ac 24-26). He used his Roman citizenship as a means to testify to Caesar (Ac 25:11). In an even more striking act, Paul circumcised Timothy to facilitate his witness to the Jews (Ac 16:3) even though he adamantly opposed to circumcision as a requirement for the salvation (Ac 15:1-2). He was in favor of circumcision to promote the Gospel *presentation*, even though he was against circumcision as part of the Gospel *message*. In the same way, he avoided payment for his preaching for fear it might hinder the Gospel—instead living on his own earnings or on gifts from other churches (1Co 9:6-18). Paul was sensitive to the way people from every culture might react to him, preferring to yield his own rights, privileges and preferences in order to make the Gospel attractive (Tit 3:2; Heb 12:14).

Question 2: What are some different ways that you have adapted the presentation of the gospel so that your hearers would understand it?

C. The Gospel Messenger

Although we have been talking about the *presentation* of the Gospel, it might also be accurate to say that many of these biblical examples concern making the *messenger* attractive to the lost, so that they will listen to the *message*. Paul was so concerned for the lost that they understood that his love was genuine—not an act to fool

them (Ac 20:18-20; 1Th 2:6-9). Carefully planned methods will not work without genuine love (1Co 13). Biblical love should motivate the missionary to be sensitive to the issues that are important to his audience. Ministers of the gospel who humbly admit that they do not know all the answers are more likely to be accepted by the hearers.

III. IMPLICATIONS FOR CROSS-CULTURAL MINISTRY

It is vital that the church planters continually go back to Scripture for counsel on issues of church forms, evangelism, etc. Bringing forms and methods from one culture into another without critical evaluation of them is never wise and hardly ever effective. A cross-cultural missionary must be both flexible and grounded in the Word.

A. Effective Evangelism

When bringing the Gospel to another culture than your own, do so with humility and as a learner. You may understand the Gospel more clearly than your audience, but you do not necessarily understand the people. Take time to listen to them, and reflect deeply on what they are saying. Make every effort, like the Apostle Paul, to appreciate the things in their culture that are not sinful, and look for common bonds and points of contact. Everyone in every culture has some common issues involving family, children, parents, work, health, etc. Find those areas of common interest and experience and use them to build bridges to the people.

Learn to do things in new, culturally-appropriate ways, even if they seem strange to you. Russians present gifts of flowers wrapped in newspaper—something that would be offensive in Western Europe. In some countries, handing an Arab a gift of food with the left hand would also be offensive. In some cultures, the elderly merit special respect and deference. Other cultures may strictly limit interaction between men and women. Dress that is stylish in one country may be shameful in another. We need to honor those differences if there is not a clear biblical reason not to do so. Our goal, like Paul's, is to become all things to all men in order to win them. In this way, we follow Christ, who became flesh for us, yet without sin (Heb 4:15).

Question 3: What are some ways that you can learn the cultural cues that will help you develop effective evangelistic methods in a different culture?

B. Appropriate Discipleship

One of the hardest things for some missionaries to learn is that they are to make disciples who look like Jesus—not like the missionary. The disciples at Antioch were called “Christians” because they acted like Christ, rather than like Saul and Barnabas (Ac 11:26). The purpose of disciples is to multiply themselves—passing on their faith to others (2Ti 2:2). Therefore, the missionary will make much more progress in penetrating the new culture with the Gospel if they help their new converts find a form of Christianity that is both biblical and relevant to the local culture. If this balance is achieved, the new disciples will be even more effective in ministering to their culture than the missionary. That should be the missionary's goal, rather than a threat.

At the same time, the missionary has the responsibility to teach the principles and commands of God's Word to the new believers. Although they will know more about the local culture than the missionary, they will initially know less about the Scriptures and the Christian faith. The process of discipleship is not finished until the believers understand and obey all of the commands of Jesus (Mt 28:20). In order for this to happen, there will also need to be faithful local leadership that can pass on their faith (2Ti 2:2). As burden of ministry shifts from the missionary to the local believers, the missionary will need to guide them in adopting forms and practices that do not conflict with biblical Christianity. The end result should be Christianity with a local flavor, but with a solid foundation (1Co 3:10-11).

C. Meaningful Church Planting Forms

Contextualization should not end once a person is saved. It should also guide the spiritual growth of the disciple and the local church. Just as changes in the presentation and messenger can lead to greater acceptance of the Gospel, culturally-sensitive forms and methods in the church can lead to greater maturity, more sincere worship, and more effective leadership development in the church. Contextualization causes us to ask questions like:

- Should the church meet in a special room or place?
- What symbols of our faith should be on display when we gather for fellowship and worship?
- Should drums, guitars, a piano or something else be used for worship?
- Should the leader wear a robe? Should worshippers wear special clothes?
- What foods will the church forbid or permit?

These are “form and function” issues which are best answered by reflecting on what they communicate in the culture at large in combination with biblical teaching. However, the Bible gives us “Christian liberty” in many of these areas. What do we mean by “Christian liberty?” While some things are allowed or forbidden for all people, other issues are more complex. Some things were permissible only to particular people, or at particular times.

For example, Adam was only allowed to eat plants and fruit (Ge 1:29). But after the flood, God added meat to man’s diet, but without blood (Ge 9:3-4). Later, God gave to Israel a very specific list of allowed and forbidden food (Lev 11). Yet in the early church, Paul says that instruction to “abstain from certain foods” is the sign of false teachers, and that “nothing is to be rejected” (1Ti 4:1-5). Daniel was praised for abstaining from unclean food (Da 1:8), but Peter was rebuked by the Lord (Ac 10:13-15). Even the preferred day of worship appears to be a matter personal freedom (Ro 14:5-6).

There are many New Testament examples where the distinguishing between “Christian liberty” and “sin” is difficult. Marrying or remaining single was an individual decision, depending on one’s gift from God and ability to live in purity (1Co 7). Paul was free to eat meat sacrificed to idols, unless his freedom became a temptation for a weaker brother (1Co 8). He preached against drunkenness (Eph 5:18), but told Timothy to drink wine for his stomach problems (1Ti 5:23). Paul confronted Peter for ceasing to eat with Gentiles when other Jews were present (Gal 2:11-14).

Therefore, we need to be very careful not to apply random verses to a particular audience, but instead to carefully study how the Scripture applies to each situation. The biblical principle is to do everything possible to promote the spiritual growth and health of other believers (Ro 14:19; 1Co 10:32).

An important task for any church planter is to identify the unique ways that God has created his congregation to learn, worship, pray, teach, preach, and live. There is a great deal of freedom in this, but also a serious responsibility. Diversity is not an excuse to do whatever we want. Some things are clearly sin for everyone because the Word of God identifies them as such. Lying, hypocrisy, adultery, murder, and theft are just a few that are forbidden throughout the Scriptures. No amount of sensitivity to culture can justify permitting these actions. This was the error of the Corinthian church—they accepted immorality instead of judging it (1Co 5). The Holy Spirit personally judged Ananias and Sapphira for their hypocrisy (Ac 5:1-11), and it seems that other New Testament believers suffered disease or death because they failed to forsake their sin (1Co 11:27-34).

CONCLUSION

Contextualization is an ongoing process that begins with evangelism and continues through the discipleship and leadership training stages. The primary objective of contextualization is to adapt the *presentation* of the Gospel and the *messenger* of the Gospel (the missionary) to be more acceptable to the local culture. However, the core *message* of the Gospel cannot and must not be changed. Repentance and faith in Jesus is a universal message that applies to all people, everywhere, in every culture.

God’s ultimate purpose in salvation is to sanctify a group from every tribe, language, people and nation that will glorify Him forever (Rev 5:9). Cross-cultural missionaries have the privilege of reaching some of those diverse

people and help them maintain the beautiful diversity that God has created, while confronting and correcting sinful attitudes and practices that are contrary to the Word of God. In order to do this effectively, missionaries must approach their ministry with humility and love, knowing that the task is complex, but extremely important.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What is “contextualization?”
- What is wrong with changing the Gospel message to make it more acceptable to the lost?
- What is the role of “diversity” in the Body of Christ?

ASSIGNMENT

Write out a sample Gospel presentation as if you were giving it to a lost person. Then carefully evaluate it to see if it contains the essential elements of the Gospel. Also note which things you have included would really be cultural preferences or practices. Rewrite your presentation until all core Gospel points are present. Then begin to add examples that would make it more clear to your target audience.

SPIRITUAL CHARACTER

Lesson 7: The New Nature

The Bible says that if any man is in Christ he is a “new creation” (1 Cor 5:17). This does not mean that we are perfect, or that we never struggle. We do struggle. We struggle to understand the “new creation.” We struggle against the old sinful nature. And these struggles may discourage us and even blind us to the reality of the new nature. An important key to the ongoing victory over the old sinful nature is to understand the new nature with all its privileges. In this lesson we are going to explore four aspects of our new nature.

I. A NEW RIGHTEOUSNESS

As believers in Jesus, our sins past, present and future are forgiven. This is good news. But there is more. We each also have a new nature that includes a new righteousness. We have not only forgiveness, but God’s favor too. The righteousness that we have as believers is not our own. It is the righteousness of Christ, which we receive as a free gift. Bearing Christ’s righteousness makes us fully pleasing to the Father (Rom 5:1, 10:4).

Jesus’ life and death have made a way for us to know His favor and forgiveness in spite our failure and shortcomings. Romans 4:25 says “*He (Jesus) was delivered over to death for our sins and was raised to life for our justification.*” His death and life work together on our behalf!

<u>Jesus’ Death</u>	<u>Jesus’ Life</u>
<i>“Jesus died for our Sins”</i>	<i>“Jesus was Raised for our justification”</i>
<i>Sins Forgiven</i>	<i>Righteousness Credited</i>
<i>Forgiveness</i>	<i>Favor</i>
<i>Just as if I had never sinned!</i>	<i>Just as if I did everything right!</i>

Question 1: Read Romans 1:17 and 3:21-22. How do believers receive the righteousness of Christ?

Question 2: What difference would it make if God’s plan was only to forgive me but not to give me his righteousness?

Had Jesus only forgiven sins, but not granted us righteousness, we would owe God nothing, but still have nothing to offer him. To use money as an illustration, we would not have a debt, but we would still be poor. God’s standard is high. Is it enough that we are forgiven? No. Therefore the good news is that we have been forgiven, rescued from spiritual debt, and additionally made spiritually rich!

There may be plenty of days when this truth does not feel real. But the truth of it does not depend on our feelings, but on his faithfulness. The blessing of the righteousness of Jesus is that you do not have to fear failure, manipulate others to succeed or hide you sin because you can be confident that you are acceptable in God’s sight.

II. A NEW IDENTITY

Saint or Sinner?

Are believers saints, or are believers sinners? As Martin Luther said, there is a sense in which we are both saints and sinners. We are sinners in that we still struggle with sin. But more importantly we are saints because that is what Jesus makes us!

We know we are saints – but sometimes we do not feel like it. Perhaps you are accustomed to thinking (or feeling) the following about yourself.

Sinner: *This is who I really am. My sinful nature, my successes and my failures define me.*

Saint: *Who I would like to be. Possibly what I might become when I get to heaven.*

Do you think of yourself in the way described above? If you do, then you do not understand the new nature. The Bible teaches a very different understanding of who believers are. Remember, believers are "new creations" from God's perspective. Although the flesh is real, and you will continue to struggle with sin, at your core you are a new person with a different heart! The following describes the correct understanding of our identity.

Sinner: *Part of me that must be repented of, but not my identity.*

Saint: *Who I am in Christ, a new creation, the real me, my identity.*

Question 3: Do you see yourself only as a sinner or a new creation?

Question 4: How does God see you right now?

Question 5: Do you really believe that at the core of who you are there are good desires that flow out of the new you?

III. A NEW COVENANT

Paul used the term "new covenant" to describe this new relationship we have with God. God has created a whole new internal dynamic in our hearts that is key to us changing and becoming like Him.

The new covenant was promised and described thousands of years ago in the Old Testament (Jeremiah 31:31; Ezekiel 36:24-28). These Old Testament passages tell us that in the new covenant God would provide a cleansing from sin and impurities, a new heart, the indwelling Holy Spirit, the ability to keep God's law, and more (see Ezekiel 36:24-28). Old Testament believers no doubt waited in earnest for this new covenant. Then Jesus who is called "the mediator of the new covenant" (Hebrews 9:15) came. Jesus introduced the new covenant during his Passover meal with the disciples when "he took the cup, saying, 'This cup is the **new covenant** in my blood, which is poured out for you.'" (Luke 22:20). In dying as the sacrificial lamb for our sins hours after the last supper, Jesus made the new covenant reality for those who believe.

We live with the reality of the new covenant. This is described clearest in 2 Corinthians 3. Read 2 Corinthians 3:6-18 and note the differences between the Old and New Covenant. The following table notes many of the differences.

Old Covenant	New Covenant
Letter	Spirit
Kills	Gives Life
Glorious	More Glorious
Condemns	Brings Righteousness
Fading	Lasting
Veiled	Unveiled

What does all this imply for us? The New Covenant means that our relationship with God is different. How God treats us and how we can honor God changed because of what happened at the cross! We were enemies of God – but now we are his children, reconciled as friends (Col 1:21-22). We have God’s presence in a more personal way (through the Holy Spirit) and we see and experience more of his glory. We do not have to approach God with fear or a sense that we have to hide something.

Question 6: How are the old and new covenants different? Do you ever treat God as if you were still living under the old covenant?

IV. A NEW SPIRIT

Indeed the new righteousness, the new identity, and the new covenant that we have been talking about are truths that we cannot understand or live out if not for the presence of the Holy Spirit in our lives. What influence does the Holy Spirit have in my life?

- *The Spirit gave birth to the new me, regenerated me - John 3:5,6*
- *The Spirit shows me my sin - John 16:8*
- *The Spirit empowers me for ministry - Acts 1:8, Acts 8:29*
- *He teaches me spiritual truth - John 14:26; 16:13, 1 Corinthians 2:9-13*
- *He lives in me - John 14:16-18*
- *He gives me His good desires - Romans 8:5*
- *The Spirit is at war with my sinful nature - Galatians 5:17*
- *The Spirit produces God’s fruit/character in me - Galatians 5:22,23*
- *He helps me in prayer - Romans 8:26,27*
- *The Spirit comforts and encourages me as my counselor - John 14:16*
- *He helps me relate to God as a “daddy” in confidence, not fear - Romans 8:15,16*
- *He guides me in daily living - John 16:13; Romans 8:14; Psalm 139:7-10*
- *The Spirit gives me a “New Way of life” - Romans 7:4-6, 8:1-4*

Question 7: Which of the above things can you do without the Holy Spirit?

Question 8: Is it possible to live the Christian life without the Holy Spirit? What happens when we try?

CONCLUSION

We have looked at only four of the many privileges of being a child of God. How can we summarize these great truths? At our core, we are something completely new (2 Cor. 5:17). From our hearts, we cry out to God as his children (Rom. 8:15-17). We have good godly desires that spring from our new heart (Luke 6:45). We each are designed with a purpose as His workmanship (Eph. 2:10). In our inner being, we delight in God's law (Rom. 7:22). God does not condemn his children (Rom 8:1) but speaks to us from within, as He guides by his Holy Spirit (John: 16:13, 14).

MONTH 12

Review of Month 11

In the last month of training, the main emphasis was on church planting movements. You were asked to do the following:

From Lesson 1, “Church Planting Cycle”

Together with those you are working with in your church planting ministry, answer each of the following questions. At this point, you may not be able to realistically answer all of them. However, answering them as best as you can will be very good preparation for multiplication:

- What research needs to be done? Who will do it? What regions or peoples are still unreached? Are there potential leaders among them that can be trained?
- What goals need to be set and published? Who is heading up the prayer effort to support this ministry?
- Who assigns and oversees all new ministries? Who will train them in continuing education?
- Are there other ministries/agencies that could be included in this effort? Who should invite them to join forces? What special contribution will they make to the overall mission effort?
- What kinds of training are needed for the movement? How will it be supported?
- Is the movement self-propagating, self-supporting, and self-governing? If not, what needs to be done to make sure that it is?
- Who are the leaders with “apostolic” giftedness for the movement? How do we work together with them? How can we encourage and support them? What are their needs?

From Lesson 2, “Next Steps—Planting More Churches”

- With your church planting team and mentor, pray and consider what should be your next steps in church planting ministry.
- Identify one or two potential church planters in your newly planted church. Spend time talking with them about their vision and mentoring them in preparation for church planting work as part of a church planting team.

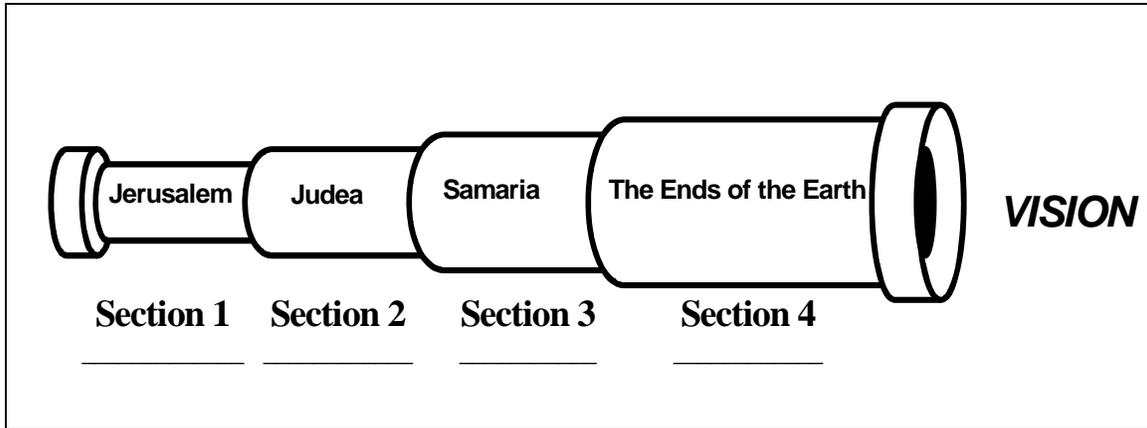
From Lesson 3, “Training as Part of a Church Planting Movement”

Prayerfully choose a location where you could begin church planter training. Talk with church leaders there and develop a plan to begin training. Begin training church planters according to your plan.

From Lesson 5, “Vision and Telescoping—Taking the Gospel Into the World”

Using the telescope shown below, begin to share vision with your church(es) about reaching out more and more with the Gospel. For each section of the telescope, write your "Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria and ends of the earth." In what sections is your church actively working? If there is a section of the telescope in which your new church is not involved, what can you do to promote this?

Telescoping For A Local Church



From Lesson 6, "Contextualizing the Gospel"

Write out a sample Gospel presentation as if you were giving it to a lost person. Then carefully evaluate it to see if it contains the essential elements of the Gospel. Also note which things you have included would really be cultural preferences or practices. Rewrite your presentation until all core Gospel points are present. Then begin to add examples that would make it more clear to your target audience.

SCP VISION

Lesson 8: Biblical Examples Of Saturation Church Planting Movements

In the early days immediately following the ascension of Jesus, the gospel had had no impact on the world outside of Judea, Samaria and Galilee. At first, Christianity appeared small and frail in comparison to the political powers of the day. Yet it rolled like a tidal wave across the Roman empire so that within one generation, worshipping communities were established everywhere from Jerusalem to Rome and beyond. Modern historians marvel, wondering how Christianity could have spread so widely in such a short time. Was this just a haphazard expansion? Did the first missionaries blindly wander the world to spread the gospel? Not exactly. A careful study of Acts reveals that the expansion of the church resulted from Spirit-guided plans based on ministry principles that we can still use today.

During this lesson we will study the Scriptures, the best text book anywhere on church planting. We will look for the factors that contributed to the rapid expansion of the church, believing that it is possible to extract ministry principles for advancing and saturating any region with the gospel.

I. THE SPREAD OF THE CHURCH IN ACTS

A. The Early Church

The Birth of the Church

The Day of Pentecost, when the New Testament church was born, played a major role in the rapid expansion of Christianity. Pentecost took place during a time of a major celebration when thousands of Jews and proselytes came to Jerusalem from all over the world. Luke records people from 13 different regions including Parthia, Media, Elam, Mesopotamia, Judea, Cappodocia, Pontus, Asia, Phrygia, Pamphylia, Egypt, Cyrene, Rome, Crete and Rome. Many of the Pentecostal pilgrims took their new faith back to their homelands, but only after receiving instruction and experiencing the church life that took place after the Pentecost celebration (Ac 2:42-47). This initial training could explain how the church in Rome was well established before any of the apostles arrived there.

Persecution

In Acts 8 a great persecution broke out that caused the believers in Jerusalem to flee (Ac 8:1; 11:19-21). This also influenced the spread of the Gospel. As the believers scattered, they spread the gospel mostly to fellow Jews. At Antioch in Syria, however, many Greeks were won to Christ, resulting in the establishment of the first church made up largely of Gentiles. This was considered so unusual that the leaders in the Jerusalem Church sent Barnabas to investigate the situation (Ac 11:22-24).

Barnabas was so impressed with the Gentile believers at Antioch that he spent at least a year ministering there. He even recruited Paul all the way from Tarsus to join him (Ac 11:25-26). Together with several others from different regions, they made up a dynamic leadership team (Act 13:1). It was here in Antioch that the disciples were first called “Christians” (Ac 11:26).

Paul’s Missionary Journeys

“So from Jerusalem all the way around to Illyicum, I have fully proclaimed the gospel of Christ” St. Paul (Ro. 15:19).

Paul was many things: an apostle, a theologian and a teacher. But in all these things his role as a church planting missionary was clear. Others have received more converts than Paul, some have preached to larger audiences, but probably no one has been so successful in planting churches. As we walk through Paul's missionary journeys, notice the kinds of cities Paul targeted as well the many people he influenced.

B. Paul's First Journey (Acts 13-14)—Expanding into Cyprus and Galatia

Paul and Barnabas were sent off as missionaries first to the Island of Cyprus, Barnabas' homeland. They started by preaching in the synagogue in Salamis, the largest city on the island. Later they went to the city of Paphos, the administrative capital of the island. The conversion of Sergious Paulus (the proconsul) would have given them favor in the region (Ac 13:1-12).

After their ministry on Cyprus, they went to Galatia in modern day Turkey. In Pisidian Antioch, an administrative capital of southern Galatia, Paul preached in a synagogue and saw many Gentile converts. Being the strategic city that Antioch in Pisidia was, the impact of Paul and Barnabas' ministry was not limited to the city as *"The word of the Lord spread throughout the whole region"* (Ac 13:49). In spite of this success, the persecution incited by the Jews was so severe that Paul and Barnabas were forced to leave (Ac 13:14-52).

Paul and Barnabas traveled next to Iconium, an important commercial center also in Galatia (Ac 14:1-7). Having been driven away, they fled to Lystra, a military city with strong Roman elements. After the healing of the lame man in Lystra, the people proposed to worship Paul and Barnabas, confusing them with Zeus and Hermes. The Jews stirred up opposition and Paul was stoned. Undaunted, Paul and Barnabas escaped to Derbe (Ac 14:8-20).

From Derbe, Paul could have easily gone back to Antioch via his home town, Tarsus. But he considered it more important to encourage the new believers and appoint leaders in the four churches he had planted in Pisidian Antioch, Iconium, Lystra and Derbe in spite of the danger he could again face (Ac 14:20-23).

Question 1: What types of persecution did Paul encounter on his first missionary journey?

C. The Council at Jerusalem (Acts 15)

Right after Paul's first journey, an important meeting was held in Jerusalem which had a great impact on the rapid spread of the Church among the Gentiles. The events leading up to the meeting include several incidents of Jewish and Gentile animosity. The first evidence of conflict occurs when Gentile widows of Jerusalem are neglected (Ac 6). Stephen, one of those who were chosen to solve the problem, is then stoned. Tension is seen again in the personal experience of Peter. He was asked by God to break the Law previously given and eat "unclean food." Only after this did Peter witness the conversion of the first Gentile, Cornelius (Ac 10). The third event involves the Church at Antioch, which included many Gentile converts. It seemed strange to the Jews in Jerusalem that Gentiles in Antioch would be following the Jewish Messiah. Thus, they investigated it for themselves, sending Barnabas to inspect (Ac 11:19-24). The first missionary journey was the final element which led to the events of Acts 15. Paul and Barnabas saw and sought Gentile converts in many cities of Galatia. Soon some Jewish Christians from Jerusalem were in Antioch, the center of the Gentile Christian movement, teaching that all Christians were required to observe the Law of Moses (Ac 15:1).

This led to the conference at Jerusalem. The essential issue was whether the Gentiles needed to observe the Law of Moses. Or put another way, was the Gospel open to the Gentiles or were they expected to convert to Judaism first? By God's guidance, the council made its decision without much trouble. Liberty was extended to the Gentiles so that they were not expected to observe the Law of Moses. *"It seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us not to burden you (Gentiles) with anything beyond the following requirements: You are*

to abstain from food sacrificed to idols, from blood, from the meat of strangled animals and from sexual immorality" (Ac 15:28-29).

The events in Acts 15 have great missiological and theological truth. Church planting movements take place when the Gospel, in all its fullness, is embraced by the Church. When the Gospel is hidden or replaced by traditions, laws or man-made “forms,” its power to transform lives is diminished. We tend to put much emphasis on the “forms.” It was natural for the first Jewish converts to expect the Gentiles to express their faith with exactly the same “forms” that they were accustomed to. But God was doing a new thing! Had the Jerusalem Council made the wrong choice, Christianity would likely have remained a small branch of Judaism instead of spreading among “all the nations” as it was intended.

Question 2: What forms might need changed in your church in order to reach the younger generation in your region?

D. Second Journey (15:36-18:22)—Expanding to Macedonia and Achaia

As a result of a disagreement, Paul and Barnabas began to minister separately. Barnabas and John Mark returned to Cyprus. Silas was chosen to accompany Paul on his second missionary journey. This new team began by returning to the Galatian cities. In Lystra they invited Timothy to join them in the ministry (16:1-6). Paul intended to go to the province of Asia but the Spirit led him away through a vision (Ac 16:7-11). Soon Luke joins them so the team (Paul, Silas, Timothy, Luke) moved together on to Philippi (16:12-40). In Philippi, Silas and Paul were beaten and jailed because they delivered a slave girl from demons. The jailer and his ‘household’ are saved when Paul and Silas are delivered from prison (Ac 16:16-40).

Paul, Silas and Timothy arrive in Thessalonica from Philippi, the district capital and chief port of Macedonia. Once again, they begin in a synagogue where Paul preached on three consecutive Sabbath days. There is a good response. But jealousy on the part of some Jewish leaders leads to persecution (17:1-9). So Paul moves on to Berea. When the Thessalonian persecutors follow the missionaries to Berea, Paul is forced to escape leaving Timothy and Silas behind in Berea (17:1-15).

Paul waited for Timothy and Silas to catch up to him in the city of Athens, which at that time was the cultural and intellectual center of the world. While there he preached an excellent sermon in which he established common ground with his audience and then proclaimed the distinctives of the faith. Some were saved (17:15-34).

After this Paul settled in Corinth, the capital of Achaia, an important transportation and communication hub for the region (Ac 18:1-16). Paul is joined by Aquila and Priscilla, fellow tentmakers from Rome. Now the team includes Paul, Silas, Timothy, Aquila and Priscilla. Like so many other places, Paul’s ministry in Corinth had a regional impact in the province of Achaia (2 Co. 1:1).

After 18 months Paul sailed to Antioch in Syria, leaving behind Silas and Timothy to carry on the work in Corinth. On the way Paul stopped in Ephesus, a sea port in modern day western Turkey. Paul was well received in the synagogue and they invite him to stay. Having earlier been forbidden by the Spirit to preach in Asia, He promises to return “if it is God’s will.” Paul leaves Aquila and Priscilla there to carry on the work (Ac 18:19-21).

E. Third Journey (Acts 18:23-21:15)—Expanding into the province of Asia

Paul began his third missionary journey by visiting the churches he planted in Galatia for the fourth recorded time (Ac 18:23). He then made his way through the interior to Ephesus (Ac 19:1). Ephesus was a seaport on a major caravan route with easy access to the Roman province of Asia, for which Paul had had a burden for a long time. Ephesus was also a stronghold for sorcery and idolatry. At that time it was one of three main

cities of the eastern Mediterranean world (the other two important cities are Alexandria in Egypt and Antioch in Syria). This was indeed a strategic place in which to minister.

As was his pattern, Paul preached in the synagogue and was rejected after three months. So *"...He took the disciples with him and had discussions daily in the lecture hall of Tyrannus. This went on for two years, so that all the Jews and Greeks who lived in the province of Asia heard the word of the Lord"* (Ac 19:9-10).

How is it that everyone in the province of Asia heard the *"word of the Lord"*? Other passages in the New Testament reveal that Churches sprung up in the cities of Colosse (Col 1:2), Laodicea (Col 4:16), Hierapolis (Col 4:13), Smyrna (Rev 2:8), Pergamum (Rev 2:12), Thyratira (Rev 2:18), Sardis (Rev 3:1), Philadelphia (Rev 3:7), and elsewhere (probably Magnesia, Troas, Militus, etc.). These churches in the province of Asia give evidence to a church planting movement and substantiate Paul's statement that all of Asia heard the word of the Lord. In addition, the books of Ephesians, Colossians, First and Second Timothy, Philemon, First, Second and Third John, Revelation, and portions of Acts, are all about churches and church leaders in Asia that came about from the great advance of the gospel there.

After three years in Ephesus, Paul decided to go back to Macedonia and Achaia to visit four the churches he had planted on his second journey in the cities of Philippi, Thessalonica, Berea and Corinth. He sent Timothy and Erastus ahead of him (Ac 19:21) and stayed in Ephesus a little longer. When a riot forced Paul out, he went to Macedonia. Paul was traveling with Sopator (from Berea), Aristarchus and Secundus (from Thessalonica), Gaius (from Derbe) Timothy (from Lystra), Tychicus and Trophimus (Ac 20:3-6). Some of these were colleagues Paul had been training in the hall of Tyrannus in Ephesus.

Paul encouraged the brothers in Macedonia and Achaia by staying in Corinth for three months (Ac 20:1-3). On the way to Jerusalem Paul stopped in Miletus, where he meets with the Ephesian elders to instruct them in their leadership (Ac 20:17-38).

II. PRINCIPLES BEHIND STRATEGIC MISSIONARY ACTIVITY

Scripture gives us a great amount of detail on Paul's activity. We do not know as much about the other Apostles. However, tradition says that the Apostle Matthew planted churches in Mesopotamia, Thomas in India, Peter in Rome, and Mark in Egypt, while Andrew took the gospel to Scythia north of the Black Sea. In any event, the church continued to expand steadily even after the Apostolic era. By around AD 200, secular writings from the time report Christians and churches in every corner of the Roman Empire and beyond.

How did this happen? Was it haphazard? A careful study of Acts reveals that the expansion of the church resulted from Spirit-guided plans based on ministry principles that we can still use today. Now that we have carefully studied Acts, let's examine some of the principles we find there.

A. Submission to the Leading of the Holy Spirit

Much missionary activity is not only a result of biblical strategizing or good decision making, but of direct divine guidance. The Spirit sent Philip to the Ethiopian eunuch; the Lord told Peter to go to Cornelius' home; the Holy Spirit spoke to the leaders at Antioch telling them to send Barnabas and Paul as missionaries. The Spirit guided Paul to Macedonia instead of Asia (Ac 16:6ff). Jesus appeared to Paul in Corinth telling him to stay on there. The Holy Spirit and the prophet Agabus confirmed what Jesus said to Paul at his conversion, that *"he must suffer for my name"* (Ac 9:16). This prophecy led him on toward Jerusalem.

We cannot fully comprehend the ways of God, but we can be sure that there were reasons for all that is described above. Perhaps God forbid Paul to work in Asia during the second journey because the time was not right and because God knew that the most strategic place to reach Asia was from Ephesus and not from Bithynia and Mysia. It is interesting to note that when Paul went to Macedonia, one of the first people he meets is Lydia who is from Thyritira a city in the province of Asia. Also note how God prepared the way for his later arrival in Ephesus by sending Priscilla, Aquila and Apollos there ahead of him.

Already involved in the work, Paul and others sometimes received guidance while “on the move.” There is no biblical excuse for someone to remain inactive until receiving a “special call”. Those involved in church planting must work from good planning and strategy, but they need to realize that God will intervene—even changing their plans—guiding them as they actively pursue their church planting objectives.

Question 3: How has the Holy Spirit open doors and lead you in your church planting ministry to this point?

B. Moving Quickly

Paul spent an average of only a few months in most of the cities where he planted churches. For example he spent perhaps only three weeks in Thessalonica (Acts 17:1-4). How could Paul plant churches so quickly? The answer is that Paul understood that he was called to be an Apostle. This meant being a “pioneer”, a “foundation layer” (Ro 15:20; 1Co 3:6-8). Paul trusted others who would become gifted as pastors to lead the churches he founded. Specifically, Paul 1) trusted the Holy Spirit to guide new believers and 2) he trained local leaders.

The impact of these two concepts (trusting the Holy Spirit and training local leaders) lead to the same qualities in the churches Paul planted. In other words, the little time Paul spent in each city encouraged the new converts to 1) depend on the Holy Spirit and 2) to practice leadership. The training of the first converts sets the pattern for the future of a church plant. If the first converts are taught to depend upon the church planter, the new community learns to be passive.

Question 4: What are two things that Paul did that enabled him to plant churches so quickly?

Question 5: How long does it typically take to plant a church in your region? How could the strategy be change to enable churches to be planted more quickly?

C. Facilitating Others in Ministry

Studying Paul's journeys reveals a gradual shift in emphasis during his ministry. During his first journey, he planted at least four churches and made a follow-up visit to each. His emphasis was on frontier evangelism and direct church planting. But during his last journey, he does not seem to have the same objective. Instead of moving about, he spent most of this journey in Ephesus. It appears that he planted only one church (Ephesus) during this journey but he invested his travel time in visiting at least nine cities where he had planted churches before. His focus had changed from frontier/evangelism to discipleship/training. During this journey Paul had many disciples traveling with him (Ac 20:1-2).

More broadly we see that Paul trained other missionaries who traveled in teams including John Mark, Silas, Timothy, Epaphras, Priscilla and Aquila, Apollos, Luke, Demas, Titus, Epaphroditus and others. These workers planted, strengthened, and led new churches from Antioch to Rome. These leaders were necessary as teachers, encouragers, problem solvers and messengers for the new congregations. The development of such leaders in your country could be a necessary strategy for advancing the Gospel. As a church planter your goal is not just to plant churches – but to train leaders who will train others also (2 Tim. 2:2).

D. Preaching to Responsive People

All the cities Paul visited seemed to have a sizable Jewish community with the exception of Philippi. Paul normally entered synagogues to preach his message. This is partly because he was Jewish himself, partly because the Messiah's coming has unique significance for Jewish people (Ro. 1:16), and partly because the people in the synagogues would be "pre-evangelized." They could understand and accept the Gospel, which had Jewish roots, with the least amount of cultural disruption.

While Paul started in the Jewish synagogue and preached there, his real target was the God-fearing Gentiles. God-fearers were Gentiles who believed in monotheism and would have converted to Judaism had it not been for the strict legal requirements, especially of circumcision. God-fearers attended the synagogue meetings and would have studied the Old Testament Scriptures. When the Gospel was proclaimed by a Pharisee (Paul) in a synagogue, and circumcision was not required, many God-fearers would feel that this was a logical faith for them. Paul's message included the monotheism that attracted them to the synagogue without the legalism that kept them from converting to Judaism.

Question 6: Who are the receptive people in your region?

E. Working from a strategic base for a regional movement

The apostolic model is to begin ministry in a strategically located city from which the Gospel would spread and permeate the whole region. In the beginning of the New Testament Church, Jerusalem was the strategic base from which the church went out. The next strategic center was the church in Antioch. From there, as the Antioch of Syria church leaders worshipped and sought God, the Holy Spirit sent out Barnabas and Saul to take the Gospel to the Gentiles (Ac 13:1-3). On a smaller scale, by preaching in Pisidian Antioch "*The word of the Lord spread throughout the whole region (Galatia)*" (Ac 13:49). Likewise, Paul planted the church in Thessalonica which had a broader impact (1Th 1:8). This is seen in Ephesus (Ac 19:10) which replaced Antioch of Syria as the next strategic center. Ephesus was the gateway to the province of Asia and central to the four provinces (Galatia, Asia, Macedonia and Achaia) in which Paul invested most of his church planting ministry. Eventually Rome, the capital of the empire became the strategic center for the advance of the Gospel.

Nearly all these cities mentioned in the previous paragraph were usually located on the most important highways of the day and served as centers of trade and commerce. Paul and the Apostles, by divine guidance, made the natural highways of commerce the vehicle for spreading the gospel from Jerusalem all the way to the capital city of Rome.

Every church planter has a starting point. It is important to select a strategic starting point in which to plant churches so that they multiply to saturate the surrounding region. Working from a strategic center applies to evangelism as well as training. Developing a geographic strategy for the training can result in more people being equipped. Find strategic locations in your target area where there is receptivity to church planter training. This will help the training multiply and will be a positive step towards a movement.

Question 7: Where are the strategic centers in your country?

CONCLUSION

Was the expansion of the church given to chance? No. The expansion of the church resulted from Spirit guided plans based on ministry principles that we can still use today. In summary, Paul's plan was to evangelize responsive people in strategic centers, facilitating regional church planting movements under the

guidance of the Holy Spirit. What church planters need above everything else is simply to use the missionary methods of the early church.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- How was the Day of Pentecost in Acts 2 a great day for the spread of the Gospel?
- Why was the counsel in Jerusalem so important to the expansion of the Church?
- How did persecution affect the spread of the gospel? Has persecution resulted in the expansion of the Church in recent generations?
- Describe the shift in emphasis between the first and third journeys of Paul.

Lesson 9: Strategy Components For A Church Planting Movement

Strategy is the effective method for accomplishing a task. It has been said that valor and bravery have won many battles, but that strategy has won more. This is illustrated best for us in the book of Joshua. The conquest of the land of Canaan under the command of God’s servant Joshua was indeed strategic. With three swift campaigns, one through the interior, one to the south and one against the united forces of the north, the Israelites gained control of the land in spite of the fact that the enemy remained. Joshua’s army was not better equipped, stronger or more numerous than the Canaanites. But with God’s help they were able to strategically overtake the enemy. Strategy has a legitimate and important place not only in warfare, but also in the task of taking the Gospel to all the world. In this lesson we will examine several strategies that can be used to work towards a Saturation Church Planting movement.

I. SPREAD THE VISION

The most important characteristic for a saturation church planting movement is vision. The vision is to establish Bible-believing, gospel-preaching churches in every town and neighborhood of a region. Not everyone will immediately accept this vision. Some will accept the vision and join the effort. Others will oppose it or will appear to accept it, but not join in heart and soul. How can you encourage those who accept the vision and win over those who resist it?

Question 1: How well is the vision for saturation church planting embraced in your region?

A. Teach the vision as God’s will

The vision of saturation church planting is not man’s idea. It is a calling from God.

One way to build conviction and vision is to constantly ask the “Z” question—“What does God want?” This should be the topic of prayer, Bible study, sermons and ministry planning. In answering the question, we see over and over again in the Bible that God has a plan to redeem the world through his people. This is clearly seen in the life of Abraham the Patriarch. Abraham was blessed so that he would bless others (Gen 12:1-3). This was the purpose of the nation of Israel. The purpose of the Church is the same. Jesus said we were chosen “... to bear fruit” (John 15:16). We are to witness in such a way that the unbelieving world is impacted.

Studying the history of God’s people reveals two succinct and quite different responses to God’s will. The first response is one of doubt and disobedience; the second comes from faith and results in obedience.

1. *The Response of Doubt and Disobedience*

God’s ultimate desires are clear. But many will respond with skepticism and fear concerning the reality of its achievement. The best biblical example of this is found in Numbers 13:26-33 when the 12 spies returned from the land of Canaan that God had promised them. Ten spies, having seen the difficulty of the task, concluded, “We cannot attack those people for they are stronger than we are” (Nu 26:13:31). Their unbelief produced fear and disobedience, for which the Israelites were punished.

The following fears are common objections to aggressive and broad church planting. These fears have no basis in truth. In fact, they are simply lies of Satan.

“The Lies” Believing the lies leads to fear	“The Truth” Faith in the truth leads to obedience
We need to take care of the home church first.	Just as Abraham was blessed to bless others, so the purpose of the church always exists outside of itself. The truth is that in God’s economy, there are enough resources to take care of existing churches if we will be faithful to God’s mission.
We do not have enough trained leaders.	We often do not have enough leaders because we place barriers of education and experience in people’s lives. It is a form of control resulting from distrust of the Holy Spirit to lead and teach others.
We do not have enough money.	God provides enough money to see His will done. Luke 6:38 clearly shows that if we give, we will have more than we could hope for. Throughout the history of the church, men of faith have been provided for by the Father.
One church is enough for this city.	Saturation means a culturally relevant witness within access of every person. If God expects the great commission to be fulfilled through the church, this is what God wants.
We will divide the church.	Multiplication of the body of Christ is God’s natural way to fill the earth for His glory. The Holy Spirit is one and can not be divided.
We will lose the standards of our morals.	Fear not, for the Holy Spirit will lead in truth and righteousness. He will purify the bride of Christ.
We can’t do this without outside help.	There is not a people on the face of the earth who do not have the resources for their own spiritual work. This attitude has often produced unhealthy dependence and created complex church structures which can not be reproduced or multiplied.
We shouldn’t work with “them.”	Disunity and anger within the body of Christ is Satan’s greatest weapon to keep the Church from completing God’s mission.

Adapted from: Correll, Richard C. *The Glory of God among the Nations*. Grand Rapids: Church Planters' Training International.

2. *The Response of Faith and Obedience*

Returning to Numbers 13, we find that Caleb, also one of the 12 spies, saw all the challenges associated with conquering the land. But Caleb, a man of faith, said, “We should go up and take possession of the land, for we can certainly do it” (Nu 13:30). Caleb’s faith resulted in a desire to obey God.

As the writer of the Hebrews says, “*without faith it is impossible to please God*” (Heb 11:6). In the same chapter we read of the great Old Testament heroes—those “*who through faith conquered kingdoms, administered justice and gained what was promised*” (Heb 11:33). Faith is essential to see what God wants. In order for a church planting movement in your region to be a reality, you must build faith in the vision. Responses by faith will be blessed by God!

Question 2: Which of the “lies” listed above are commonly heard in your region?

II. MOBILIZE FOR PRAYER

An effective way to unite people and instill vision concerning the fulfillment of the Great Commission is by aggressive prayer in search of wisdom concerning what God wants for the region. People who rarely pray have a problem accepting God's vision for saturation church planting. Prayer brings together those who have been longing for a great movement of God to impact their nation, people, and region.

A church planting movement can only go on if fueled by prayer. From the beginning, the early church dedicated itself to prayer (Ac 2:42), and even when persecution pressed hard, the believers held a prayer meeting (Ac 4:23-31). Paul stated the classic church planter's prayer request in Ephesians 6:19-20. He asked twice for boldness to proclaim the Gospel. Paul also asked that they pray for the right words to be given to him, words that move peoples' hearts to a decision for Christ, and that he would have no fear.

If you want to see a church planting movement in your region, one of the most strategic things you can do is encourage aggressive prayer. Prayer is necessary in both the church planting task and in keeping the church planting movement continuing in the proper direction.

1. Intercessory Prayer

Prayer is needed on behalf of missionaries, church planters and pastors. These people are in critical spiritual positions and need the prayers of God's people. Paul states the importance of praying for political and other leaders as a priority in the prayer life of believers (1Ti 2:1-3). This dedication to prayer for people in authority is so that there may be positive conditions for the spread of the gospel.

2. Prayer for Unity

Jesus prayed that his followers would be one (John 17:22-23). Paul encourages believers to pray in a spirit of unity with one another (1Ti 2:8). Perhaps nothing encourages unity like corporate prayer. Prayer is often used by God to bring believers together, when they might be divided over other issues.

3. Spiritual Warfare Prayer

The expansion of the church is spiritual warfare. Satan does not want a church planting movement in your region and will mobilize demons against it. Powerful spiritual warfare against Satan, demonic rulers, authorities, powers of the dark world, and spiritual forces of evil requires solid Christian living and prayer (Eph 6:10-20).

Question 3: How would you describe the existing prayer focus in your region? What could you do to improve it?

III. SET GOALS BASED ON FAITH

Goals are tangible expressions of the vision. Challenging goals stir up and mobilize people. Leaders and laymen alike will want to get involved in a challenge. It is exciting to work together towards a worthwhile and challenging goal. Goals should be set for towns and cities, counties, states and whole countries, as God leads.

Goals should be specific and measurable. Specific numbers and specific dates get people involved and enable them to rejoice in achievement. Remember, when setting goals there are things you can plan to do and there are things you can hope to see happen. Setting goals does not exclude the Holy Spirit from the process; rather, it helps you to better understand what God wants to do in your region.

EXAMPLE

The Muria Church in Indonesia has grand growth plans. In the mid-1980's they had about six congregations with a combined membership of just over 500. The leaders set a goal to have 10,000 members by the year 2,000. This goal may have seemed completely unrealistic, yet today they are ahead of schedule. They set out to reach the goal by breaking it down into mini-goals. Each person is to lead another person to Christ every three years, while each congregation is to plant another congregation every three years.

Realistic goals are set so as not to discourage the people. Goals not based on the present facts in terms of what is possible, can be worse than no goals at all. Make goals large enough to be a challenge, but realistic enough to avoid discouragement.

It is important to seek God and set *challenging goals*, not just easily attainable ones. Goals set under the guidance of the Spirit are "*being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see*" (Heb 11:1). In other words, goal setting by the Christian is an act of faith, without which "*... it is impossible to please God*" (Heb 11:6).

Example:

In Central America, leaders were setting church planting goals. One leader felt that the goals were too easy. His words were, "We could do that in the flesh!" He requested that higher, more challenging goals be set that would require not only human effort but God's power as well. Make sure that goals are not so fantastic that they will disappoint people if not attained, but equally important you must set goals that only with God's help you can attain, and He gets all the glory!

Question 4: What are some church planting goals that have been set for your nation and region?

IV. RESEARCH THE HARVEST FIELD

Research enables God's people to see how God is working by making clear the big picture of what God wants to do in their nation or people group. Research also provides the information that helps Christian workers make correct decisions about ministry efforts and strategy. More specifically, it helps agencies and churches know where churches need to be planted, and which methods of evangelism are successful and which are unsuccessful among various people groups.

Church planting movements often include research because people involved want to know where and how God is working. Sometimes research is one of the first things that takes place and results in motivating others, unleashing a movement.

Research can be done on different levels, depending on the desired information:

1. Specific Location (Single Church Plant)

By revealing the worldview and felt needs of people living in a target area, research can help determine which evangelism and church planting strategies should be used. Research will also reveal available church planting resources which may be mobilized to help with the church planting effort (see lesson 1, "Research-Information for Strategic Purposes" and the attached worksheet in Book One of this course).

2. Entire Region (Church planting in a Nation/Province/County/City)

Researching a whole nation or specific region can give a general picture of the status of Christianity within it. Simple information such as the number of churches and the number of towns without churches, can then challenge church leaders to mobilize believers for evangelism filling that region with churches.

Question 5: What research needs to be done in your region?

V. TRAIN CELL GROUP LEADERS AND CHURCH PLANTERS

A saturation church planting movement requires people full of conviction advancing the cause of the Gospel through starting new churches everywhere. As these people emerge, the movement is best served by developing them in their area of giftedness. Empowering average believers with vision and training them to evangelize, disciple, lead cell groups and start new churches is critical to reaching saturation church planting goals.

EXAMPLE

George Whitefield and John Wesley were both leaders in the 18th century spiritual revival of England. Whitefield preached before audiences of sixty to eighty thousand at a time and was considered to be a better preacher than Wesley. Yet the strategic nature by which Wesley worked led to a greater impact. Wesley believed that the laity was the key to the spread of the Gospel. He understood the power of small units and he knew how to harness manpower. He wisely gathered his converts into ‘classes’ which we would today call ‘cell groups.’ Several classes in a region then constituted a ‘society.’ Some 100,000 people gathered in 10,000 ‘classes’ at the height of the movement. Wesley’s role as a leader in the movement was as a traveling facilitator who not only preached, but more importantly empowered, the leaders of these societies.

How can we empower others? Empowering people toward a church planting movement requires:

- Mentoring people more than managing them.
- Equipping people more than controlling them.
- Investing in people more than demanding from them.
- Challenging people more than pushing them.
- Encouraging people more than criticizing them.
- Convincing people more than commanding them.
- Training people more than lecturing to them.

VI. PUT INTO PRACTICE THE PRINCIPLES WHICH MAXIMIZE GROWTH

A. Natural Growth Principles

Many ministry models do not yield lasting results. The following list summarizes some of the common tactics that promote or do not promote the natural spread of the Gospel.

Things that Promote the Natural Spread of the Gospel	Things that May Not Promote the Natural Spread of the Gospel
The establishment of churches	The establishment of missions
Self-governing churches	External control of churches
Self-reproducing churches	Stagnant churches
Self-supporting churches	External dependence
The multiplication of leaders	The addition of leaders
Training while in ministry	Training prior to ministry
“Z” thinking	“Maintenance” thinking
Cooperation/unity among believers	Division among believers
Local initiative and ownership	Dependence on foreign leaders
Ministry training done in local churches	Institutional education

Question 6: Which of the natural principles above were illustrated in the book of Acts?

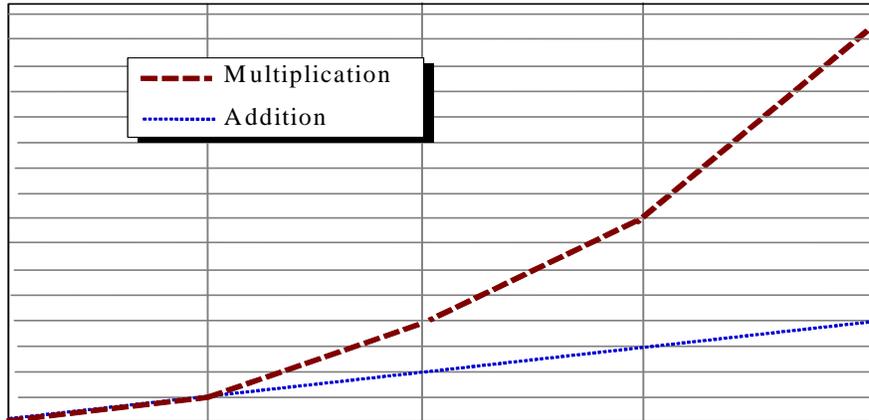
Question 7: What does the table reveal about the ministry models you have used in church planting?

B. Multiplication Versus Addition

The result of these natural tactics is multiplication. Remember, the goal of church planting is not just one new congregation, but multiplying churches in each and every region. A church planting movement can be described as the planting and growing of churches in a particular region in an unusually rapid fashion under the direction of the Holy Spirit.

Addition is the most common approach to ministry. We think about adding one new church, starting one more new small group, leading one more person to Christ. These are good intentions. But God’s way is not addition—it is multiplication (2Ti 2:2). Using addition, three becomes four. But in multiplication three becomes nine.

Multiplication vs. Addition



The multiplication principle applies to evangelism, discipleship, cell groups, church planting, leadership development and more. New converts should be taught to find other converts, cell groups should multiply regularly, and churches should reproduce and plant daughter churches. Leaders should train other leaders to train still others. All this is multiplication. In practice, the principle of multiplication means we should employ ministry methods and models that are reproducible within the culture. Church planting models that depend heavily on foreign support or expertise may not be reproducible. Training programs that require long term residential study are also difficult to reproduce.

A look at nature can give us some insight into multiplication. All living things (plants and animals) grow. But there is a natural limit to their growth. Sooner or later the growth stops and there is a natural death. The fruit or offspring they have produced, however, live on. Growth is like addition, while reproduction is like multiplication.

The principles are similar in church ministry. If a witnessing church is to live on in a region, simply having growth is insufficient. To have a witness in successive generations, the church will need to reproduce itself, planting daughter churches. The best leaders for the daughter churches come from within the church itself, rather than from a distant place such as a seminary or Bible school. Leaders need to encourage vision for multiplication so that more churches can be established in the city and region.

CONCLUSION

The strategies we have studied are the kind of methods that are used in parts of the world where church planting movements are flourishing. “Ministry as usual”, which focuses on maintaining and controlling, does not lead to the releasing of the power of God to work through His people. Your task is to consider which of the strategies discussed in this lesson would be helpful for your region?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Why is vision so important in church planting movements?
- Why is multiplication so important in church planting movements?
- Of the strategies discussed in this lesson, which ones may apply to your current situation? How can they help you to progress in your church planting efforts?

CHURCH PLANTING SKILLS

Lesson 10: Shepherding Within A Movement

All over the world where church planting movements are underway, these movements face challenges concerning leadership, doctrine, finances, ongoing evangelism, etc. Where do we find the answers to these difficulties? We may not traditionally think of the Bible as a church planting textbook, but since it teaches divine truth and since much of it was written in response to the expanding church, it is the best place in the world to learn about church planting movements.

I. LEADERSHIP IN A CHURCH PLANTING MOVEMENTS

One of the keys to a church planting movement's health and vitality is a strong leadership structure. There is never one leader of a movement. Instead there are a variety of leaders serving different functions. For example, national and regional leaders shepherd pastors (local leaders). The pastors in turn shepherd the cell group leaders. The cell group leaders are the front line of the advance of the movement.

A. Movement Leaders

Some leaders exercise influence over multiple churches. 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. Movement leaders train church planters and pastors, ensure that the movement stays on track theologically, and spread the vision for planting churches every where. The apostle Paul was such a leader.

B. Local Church Leadership

One of the most common issues in church planting movements is that of leadership. When the Gospel advances powerfully and churches are planted rapidly, there is often a period of time when adequate leadership is difficult and sometimes impossible to find.

Mature local leadership is the best arrangement for a new church, and the church planting team's effort should be devoted to the development of mature local leaders. However, rather than place men into leadership prematurely, the apostles allowed churches to exist without elders until they appointed them on the second visit (Ac 14:21-23). Sometimes leadership came from outside for a time. Paul sent Silas and Timothy to lead the ministry in Berea (Ac 17:14). He left Priscilla and Aquila in Cenchrea/Corinth (Ac 18:19). Toward the end of his life, Paul left Timothy to oversee Ephesus and Titus to be responsible for Crete (Tit 1:5). The goal of outside help is to train and release new leadership.

C. Cell Group Leadership

One of the most important components of a church planting movement is the cell group. As we talk about the "big picture" of multiplication and movement it would be wrong to ignore the reality of the "little picture" that is repeated over and over again in cell groups as they grow and multiply. Cell group leaders should be trained and supervised at the local church level. But, national leaders/shepherds of movements should be engaged in a process that helps local churches train and resource cell group leaders on a broad scale. If cell groups are not the focus, the church planting movement will die.

Question 1: Why should shepherding cell group leaders be a priority in a church planting movement? Is this a priority for you? How so?

II. CORRESPONDING WITH NEW CHURCHES

New Testament leaders shepherded new churches through visiting and through writing Epistles. By studying the Epistles we can discover how to apply spiritual truth to problems which young churches face. These letters were written to clarify theology, encourage the believers, instruct concerning church problems and to train new leaders.

A. Instructions to the Galatians

Paul wrote the book of Galatians to some of the very first churches he planted in order to stamp out the false teaching of the Judaizers who taught that obedience to the Mosaic Law was a necessary part of the Christian faith. False teaching is a common weapon of the enemy, and new churches can be most susceptible to it. With great passion, Paul countered this false teaching by re-explaining the gospel and the role it plays in our salvation and sanctification. It is critical that church planting movements embrace the true gospel.

B. Instructions to the Macedonian Churches

1. Instructions to the Philippian Believers

Paul wrote Philippians from prison in Rome. Philippians is all about joy. What a testimony that Paul was joyful even in prison! It is no wonder that Paul is so joyful, as he reveals great understanding into the character of Christ in one of the greatest Christological passages in the Bible (2:5-11). Indeed for Paul, “*to live is Christ, and to die is gain*” (1:21).

2. Instructions to the Church at Thessalonica

Paul wrote two letters to the believers at Thessalonica. According to 1 Thessalonians 1:8-10, these believers had an impact on their province (Macedonia), the neighboring region (Achaia) and the world. This church was doing well! The dominant theme of Paul’s writing concerns the second coming of Christ.

C. Instructions to Corinth in Achaia

The church in Corinth was indeed weak and spiritually needy. We learn in Paul’s epistles to them that the church was plagued with divisions, jealousies, immorality, and confused about church discipline, spiritual gifts and the Lord’s Supper. However, Paul did not give up on this troubled church as many leaders would be tempted to do. He even tells them that the answers to their problems are in their midst (1Co 1:4-9).

D. Instructions to the Churches in the Province of Asia

1. Instructions to the Church in Ephesus

Ephesus was the dominant city of the province of Asia, where Paul stayed and worked for three years. Many theologians believe that the letter to the Ephesians was intended not just for the Ephesians but also for the daughter churches which resulted from the advance of the Gospel in the province of Asia (Acts 19:9-10). The teaching in this letter has much to do with church planting movements. The statements concerning the purpose of the Church (chapters 2-3) make it clear that God intends for Gentiles (nations) to understand the Gospel through the presence of the Church.

2. Instructions to the Church in Colosse

Paul’s letter to the Colossians is addressed to a church that he did not plant, in a city he had never visited. The church in Colosse was a part of the movement which started in Ephesus and spread to the entire province of Asia (Ac 19:9-10). The Colossian church was planted by Epaphras (Col 1:7), who had been trained by Paul and was sent out from there to accompany Paul in missionary work in other places (Col 4:11-13; Phm verse 23).

3. Instructions to Timothy

After Paul left Ephesus, Timothy became Paul's emissary and a leader in the Ephesian church. Having told Timothy to "stay in Ephesus" (1Ti 1:3), Paul wrote two letters to his "son in the faith" while Timothy supervised the churches in Asia from Ephesus. In his first letter to Timothy, Paul taught actions and precautions necessary to keep a church planting movement healthy. These include watching over doctrine (1Ti 1:3-5), public worship and prayer, the qualifications for leadership, warnings about financial gain, maintaining spiritual integrity, and practical advice on how to deal with people and matters of social action.

From his dungeon, facing his last days on earth, Paul wrote his second letter to Timothy. Here Paul uses the family as the model for relationships between leaders in a saturation church planting setting. Most of the admonishments are personal, as a father to a son whom he loves dearly (2Ti 1:2; 2:1). Paul told Timothy to set an example of how to treat other believers in the church (1Ti 5:1-2). He simply said to treat each other like family! Women are sisters or mothers and men are fathers or brothers. A family atmosphere guarantees that people are loved and accepted. Everyone can feel like they belong.

4. Instructions to Philemon

Paul wrote a sensitive letter to his friend Philemon, a member of the church in Colosse. A difficult social issue, that of slavery, had arisen when a runaway slave, Onesimus, became a believer. Paul encouraged Philemon in Christian love to accept Onesimus back as a brother in Christ.

When he treated this problem, Paul noted that he had the authority to tell Philemon to change his position. However, rather than force Philemon to change, Paul wanted to persuade him to take a new position toward his slave. In the same way, when Paul taught in the school of Tyrannus, Scripture says that "he reasoned" or "he discussed" (Ac 19:9). Although it may be more difficult, it is more effective to gently help people change their convictions rather than just tell them what to do. A movement always goes further when people advance the Gospel from their own convictions rather than only blindly obeying commands.

On the basis of their relationship as friends and brothers in Christ, rather than from a position of authority, Paul was able to encourage Philemon to change his conviction and accept Onesimus as a brother. This same principle can be used in solving sensitive social issues in the church today. What are some issues facing you in your church, and what guidelines from this example can you apply to resolve them?

Question 2: How can you stay in touch and provide instruction for the groups and churches which God begins through your ministry?

5. John's Vision on the Island of Patmos

Revelation was given to the Apostle John for the churches of Asia while John was in exile on the Island of Patmos. The seven churches (Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia and Laodicea) represent the second generation of the church planting movement.

The Lord Jesus Himself addressed the churches to tell them what really matters to Him. By paying close attention to Jesus' own evaluation of the churches, we can work to plant churches that please Him. Church planters must teach their congregations the qualities that Jesus praises in order to avoid the criticisms with which Jesus reproves the seven churches. For a biblical ecclesiology, or view of the church, chapters 2-3 of Revelation are essential.

The apocalyptic vision of John recorded in Revelation 4-22 is a unique part of the New Testament that in many ways is difficult to interpret. But the message of the vision has one reoccurring theme about which there can be no doubt—**Jesus will build His church!** "All nations will come and worship" (15:4). This should be great comfort to believers in all circumstances.

E. The Letter to the Romans

Although Rome was not part of any of the regions that Paul evangelized during his missionary journeys, a strong church developed there as a result of the labors of other believers. Paul's letter to the Romans is one of the most valuable parts of Scripture. In great detail, Paul explained the meaning of the Gospel about which he was "not ashamed" (Ro 1:16). Paul knew the power of Gospel, for it had transformed his life, as well as the lives of thousands of others. Why is it that we do not see God working in powerful ways today? Perhaps part of the answer has to do with the fact that we fail to fully understand and release the Gospel in ministry.

Example:

The powerful book of Romans has been the spark that has ignited several spiritual movements. In the 16th century a young German Catholic monk and seminary professor named Martin Luther had a desire to be close to God. The problem, however, was that he did not know how and it seemed that neither did the other religious leaders of the day. Luther found the answer he was looking for in 1515 while lecturing on Paul's letter to the Romans. When he came to chapter 1, verse 17 he rediscovered the biblical doctrine of "justification by faith." Luther went on to preach the Gospel of salvation as a free gift apart from works. As the Gospel was preached, countless lives were eternally changed and Europe was transformed.

200 years later, in 1735, a young Anglican priest named John Wesley left England to serve a three-year missionary term among Native Americans in the US, where he encountered many difficulties. Upon returning to London in great discouragement, he went to a meeting where a group of believers was reading Martin Luther's introduction to his commentary on Romans. Then and there, on May 24, 1738, John Wesley heard the Gospel for perhaps the first time. Wesley went on to lead one of the greatest revivals the world has ever seen.

F. The Letter to Titus (on the Island of Crete)

Paul sent Titus to oversee the churches on the Island of Crete. Titus' first task was to appoint leaders in every village (Tit 1:5). It is interesting that although Cretans were not known to be of good character (Tit 1:12-13), Paul expected Titus to find local leaders, and not import outside leaders from other established churches. Paul also gives a list of the qualifications for leadership (Tit 1:6-9) so that Titus would know what to look for.

III. GUARDING AGAINST HERESY

As we have already seen, doctrinal issues are some of the problems a church planting movement will usually face (1Ti 1:3-5). It is possible to plant many churches, but if they are not strong in biblical teaching, serious problems may arise. Extremes may go from legalism to mysticism. All such teachings must be regulated by Scripture. It is critical that new believers are taught that the answers ultimately reside not in the mind of leader or in denominational tradition – but rather in the Bible.

A. A Portrait of Christ

A portrait is an accurate picture of someone. A caricature, like those in newspaper and magazine cartoons, twists the accurate image to emphasize one or two aspects of the person's image. Training leaders to adhere to good, solid Bible teaching will help the Church be an accurate portrait of Christ. Often, because of legalism or experiences, the accurate portrait of the Lord becomes twisted into a caricature. This can happen when a denomination or group of churches strongly urges members to follow only one, or a few parts of Scripture, or emphasize experiences. Remember:

1. *Experience should be interpreted by Scripture and not vice-versa. Scripture is the basis for teaching and training (2Ti 3:16-17).*
2. *Avoid extreme legalism or mysticism (Col 2:18-23). Instead, make Jesus Christ the center of everything (Col 1:27-29; 2:2-3,6-9; 3:4,15-16).*

Question 3: What is the role of the Holy Spirit in guarding against heresy in a movement? What is your role?

B. True Christianity Requires Love Among Christians As Well As Correct Doctrine

According to church tradition, the Apostle John wrote First, Second and Third John while in Ephesus. John speaks strongly against those who distort the doctrine of Christ (1Jn 2:22) and who do not have relationships that are marked by Christian love (1Jn 2:9).

People who mixed Christianity with popular philosophies of the day distorted correct doctrine (1Jn 4:1-3). People like Diotrophes (3Jn 9) were leaders in the church who caused dissension and division, who wanted to be the most important, and who did not practice Christian love in their relationships. The old apostle affirmed that Christ-centered faith and relationships of Christian love are the marks of a movement that practiced true Christianity (1Jn 5:1-2).

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What are some of the issues that church planting movements face? How does the Bible help us respond to these issues?
- What heretical teachings threaten the Church in your region? What parts of Scripture address these issues?
- What kind of leadership is necessary for a church planting movement?

Lesson 11: Mobilization

During a time of war, the sense of urgency and need to survive dominates everything people say and do. Whether people are on the front lines in the heat of the battle or at home, far from the battle, the war affects their interpersonal relationships, their thoughts, and the management of their time and resources. The cry during war is to MOBILIZE! To "mobilize" simply means *to assemble people into readiness to participate where they best contribute in a common cause with a common goal*.

As the church strives to grow, the eternal destiny of millions is at stake. Mobilizers see the expansion of the Church as it truly is—a spiritual war. With military-like zeal they cry out for mobilization. In this lesson we will discuss the importance of mobilization as well as some practical ways in which mobilization can encourage churches to be more effective in fulfilling the Great Commission.

I. COMPONENTS OF MOBILIZATION

A. Common Vision

Mobilization is impossible without common vision. Why should people work together when they are not trying to accomplish the same things? Without vision, what do people mobilize around?

A common vision provides the focus for mobilization. A common vision can only come from God—only a vision from the Lord can hold people united in the spiritual battle. As has been said repeatedly throughout this track, prayerfully asking “what does God want?” is perhaps the most helpful way to stir up vision toward mobilization.

B. Training

A common vision does not automatically result in mobilization. People must be trained and equipped for the fulfillment of the vision. Training naturally follows vision. How many people do not evangelize because they have never been trained in how to share their faith? When people have not been trained to serve God as they should, then they are not mobilized. Mobilization can only happen when people have been trained.

On the other hand, training in and of itself does not equal mobilization. Training must lead toward the fulfillment of the vision. For example, a church planter training program is successful only if new churches are planted as a result. The number of people involved is not necessarily an indicator of success, nor is the quality of the program. Although we hope that there are many involved and that the program is of a good quality, the success is determined by the vision—establishing churches everywhere.

C. Resources

One of the most notable aspects of mobilization includes resources. As the Church grew in the New Testament, believers mobilized resources needed for its growth. The people of the Jerusalem Church gave sacrificially to assist others in need (Ac 4:32-37). Christians were exhorted to support other believers who had no other tangible means of support, such as godly widows (1Ti 5:9-16). The wealthy were encouraged to give more, to help those with less (1Ti 6:18-19).

Question 1: What resources can you think of (besides money) that are needed to start and further a church planting movement in your region? Take a moment and list some of them now.

A. The Principle of Self-Support

Scripture teaches that local giving was part of the church planting movement in the first century. Paul expected churches to support their leaders financially (1Ti 5:17, 1Co 9:3-12). Ministry resources, including money, may be drawn from foreign sources occasionally. However, the fulfillment of the Great Commission in a region should be done primarily with the resources and initiative of the believers of that region. At the heart of the issue of resources is the fundamental truth that God’s own people provide the primary means for the work of the Gospel. Their own tithes and offerings should be used to support their work.

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

B. The Principle of Sharing

The collection from Galatia, Asia, Macedonia and Achaia for the needy believers in Jerusalem (1Co 16:1-2; 2Co 8,9) indicates that churches were expected not only to support the local ministry, but also to give to others in need. While it is common today for “mother churches” to provide for the financial needs of “daughter churches”, we see that the opposite took place when Paul collected money for the Jerusalem church. Note also that this collection did not violate the principle of self-support (2Co 8:13-15).

Paul normally supported himself financially in order not to be a burden on others (Ac 18:2,3; 1Co 4:12). He did, however, receive help from the Philippian believers (Php 4:15-20). It is interesting to note that the often repeated phrase “*my God shall supply all your needs...*” is found in the context of Paul congratulating the Philippians for their giving to church planting ministry. In other words, *as they were giving*, Paul assured them that God would supply all of their needs.

Financial giving is a basic discipline of the Christian life that enables churches to minister, reach out, and to plant more churches. Believers were never to be greedy (1Ti 6:3-10), and it is “more blessed to give than to receive” (see Acts 20:32-35). In fact, most of the giving in the New Testament was done out of poverty, or at least beyond one’s means. Wealthy people also have an important role in a church planting movement. However, those who are well off must understand that 1 Timothy 6:17-19 includes six instructions for rich people who turn to Christ: not to be arrogant, not to put their hope in wealth, to hope in God alone, to do good, to be rich in good deeds, and to be generous and willing to share.

Question 2: Have you talked to the wealthier people in your church about the six commands directed toward them? What was their response?

Question 3: What are some ways you can teach the poorer people in your church about their responsibility to tithe, trusting that God will supply their needs when humanly it does not seem possible?

D. Strategic Positioning

An army is not mobilized when it has its orders (vision) nor when it has been trained and supplied (resourced). Rather, mobilization can only take place when trained and resourced personnel are in *position* to carry out orders. When people are mobilized, they work in a variety of places in different ways, but always toward the same goal. If all the churches in region are duplicating one another’s efforts and channeling resources and workers toward the evangelization of a particular people group to the exclusion of

another, than the churches are poorly mobilized. Research can show where and among whom churches are or aren't working, thereby revealing the most strategic needs which need to be addressed.

II. WHY SHOULD BELIEVERS BE MOBILIZED?

Jesus prayed that His followers would be united (John 17). He designed the Church to work together as a body (1Co 12, Ro 12). God has called the whole church to take the Gospel to the whole world. Therefore, God empowers every believer with spiritual gifts for the purpose of mobilization.

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

The Church is God's agent for mobilization. When the whole body of Christ will consciously mobilize around the cause to witness for Christ, God will accelerate the church toward reaching the goal of making disciples, both in their own nation and also out to other nations! Each part of the body must understand their role and each gift must discover its expression. In this all the members of the body join the cause and pursue the goal.

III. BIBLICAL EXAMPLES OF MOBILIZERS

A. Nehemiah

Nehemiah mobilized the Jewish people after the exile to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem. He did this by giving vision, providing resources as well as placing people in strategic positions so they could use their giftedness. Nehemiah's vision and goal to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem came to him as a result of information (research), having heard about the conditions in Jerusalem, and through prayer (Ne 1:2-4). He secured resources for the project from King Artaxerxes (Ne 2:7-9). He wisely had people rebuild the part of the wall nearest to their own homes (Ne 4:22-23).

The mobilization of the Jewish people in Jerusalem resulted in synergism so that the results were more than the sum of the parts. The wall was completed in an amazingly fast 52 days, instilling fear in the surrounding nations (Ne 6:15-16). When God's people unite and work strategically to accomplish God's plan, God blesses in amazing ways.

B. Barnabas

Barnabas' name was Joseph, but because he used his gift of encouragement so effectively, the apostles called him "Barnabas", meaning "son of encouragement." He was also generous and gave financially to the Lord's work in Jerusalem (Ac 4:36-7). Barnabas had a desire to see the Gospel advance throughout the world. He served the church in Antioch and then worked as a church planter in Cypress and Asia Minor.

Barnabas' greatest contribution to the advance of the Gospel was his mobilization of the apostle Paul into effective ministry. After Paul's conversion on the Damascus road, Paul went to Jerusalem and tried to join the disciples, who, doubting he was a true disciple, were afraid of him. But Barnabas believed in God's transforming power in Paul's life. Risking his own reputation and potentially the safety of the believers in Jerusalem, Barnabas brought Paul to the apostles. Barnabas explained how the Lord had appeared to Paul and how Paul had preached the Gospel fearlessly in Damascus (Ac 9:26-31). Based on Barnabas' affirmation, Paul was accepted by the apostles.

After the church was established in Antioch, Barnabas, seeing a great opportunity and need for Paul's gifts, went to Tarsus and brought him back to the church at Antioch. Paul became one of the leaders of that church and from there launched his church planting ministry throughout Cypress and Asia Minor (Ac 13:1-3). In all this, Barnabas mobilized Paul so that Paul would do his part in the advance of the Kingdom. Imagine if

Barnabas had not taken the role of mobilizer. Many churches may not have been planted, many New Testament epistles may not have been written.

Question 4: Do you know a “Paul” who needs to be encouraged and mobilized? Write down their name(s) and begin praying about how you can be a “Barnabas” for them.

C. Paul

Clearly the apostle Paul had a great commitment to the mobilization of the Church. Paul mobilized many of the churches in Macedonia, and Achaia to give to the Jerusalem Church during her time of need (Ro 15:25-27). In his epistles, Paul often taught on spiritual gifts (Ro 12, 1Co 12, Eph 4) and made the churches aware of the potential they themselves possessed to accomplish what God desires (1Co 1:4-9, Ro 15:14).

Paul mobilized many others in pursuing God’s call in his life. Paul trained Timothy, challenged him to boldly exercise his spiritual gift and instructed him to mobilize still others (2Ti 2:2). Timothy is by no means the only one to have been mobilized by Paul. The last missionary journey of Paul seems to have been a training/mobilization trip during which we read of seven people traveling with Paul, most of them learning from him (Ac 20:4). In his epistles, Paul mentions Epaphras, Demas, Archippus, Titus, Phoebe and many others. In Romans 16, Paul greets 27 people, many of whom he had influenced or some way facilitated in ministry, giving more evidence for the vast network of people Paul had mobilized in his travels.

IV. CHARACTERISTICS OF EFFECTIVE MOBILIZERS

Mobilization does not happen by accident. It takes people who are especially good at encouraging and involving others in ministry. Mobilizers create conditions so that the church will naturally accept the vision, pray for it to happen, and then train and release leaders and workers to carry out the task. They have the following characteristics:

A. Vision

Mobilizers have a vision for the world. They help others who may find it difficult to look beyond the local visible needs, to encourage them to believe that God has bigger plans than they could ever conceive. Some regions are not mobilized because the local churches lack vision. In such a situation, once God’s vision is proclaimed it can be a rallying cry, or a call to action leading to mobilization.

B. Faith and Encouragement

Mobilizers are people of faith. Faith means looking past present reality to what God can and wants to do. If faith moves mountains, can it not also wake up the body of Christ to join the cause of Acts 1:8 and pursue the goal of Matthew 28:18-20? Faith believes Jesus when He said that He would build His church. A person of faith will have a passion for the church.

A mobilizer’s faith affects the way in which he or she treats others. Like Barnabas, the “son of encouragement”, many mobilizers have the gift of encouragement. They are able to see through setbacks and discouragements and focus on positive things. Mobilizers help Christians to realize that they are special because they belong to God, that God has gifted them for ministry to others, and they can, by God’s grace and through His power make a difference in the world.

C. Influence

Mobilizers are people of influence and they invest this influence to see God’s purposes advanced. People listen and respond to them because they have credibility—they have a good reputation in the church, a

servant's heart, and ministry experience. Many mobilizers are people oriented and have the unique ability to remember names, faces and the abilities of people they have met only briefly. They are then able to link people to resources and opportunities that can help to advance God's Kingdom.

V. EXAMPLES OF MOBILIZATION

A local church is mobilized when the people in that church catch a vision for evangelizing the lost and then act on that vision. Mobilization aims at people's hearts—helping them to see the world through God's eyes. Most mobilization happens at a grass-roots level, among the members of a congregation.

Below are some simple ideas for mobilizing members of local congregations to help them catch a vision for reaching the world with the Gospel. These are not exhaustive, but rather, are listed to encourage your thinking. You will likely come up with other ideas of your own.

A. Corporate Prayer

One of the most important ways in which to mobilize people for world evangelization is to have them pray together. Maps and research data can encourage specific prayer for unreached peoples and areas in your own nation and around the world. As people begin to pray and learn about the lost, they will want to become involved in reaching lost people. As mentioned in other lessons, prayer walking and concerts of prayer can also be invaluable tools for allowing God's spirit to touch people's hearts and give them a burden for the lost.

Example:

In many churches in America, people meet weekly in small groups to pray for unreached people around the world. Prayer groups may also pray that the Lord would send out from the members of their church a church planting team to work among an unreached people group.

In one case, the Lord gave a church a special burden for the Kazakh people of Central Asia. Within two years, three members of that prayer group became missionaries to the Kazakhs. The congregation then adopted the Kazakh people as a special focus of outreach and began to send short-term teams of medical workers, construction workers, children's workers, musicians and business people to Kazakhstan. Eventually, the church sent a long-term church planting team to work in western Kazakhstan. Prayer led to the mobilization of an entire church toward reaching the Kazakh people.

Question 5: Do you practice corporate prayer in your church plant? What are some ways that you can encourage your church to begin praying for the lost?

B. Children's/Youth Programs/Sunday School

If we want our children to have a heart for the world and to be involved in God's Kingdom work, we need to give them opportunities and experiences of that while they are children. Children are an important element of mobilizing churches for world evangelization. They are often links into unsaved families. Children who grow up strongly committed to the Lord are often used by Him in significant ways as adults.

Example:

A Christian drama team of youth from Holland came to Hungary in 1992 to work with a short term evangelism team who were helping a local Baptist church with evangelism. On the evangelism team were two students from a Reformed teachers college who caught the vision of starting their own drama team. They recruited seven others and started performing in the area churches. Through their ministry several people were saved and joined the group. In the next three years, 20 people were trained and participated in

the drama group. All of those 20 are now active members in local churches and five are involved in full-time mission work.

C. Mobilizing Adults

Remember that to mobilize means to assemble and prepare people into readiness to participate where they can best contribute in a common cause with a common goal. Adults must be convinced of the importance of world evangelization (the common goal) and they must see how they fit into that picture. Mobilization needs to happen through biblical teaching on the nature and purpose of the church, the Great Commission, and the role of the believer in world evangelization.

Example:

In 1722 the Moravian Brethren, on the verge of extinction due to severe persecution, found freedom to worship and grow on the property of a German Count named Nicolaus Zinzendorf. On the foundation of an agreement emphasizing unity, prayer, the necessity of acceptance and forgiveness among believers and the priority of evangelism, God's Spirit energized the group in 1727 into the first missionary movement of modern times. By 1800 this movement had sent almost 1000 missionaries to every continent of the world forming new congregations everywhere they went. It was their example that infused William Carey in 1791 with his vision to carry the message of the Gospel to the Far East, launching the mighty movement of missions in the nineteenth century.

CONCLUSION

Mobilization is a spiritual work. Effective mobilizers have vision, faith, and influence. They are encouragers who help people realize their God-given potential. They desire to see God's glory fill the earth. They advance the cause of Christ in the world and not their own agendas.

A church planting movement will not succeed without effective mobilization. It helps to focus and release existing resources to the task of world evangelization—the establishing of new churches among unreached peoples within a nation and also out to other nations. When the body of Christ is not mobilized—it cannot fight at full strength.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Why is mobilization important?
- Do you practice your spiritual gifts with enthusiasm as Barnabas did?
- Do you know someone who could be an effective mobilizer?
- Where do you think resources should come from to support church planting?
- What are some specific ways in which you can help mobilize the people in your church for evangelism and church planting?
- Which qualities of a mobilizer do you best fulfill? Which is the most difficult for you?
- How can you help your church mobilize to advance the Gospel, reproducing by planting new churches?

SPIRITUAL CHARACTER

Lesson 12: Ministry Through Weakness

The vision that this training material promotes is bold. There are and will be days when those who pursue this vision will feel inadequate for the task. Questions like “What am I doing here?” and “How can God use me?” plague every church planter and Christian leader at some point. We will not always feel qualified for the task and will have to minister with a sense of weakness sometimes. How can we do that?

Question 1: *Describe a time in your life when you felt incompetent or ill equipped for something God had clearly called you to do.*

I. GOOD DAYS AND BAD DAYS

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

In Class Exercise: Two days in your life.

Day of Strength: One Saturday you get up and go to a prayer meeting as is your routine. On the way out, you have a brief and very pleasant conversation with your neighbor. You go on to have a wonderful day filled with many successes. God’s presence is obvious in many ways. On the way home, you have an opportunity to share the Gospel with a neighbor.

Day of Weakness: The next Saturday is quite a bit different. You wake up late, miss the prayer meeting, and speak unkindly to your neighbor on your way out. The day is filled with failure, trouble and confusion and God does not seem to be near. In general, you cannot seem to do anything right. On your way home you feel terrible, but you have another opportunity to share the Gospel with someone.

Question 2: *Would you share the gospel differently on a day of strength as you would on a day of weakness? Why or why not? Is God more likely to use you when you are having a “good” day versus a “bad” day? Why or why not?*

We often think that while we are saved by grace, we either receive or lose God’s blessing based upon our performance. If you would share the gospel differently on a “day of strength” compared to a “day of weakness”, then that might be an indication that you are depending on your own strength instead of God’s. But since our standing before God is based on Jesus Christ, our worst days are never so bad that God cannot work through us. Likewise, our best days are never so good that we do need God. We are always in need of God and His grace and He is always able to work through us in spite of ourselves.

Ministering out of strength and being dependent on our own performance is man-centered and results in stress and eventually burnout. However, God has given us his Spirit and invited us to allow Him to minister through us. This means that ministry does not have to be all about us and our abilities to “do it.” The following table shows us a contrast between these two styles.

Ministry through Strength	Ministry through Weakness
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The strong person depends on himself. He has a “success/ failure” view of things. • This person is characterized by pride. • Unbelief is a normal pattern for this person because deep down, he knows he has limits. Even though he appears to be strong, on the inside he is afraid of failure. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This person depends on Christ and is confident in Him. • This person is characterized by humility. • Faith is central to this person’s life. The only failure in his mind is unbelief. His identity is not based on his successes and failures.

Question 3: Looking at the table above, would you say that you pursue ministry from strength, or weakness?

II. VICTORY THROUGH WEAKNESS

God’s ways are not like the ways of the world. People naturally think that success comes through power, strength, hard work and excellence. But the Bible talks about *power made perfect in weakness* (2Co 12:9) and *weakness turning to strength* (Heb 11:34). How is this possible?

There are many examples in the Bible of God’s servants seeing success when they were outnumbered, undersized, or in some way disadvantaged. Moses was not a dynamic speaker, but God called him to be His spokesperson before the Egyptian Pharaoh (Ex 3). David killed the Philistine giant Goliath while he was still a young shepherd boy (1 Sam 17). Gideon defeated an army of thousands of Midianite soldiers with only 300 men (Judges 7). In all these stories and in many others, victory came from man’s weakness. In this way, God’s miraculous hand is obvious and God’s people are not able to boast in themselves, but praise the Lord for what He has done through them.

We have referred to the church planting movement from Ephesus that impacted the province of Asia many times in this course (see Acts 19:10). In many ways it is a model for us today. It is important to note that this great movement came at a cost to its leader, Paul. We do not know the specifics, but Paul tells us that he faced some very intense personal struggles in Asia (see 2Co 1:8-9). This does not appear to be a unique situation. It is true even today that great church planting movements include difficult trials and struggles for the leaders. This may come through ministry demands, spiritual forces, team conflict, persecution, etc. The struggles do not mean that there is no victory. On the contrary, there is a reason that God allows these hardships.

Question 4: Read 2Co 1:8-9. Why did God allow Paul to suffer in Asia?

The crucifixion of our Lord is the best example of victory through weakness. Jesus dies on a cross to redeem us. The cross is foolishness to the world (1Co 1:18-23). But as 2Co 13:4 says “*he was crucified in weakness, yet he lives by God’s power.*” We see that God’s pattern is very different from the world’s. To redeem the world Jesus did not kill, but died; he did not use force, but love; in this sense he was not strong, but weak.

III. REJOICING IN WEAKNESS

Once again the apostle Paul stands as a premier example of an important ministry principle. Paul had a lot of strengths and was well accomplished in worldly and spiritual ways (see Phil 3:4-11; 2Co 11:22-29). Yet in listing his accomplishments he often interjects phrases like “*If I must boast, I will boast of the things that*

show my weakness” (2Co 11:30). Paul knew that the secret to his ministry was not his strength but his weakness.

Paul had a “thorn” which we do not completely understand, but which he asked God to take away. This thorn was effectively a weakness for Paul. Note his comments concerning this request: *“But he [God] said to me, ‘My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.’ Therefore, I will boast all the more gladly about my weakness so that Christ’s power may rest on me. That is why, for Christ’s sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong”* (2Co 12:9-10). It was more important from God’s perspective for Paul to testify through means of “the thorn” and live in humble dependence on God, than for Paul to be free from the thorn and be proud. God wants His children to depend on Him.

Compare and contrast the man who is strong on the outside (strong in himself) but weak on the inside with the leader who is outwardly weak but inwardly strong.

Saul: <i>Outwardly Strong - Inwardly Weak</i>	Paul: <i>Inwardly Strong - Outwardly Weak</i>
<p>This man was very strong in his determination to “do the right thing.” His zeal even drove him to put Christians in jail. As a Pharisee, he followed the law strictly. He may have been outwardly flawless, but inwardly he was wasting away (Php 3:4-11).</p>	<p>When Saul was converted, he became less dependent on his own strength to accomplish things and more dependent on the Father’s strength working in him. As Paul, he was no longer interested in how he was perceived outwardly and chose to allow God to work through his weaknesses. (Gal 1:10; 1Thes 2:4; 1Cor 2:1-5)</p> <p>We see a man who was powerful in ministry because he did not care what others thought of him. He cared only about what Jesus thought about him.</p>

Question 5: *What does it mean that ‘power is made perfect in weakness?’ (2 Cor 12:9)?*

Question 6: *Can you boast in your weaknesses?*

Our Weaknesses lead us to Pray

Many Christians have little knowledge of how to live in complete dependence and trust in God. Our prayer life can be a barometer of the degree to which we depend on God. A person who lives out of their strength will not pray much. He does not feel he needs to! **Prayer is a declaration of dependence on God.** A person who admits his weaknesses depends on God and will turn to him in prayer often.

Question 7: *What does your prayer life reveal about your dependence on God?*

IV. CONFIDENCE IN CHRIST

In today's modern world, we have constructed many things to train Christian leaders. Residential schools, correspondence courses, books, videos, etc. In and of themselves, these are good things. But there is a tendency to depend on them at the expense of an intimate walk with Jesus. People may put confidence in these things, thinking that such tools qualify them for ministry, that they make them strong. It is true that these tools may help. But, we want to point out several problems that come with this kind of thinking:

- Our human strength is inadequate to enable us to do what he has called us to do.
- Ministry based on human wisdom can work against the power of the cross (1Co 1:17; 2:1-5).
- Relying on personal strength to do God's will is usually linked to an attempt to impress others (1Thess 2:4-5).

Question 8: What kinds of good things could we wrongly put our trust in to be used by God?

Another problem with having the wrong kind of confidence is that you will tend to pass on these extra-biblical requirements to disciples. In other words, if you put confidence in having attended a certain school, or in reading a certain book, then you may not trust cell group leaders and church planters that you are training unless they have gone to the same school or read the same book (this principle is implied in Luke 6:40).

Question 9: What do you think qualifies you to be used by God?

Rather than having confidence in man-made programs, Paul tells us that our confidence and our competence come from Christ (2Cor. 3:5-6a). When we properly understand that Jesus is the one who qualifies us for ministry, then that is what we pass on to others. Our power for ministry is directly proportional to the strength of our relationship with Christ.

CONCLUSION

Perhaps the phrase "I must decrease and He must increase" spoken by John the Baptist summarizes most of what needs to be said in this lesson. The church planting ministry is all about God. It is His vision to see the nations filled with churches and the vision should be pursued for His glory. Let's be sure to surrender everything, even our *strength*, to God in obedience to His call.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Why do you think many Christians, including leaders, hide their weaknesses?
- How are you weak? How does this weakness keep you from ministry? How should this weakness lead you into ministry?
- What ultimately qualifies us to be used by God?
- What difference does humility make in the life of a church planter?