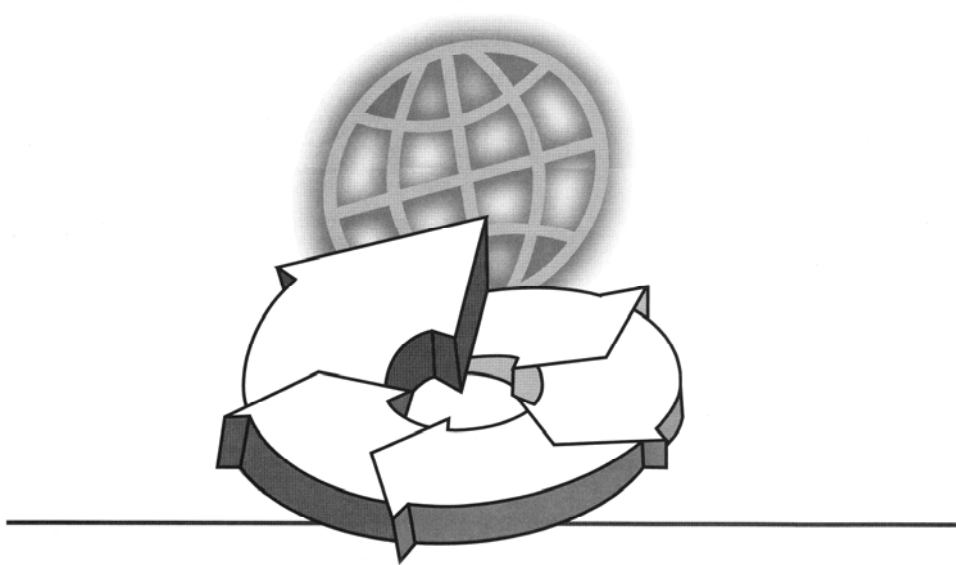


Manual Two

Omega Course



Practical Church Planter Training

**Omega Course:
Practical Church Planter Training
Manual Two**

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MANUAL TWO

Table of Contents

PREFACE.....IX
ABOUT THE ALLIANCE.....XI
THE CHURCH PLANTING CYCLE.....XII
THRESHOLDS.....XIII
CURRICULUM OVERVIEW..... XV

SCP VISION

LESSON 5: Biblical Foundations of Saturation Church Planting 3
Saturation In The Old Testament 3
The Ministry Of Jesus..... 4
The Biblical Basis For Saturation Church Planting..... 4
How Many Churches Is Saturation? 6
Saturation Church Planting In History..... 7
LESSON 6: Research Workshop..... 9
Part One—Basic Data Gathered (5-7 Minutes):..... 9
Part Two—Analysis Of Research Data (5-8 Minutes): 10
LESSON 7: Mobilizing Resources Through Research..... 11
Call To Action 11
Guidelines For Sharing Information..... 12
Determine How To Mobilize The Harvest Force..... 13
Case Study On How Research Can Be Used To Mobilize Resources..... 14

THE CHURCH

LESSON 5: The Nature of the Church 17
The Meaning And Use Of The Word "Church" 17
False Conceptions Of The Church 18
Metaphors Describing The Church As A Living Organism 20
Planting A Living Church 21
LESSON 6: Corporate Functions of the Church..... 23
Corporate vs. Personal Responsibilities Of The Church 23
Corporate Functions Of The Church 24
When To Do Corporate Functions..... 28
Appendix: Baptism In The New Testament..... 30
LESSON 7: Developing A Church Purpose Statement 33
What Is A Purpose Statement? 33
Finding Your Church's Purpose..... 34
Writing A Local Church Purpose Statement..... 34

LESSON 8: Philosophy of Church Planting Ministry 37
What Is A Philosophy Of Church Planting Ministry?..... 37
The Need For A Philosophy Of Church Planting Ministry..... 39
Contents Of An Effective Philosophy Of Church-Planting Ministry..... 41
Making Your Own Philosophy Of Church Planting Ministry..... 41
Sample Philosophy Of Ministry..... 42
Appendix: Developing a Philosophy of Church Planting Ministry..... 44

SPIRITUAL CHARACTER

LESSON 6: Living Like Sons Instead Of Orphans..... 49
Life As An Orphan 49
Christians Who Think And Act Like Orphans 50
Our Sonship With God..... 51
How We Fail To Understand Our Sonship 52
LESSON 7: Learning To Be Sons 55
A Heart Weighed Down vs. A Heart Set Free 55
A Proud Heart vs. A Heart In Partnership With The Father..... 56
A Selfish Heart vs. A Heart Free To Love Others..... 57
Appendix: Orphans vs. Sons 59

PRAYER

LESSON 4: Concert Of Prayer..... 63
Celebrate The Lord (Psalm 95:1-5) 63
Worship The Lord (Psalm 95: 6-7) 64
Hear His Voice (Psalm 95: 8-11) 64

LEADERSHIP

LESSON 1: Biblical Principles of Leadership..... 67
The Definition Of Leadership..... 67
Principles Of Biblical Leadership 68
Appendix: Leadership Case Studies 72
LESSON 2: Profile of a Leader 75
Maintain Christ-Like Character 75
Work Well With A Team..... 76
Develop The Giftedness And Abilities Of Others..... 76
Know How To Delegate Responsibility..... 76
Set Goals, Plans And Objectives And Work Toward Them 77
Articulate Vision In Such A Way That It Inspires Others 77
Be Persistent And Overcome Setbacks 78
Lead In Evangelism 78
Appendix: The Leader 80

CELL GROUPS

LESSON 1: Functions and Benefits of Cell Groups	85
Foundations Of Cell Group	85
Functions Of Cell Groups	86
Benefits Of Cell Groups	88
LESSON 2: Principles of Cell Group Leadership	93
Overall Leadership Concepts	93
Leading The Cell Group Meeting.....	94
Cell Group Administration.....	97
Appendix: Cell Group Ice Breakers	98
Appendix: Sample Activities In A Cell Group Meeting.....	103
LESSON 3: Starting a Cell Group	105
Prepare For A New Cell Group.....	105
Make Contacts.....	106
Choose A Location	106
Prepare For The First Meeting	107
Appendix: Planning Worksheet	109
LESSON 4: Cell Group Evangelism	111
Two Types Of Unbelievers	111
Understanding <i>Oikos</i>	112
Share Groups	113
The Process Of Cell Group Evangelism.....	114
Appendix: About "Oikos".....	117
LESSON 5: Cell Group Demonstration.....	121
Cell Group Demonstration	121
Evaluation	123
LESSON 6: Philosophy of Cell Group Ministry.....	125
Cell Group Philosophy	125
Models Of Cell Group Ministry.....	127
Developing A Cell Group Ministry Strategy.....	130

BIBLE STUDY METHODS

LESSON 8: Various Ways to Use Inductive Bible Studies.....	135
Review Of The Principles Of Inductive Bible Study	135
Biographical Studies	136
Book Studies.....	139
Theme Studies	141
Appendix: Biographical Study on Barnabas.....	143
LESSON 9: Leading Inductive Bible Studies	147
Characteristics Of An Inductive Bible Study Group	147
Preparation For The Study	148
Leading The Study.....	150
Appendix: Inductive Bible Study on Matthew 20:17-28	153
Appendix: Inductive Bible Study on Luke 15:1-7	156
LESSON 10,11: Workshop On Leading Inductive Bible Studies.....	159
Appendix: Passages for Inductive Bible Studies	163

EVANGELISM

LESSON 4: Evangelism and Church Planting	167
The Need For A New Approach	167
The Relay Race	168
Principles For Evangelism	169
Appendix: Evaluating Evangelism Strategies	173
LESSON 5: Barriers to Effective Evangelism	175
The Problem Of Barriers And The Need For Bridges.....	175
Understanding The Barriers That Hinder Evangelism	176
External Barriers To Effective Evangelism	177
Internal Barriers To Effective Evangelism	178
A Strategy To Overcome The Barriers	179
Appendix: "A Church In Every People: Plain Talk About A Difficult Subject" ..	181
Appendix: Answering Common Objections	186
LESSON 6,7: The Process Of Conversion	189
Assessing People's Needs	190
Evaluating Where People Are In Their Understanding Of The Gospel	191
Understanding Four Phases Of Activity Related To Winning People To Christ	193
Determining Evangelistic Strategy.....	193
Appendix: Profile of Persons You Wish To Evangelize	195
Appendix: Three Principles for Strategic Evangelism	197
Appendix: Examining Jesus' Approach To Individuals.....	199

PREFACE

THE PURPOSE OF THIS MATERIAL

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

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

This curriculum has been designed to accomplish two goals:

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

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

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

CURRICULUM OVERVIEW

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

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

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

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

USING THE MATERIAL

Advice for the Participant

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

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

Advice for the Trainer

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

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

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

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

Further help

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

Jay Weaver, General Editor
Budapest, Hungary, January 2000
omega_course@alliancescp.org

ABOUT THE ALLIANCE

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

WHAT WE BELIEVE:

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

WHAT WE DO:

Church Planter Training and Mentoring

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

Information Gathering

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

Prayer Movement Consulting

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

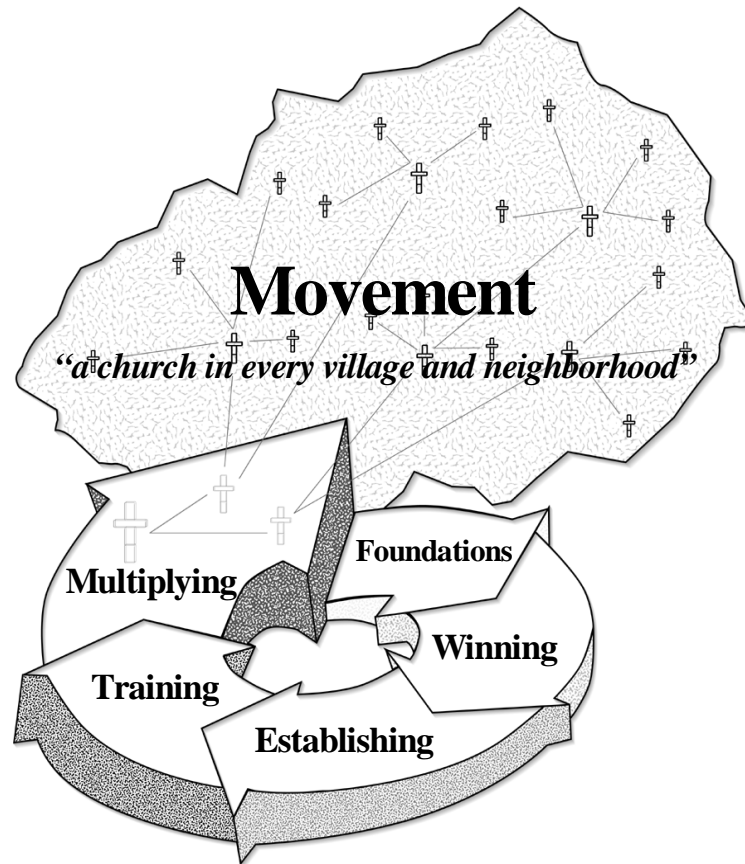
Vision Casting

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

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:

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THE CHURCH PLANTING CYCLE



Church planting is not a randomly connected series of events and activities; it is a goal-driven process. This process requires the coordination of activity, the combination of skills, a commonality of philosophy, and competence in leadership. Development in these critical areas is the goal of church planter training. The "Church Planting Cycle" is a diagram of the church planting process that visualizes, from a particular point of view, the interrelationship of the key principles and practices at work within that process. This represents a kind of 'roadmap' for the church planter, allowing one to always determine from where they've come and where they are headed.

THRESHOLDS

For the *Omega Course* Church Planting Curriculum

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

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

Specific action items:

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

MANUAL TWO: Emphasis On Evangelism and Cell Groups

Specific action items:

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

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

Specific action items:

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

MANUAL FOUR: Emphasis On Leadership and Stewardship

Specific action items:

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

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

Specific action items:

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

CURRICULUM OVERVIEW

MANUAL ONE OVERVIEW

Addresses primarily the FOUNDATIONS phase of the Church Planting Cycle

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

Numbers in brackets () refer to appendices

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

MANUAL TWO Overview

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

Numbers in brackets () refer to appendices

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

MANUAL THREE OVERVIEW

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

Numbers in brackets () refer to appendices

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

MANUAL FOUR OVERVIEW

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

Numbers in brackets () refer to appendices

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

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

Numbers in brackets () refer to appendices

TOTAL CURRICULUM HOURS: 127

SCP VISION



Biblical Foundations of Saturation Church Planting

FILLING THE EARTH WITH THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD'S GLORY

☞ Lesson Purpose

The purpose of this lesson is to show that saturation church planting is a biblical concept and is a means that God uses to fulfill His purpose.

☞ Main Points

- Saturation Church Planting is a biblical approach to fulfilling the Great Commission.
- Saturation Church Planting is a historical method.

☞ Desired Outcomes

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

- Understand a clear definition of "saturation."
- Know that saturation is a biblical principle that applies to God's work in history.
- Participate in saturation church planting as a foundational principle in the church planter's philosophy of ministry and church planting strategy.

SATURATION DEFINED

What is saturation church planting? To answer that we must first define the term "saturation."

The word saturation is the adjective form of the verb "to saturate," which is a scientific term meaning "to treat or charge with something to the point where no more can be absorbed, dissolved or retained" (Merriam Webster Dictionary. Note to translators: Use the definition in your language.) The picture is that of a sponge that is so full of water that it cannot hold one more drop.

God uses the principle of "saturation" or "filling" throughout Scripture, beginning with the filling of the earth with people and the making disciples of all nations. The goal is that the knowledge of the glory of the Lord will cover the earth as waters cover the sea (Hab 2:14, Isa. 11:9).

In applying the word "saturation" to church planting, we communicate the concept of filling the land with churches so that every man, woman and child has a chance to hear and understand the Gospel, and accept or reject Jesus Christ as personal Savior for the glory of God.

I. SATURATION IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

A. From the Beginning—Filling the Earth (Saturation) was an Old Testament theme

God's command was to fill the earth with people (Ge 1:28, 9:1, and 9:7). After the flood, the nations spread out over the earth (Ge. 10:32). But then the people "settled down" (Ge 11:1-2). They began to build a city "...so that we may make a name for ourselves and not be scattered over the face of the earth" (Ge 11:4). So God confused their language and "scattered them from there over all the earth" (Ge 11:7,8).

For Discussion: Why do you think that God wanted people to fill the earth?

B. God's ultimate purpose is for the whole earth to be saturated with the knowledge of Him

From the beginning of Scripture to the end, it is clear that God desires His glory to fill or cover all of the earth—each nation and every part of each nation. For example, God chose Abraham and blessed him **so that he would be a blessing**. God's promise to Abraham was so that "all people on earth would be blessed through you" (Ge 12:3). This is what it means to be a "chosen people."

God's desire that the whole earth know Him is stated in the following verses:

- All the earth shall be filled with the glory of God (Nu 14:21).
- And blessed be His glorious name forever! And let the whole earth be filled with His glory (Ps 72:19).
- For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the sea (Isa 11:9).
- I will gather all nations and tongues; and they shall come and see my glory... all flesh shall come to worship Me (Isa 66:18).

II. THE MINISTRY OF JESUS

A. Jesus Used Saturation As A Strategy For His Ministry In Galilee

Jesus targeted Galilee for saturation (Mt 4:23). He went to all the towns and villages (Mt 9:35). Jesus sent his 72 in teams of two to "every town and place where He was about to go" (Lk 10:1). With these teams, the Gospel was presented in no less than 36 towns and villages of Galilee!

It is interesting that, in targeting Galilee, the impact of his ministry there was not contained. "News about him spread all over Syria," and "large crowds" from Decapolis, Judea and the trans-Jordan region came to hear Him in Galilee (Mt 4:23-25). Apparently Galilee was a very strategic region to minister in since it resulted in a very broad impact.

B. Jesus' Parables Of The Kingdom Show Saturation Principles

In Matthew 13, Jesus teaches his disciples about the kingdom of God through a series of parables. In the first one, He tells how the kingdom will be received by various kinds of hearers. In the next one, the Parable of the Weeds, he tells of the work of the enemy who sows weeds among the good seed. The last parable has the same application: it is the Lord's job to separate the true from the false. Parables five and six (Hidden treasure and Pearl) emphasize the joy of those who find this "treasure." In the middle are two parables that speak of the extension of this kingdom.

1. The Parable Of The Mustard Seed (Matthew 13:31-32)

In this parable there is great growth. From a small beginning ("the smallest of all your seeds") it grew to become the largest of garden plants. The message is clear: from a small beginning the kingdom of God would grow into a "large plant."

2. The Parable Of Yeast (Matthew 13:33)

In this parable, a small lump of yeast penetrated the large lump of dough. The message seems to be the same as that of the mustard seed, but with the added emphasis on the transformation that occurs as the yeast permeates the dough. From a small beginning the kingdom of God will continue penetrating until it covers all of the earth (Compare Rev 11:15).

At the end of these teachings, Jesus asked his disciples, "Have you understood all these things?" (Mt 13:51). The obvious answer is no, since after His resurrection He spent 40 days speaking to them about the kingdom of God (Ac 1:3).

III. THE BIBLICAL BASIS FOR SATURATION CHURCH PLANTING

As we have seen, God's ultimate purpose is for the whole world to be saturated with knowledge of Him. Saturation church planting is saturating a region with churches in such away that every man, woman and

child has a chance to accept or reject the Gospel through the witness of a local church. Is saturating an area with churches just the latest fad in ministry or is it based on biblical precedent? As the following biblical principles will show us, saturation church planting is biblical.

A. The Instrument: The Church

When Jesus said, *"I will build My church and the gates of hell will not overcome it"* (Mt 16:18), He made his intention known to establish a people for Himself. From this statement two things are clear. First, the church and the work of building it belong to Christ and therefore He is intimately involved in its development. Second, the church will be triumphant. Because of who Jesus is, we can be sure that He will successfully do what He promised. Persecution, poverty or even the gates of hell itself cannot stop the Church. The building of the church is God's will and building the church is Jesus' major mission on earth today.

In his beautiful epistle to the Ephesians about the church, Paul says *'His (God's) intent was that now, through the church, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known...'* (Eph 3:10). Again the church is described as the instrument by which the Gospel is spread.

B. The Command: The Gospel Must be Proclaimed Everywhere

Before His ascension, Jesus told His disciples that they would receive the Holy Spirit and then be witnesses to the end of the earth, beginning at Jerusalem (Acts 1:8). It is interesting that Jesus opens and closes His ministry with saturation as a theme. In the parables of the sower and the dragnet (Mt 13), Jesus implied that the work of the Kingdom covers all the ground and goes after all kinds of fish. In His closing ministry, Jesus instructs His apostles to saturate the world with the Good News.

The Gospel must be proclaimed everywhere. This is clear from the Great Commission passages (Mt 28:18-20, Lk 24:46-49, Acts 1:8). Just as Abraham was blessed so that he would be a blessing to others (Ge 12:1-3), so God's people who have received God's blessing are to pass it on to others.

The Great Commission is to "make disciples of all nations" through baptizing and teaching obedience to Christ. Both of these objectives are best fulfilled by God's people, the church. The command was not a temporary command only for the original hearers. The reoccurrence of the word "All": All authority, all nations, all things (that I have commanded you) and all the days, indicates its far-reaching application. Completing the Great Commission results in saturation as converts are made in 'all nations.'

C. The Advance: To The Ends of the Earth

How did the apostles, those who first heard the Great Commission, go about completing it? The answer is simple. As recounted in the book of Acts, the Apostles were preaching first in Jerusalem. As people responded to the Gospel, they were gathered into groups for teaching, fellowship, breaking of bread and prayer (Acts 2:42). These groups became established with leadership and were known as the church. When persecution broke out, the believers were scattered from Jerusalem and everywhere they went they preached the Gospel and presumably new house churches were started (Acts 8:1-4).

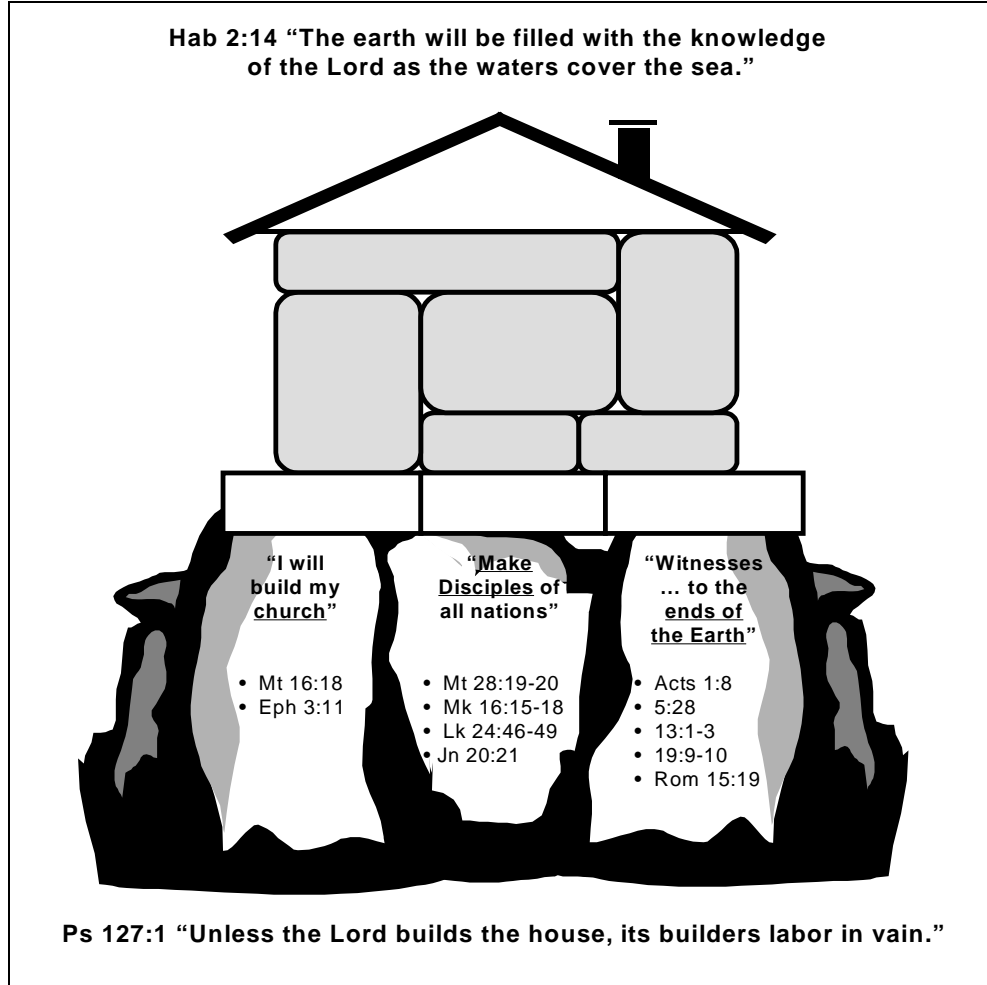
The church in Antioch sent out Paul and Barnabas as missionaries to continue the work. Everywhere they went, they established churches. Throughout the book of Acts, the spread of the Gospel and the expansion of the Church were always together. Wherever the Gospel went, a church was established.

In Acts 19:9-10, Paul's target area was the province of Asia Minor. He chose Ephesus, the most important city in the west of that province, as his headquarters. There he met with his disciples, who went out into the province *"so that all the Jews and Gentiles who lived in the province of Asia heard the word of the Lord."* Paul apparently had saturated Asia Minor with the message of the Gospel. How did he do so? From the other parts of the New Testament, we know that churches were started in at least seven of the major cities in the area (Rev 2, 3, Colossians 1:2). Who

planted these churches? Most likely these churches were planted by those who Paul trained in Ephesus.

The three biblical principles described above, when considered together, lead to the conclusion that the Great Commission is to be fulfilled through saturation church planting (see figure 5.1).

Figure 5.1 - The Biblical Foundation for Saturation Church Planting



IV. HOW MANY CHURCHES IS SATURATION?

If our task is to saturate our regions with churches, how many churches constitutes saturation? Another way to ask the question is: What does a disciplined nation look like? A disciplined nation is one in which every person has had an opportunity to hear and understand the Gospel of Jesus Christ, SO THAT they may either receive or reject Jesus as Savior. If this is the goal, how many churches are needed to reach it?

In answering this question, some emphasize geography, claiming a church for every neighborhood within normal travel distance of every person would be a good goal. Another point of view takes cultural and ethnic realities into consideration, proposing that churches must be established for every ethnic group in every region. A gypsy church for a gypsy population; an ethnic rural Hungarian church for rural Hungarians. Still others set goals of 1 local church fellowship for every 1,000 inhabitants. This is based on the theory that an average size church with viable, witnessing Christian believers can have an impact on 1,000 people.

A disciplined nation is one in which every person has had an opportunity to hear and understand the Gospel of Jesus Christ, SO THAT they may either receive or reject Jesus as Savior.

How many churches are in your neighborhood, city, province or country? How close are you to the saturation church planting goal?

V. SATURATION CHURCH PLANTING IN HISTORY

A. Ireland, in the 5th century

Patrick led a movement that filled Ireland with churches in every village. He penetrated and transformed the corrupt Druid religion by leading Druid priests to Christ as well as the general population. He used the existing Druid system of a priest in every village, and transformed the Druid temples and worship services into biblical Christianity. From Ireland, the legendary missionary teams went out and planted churches among the wild tribes of Northern Europe.

B. Hungary in the 16th century

The Reformation came to Hungary in the 16th century. The Reformed Church established a center in Debrecen that was called the second Geneva. From there, the Reformed Church made a systematic geographical saturation church planting outreach into Transylvania, filling its villages with Bible preaching Reformed churches.

C. Scotland in the 16th century

The movement led by John Knox in Scotland also saturated that region with Reformed churches. This movement was known for its commitment to intercessory prayer. Queen Mary said she feared John Knox's prayers more than all the armies of England.

D. England in the 18th century

The revival led by John Wesley and George Whitfield in England resulted not only in saturation church planting, but social change that may have averted a revolution like the one in France. Wesley was a powerful preacher and a strategic organizer. You could say he was a "Z" thinker who lived by the rule "In every act reflect on the end." Wesley proclaimed the Gospel among commoners in open rallies all over England. During his 40 years of ministry, he traveled 550,000 km on horseback. He preached 42,000 sermons and wrote 200 books. Wesley, considering the end, wisely gathered his converts into 'classes' which we would today call 'cell groups.' Some 100,000 people gathered in 10,000 of these groups that multiplied whenever 12 or more joined (Joel Comiskey, Home Cell Group Explosion. 1998).

George Whitfield, also a leader during this revival, was considered a better preacher than Wesley. However, Whitfield's impact was not as significant as Wesley's because of Wesley's ability to gather converts into groups. About this Whitfield said, "My brother Wesley acted wisely. The souls that were awakened under his ministry he joined into societies, and thus preserved the fruit of his labor. This I neglected, and my people are a rope of sand" (Miller p97).

The Wesleyan revival spilled over into America and, led by Jonathan Edwards and Francis Asbury, resulted in saturation church planting of Congregational and Methodist churches.

E. The Philippines and Elsewhere in the 20th century

In 1973, a Filipino pastor named Jun Balayo caught the vision for saturating his nation with churches. He led an interdenominational effort that is still strong. They planted 10,000 new churches in less than fifteen years. The believers set long term goals of 50,000 new churches in the Philippines by 2003. Today, they are on target! This is the result of great prayer gatherings, regular events to keep spreading the church planting vision and hard work planting churches.

Similar movements are happening all over the earth today. Great movements are underway in Latin America; especially Brazil, in China, Korea, and Central Africa (once known as "The Dark Continent" it has been said that central Africa has become, "The Christian Continent") with a very

strong movement in Ghana. Saturation church planting movements are beginning to gain momentum in Ukraine and Romania as well.

CONCLUSION

The saturation of the world with God's glory has been His desire from the beginning of time. Church planting was the principle and foundational means for spreading the Gospel in the New Testament, and continues to be so to this day. For the nations to see and understand the Gospel of Grace, it requires a sufficient incarnational witness that is personally, geographically and culturally close to every inhabitant in the land. This means saturating every part of every nation with new, vital, reproducing churches.

The mandate has not changed. In every nation, the people of God are called to be a force to engage the lost world. This engagement may begin locally, then progress outward in concentric circles spanning cultural, relationships, skin color and language—the Church is to move to the limits of the earth. *"God will bless us and the ends of the earth will fear him!"* (Ps 67:7).

QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION, REVIEW AND APPLICATION

- Is it possible to fulfill the Great Commission in a particular region without planting churches?
- Is your church driven by the purpose of multiplying and saturating?
- Do you have a plan to plant churches among other nationalities within your country?
- How many churches does your region need to be 'saturated'?
- Do you believe God wants to add your nation to a chapter in church history?

SOURCES

- Comiskey, Joel. *Home Cell Group Explosion*. Houston, TX: Touch Ministries, 1998.
- Miller, Basil, *John Wesley*. Minneapolis: Dimension Books, 1943.

SCP VISION

6

LESSON

Research Workshop

PRESENTING RESULTS OF TARGET AREA RESEARCH

☛ Lesson Purpose

The purpose of this lesson is to allow trainees to share what they had learned through their research.

☛ Main Points

- Presenting research data in an organized fashion makes it more understandable.
- Answering certain key questions can make research more valuable.

☛ Desired Outcomes

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

- Understand how the gathering of information is strategic to developing effective evangelism and church planting strategies.
- Know how to present a concise research report.
- Participate in evaluating the relevance of various information-gathering methods to developing evangelism and church planting strategies.

☛ Suggestions to Trainers

This lesson is a workshop. Allow all of the trainees to present the findings of their research assignment from Manual One (SCP Vision Appendix 4A, "Understanding Your Target Area"). If they have charts, maps, posters, etc., display these so that they can be seen during breaks and free time.

If there are more than four reports to be given during this hour, you may want to consider working in small groups. Otherwise, you may want to select a few very good reports for everyone to hear and interact with.

INTRODUCTION

In the SCP Vision lesson "Principles of Research" in Manual One, participants were given an assignment to gather information about the area in which they will be planting a church (SCP Vision Appendix 4A, "Understanding Your Target Area"). Now that as much information as possible about the harvest force (Christian resources) and the harvest field (where work is to be done) has been gathered, this information needs to be analyzed and pulled together in a report describing the data and its impact on evangelism and church planting strategies in the target region. This workshop will give you an opportunity to do that.

Each trainee or team of trainees should take 10-15 minutes to present their findings using the following guidelines:

PART ONE—BASIC DATA GATHERED (5-7 MINUTES):

- Describe your target area. Summarize what you learned in steps 2 and 3 of SCP Vision Appendix 4A "Understanding Your Target Area."
- How did you gather your information (surveys, informal interviews, observation, mapping, library research, etc.)?
- Discuss any significant problems or difficulties encountered and how they were overcome. What would you do differently next time?

PART TWO—ANALYSIS OF RESEARCH DATA (5-8 MINUTES):

The remainder of the presentation should be focused on results of findings. Answering the key questions listed below can help.

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



Mobilizing Resources Through Research

☛ Lesson Purpose

The purpose of this lesson is to learn how to use research to mobilize others to join the church planting task.

☛ Main Points

- Formulating a "Call To Action" inspires others to join in the project.
- Sharing information is vital to the task of mobilizing others.

☛ Desired Outcomes

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

- Understand the importance of prayerfully analyzing research data as part of developing a church planting strategy.
- Know how to share research data in appropriate ways for mobilizing others for church planting.
- Develop a mobilization strategy for his church planting ministry and attempt to mobilize others to pray, give or join him in his church planting ministry.

☛ Suggestions to Trainers

In teaching this lesson, try to give specific examples of where the sharing of research resulted in the mobilization of people, prayer or resources for church planting efforts. Also, try to give an example of how information shared inappropriately resulted in negative consequences. Help trainees see how this could have been prevented and what they need to learn from this mistake.

INTRODUCTION

In the lesson "Principles of Research" (SCP Vision 4) in Manual One, participants were given an assignment to gather information about the area in which they will be planting a church (SCP Vision Appendix 4A, "Understanding Your Target Area"). That research assignment equipped you to gather and analyze data concerning the harvest force (resources which could help in the church planting ministry) and the harvest field (the people and area you are trying to reach with the Gospel). In this lesson, we will discuss how to share your research results with others in order to make known the needs of the people in your target area... and to encourage others to get involved in Kingdom work in that target area.

I. CALL TO ACTION

The "call to action" is a summary report of what you or your team believes God wants to do in reaching your target area with the Gospel. It is a result of praying and reflecting over the information you gathered and analyzed in your research assignment. The "call to action" highlights the needs and spiritual condition of the people in the target area and what God's people must do in response to these needs and condition. It provides the background or framework for your church planting ministry. It helps you to answer the questions, "*What does God want for my target area?*" and "*How can every man, woman and child in this area see and hear the Gospel in a way that is relevant to them?*"

The "call to action" answers the question "what does God want for my target region?"

Your call to action should contain your and your team's thoughts and understanding of:

A. The Situation Of The People

In Matthew 9:35-38, when the Lord went among the people, He said that they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. He saw that there were many diseases among them, and He healed them. They were in a state of pain. As He went among them he saw the pain.

From your research assignment, how would you describe the situation of the people living in your target area? Use basic demographics, felt needs, etc. (Refer to SCP Vision Appendix 4A, "Understanding Your Target Area.")

B. Their Spiritual Condition

Jesus saw that the people had no guidance for their spiritual lives. They were without any direction (Mt 9:36).

Summarize the spiritual condition of the people of your target area. Are there any churches among these people? What percent of the people attend church or identify themselves as followers of Christ? Are they open to the Gospel? What other religious groups are working among them? How many churches need to be planted in your target area so that every person has an opportunity to hear and see the Gospel in a way that is relevant to them and their situation? (Refer to SCP Vision Appendix 4A, "Understanding Your Target Area.")

C. What God's People Must Do

The Lord then issued a command to pray (Mt 9:38). After commanding prayer, He found workers, trained them and sent them out and even spoke to them about raising financial support! (See Matthew Chapter 10).

What specifically is God calling you and your team to do to reach the people in your target area? How will you devote yourselves to prayer for the people in your target area? What resources (people, churches and ministries) can be mobilized to help reach the people of your target area? What role will you and your team play in recruiting others to pray and work with you in reaching the people of this target area with the Gospel?

II. GUIDELINES FOR SHARING INFORMATION

The right information, in the right hands, at the right time, is a powerful tool for changing people's perceptions and for motivating them to action. However, information inappropriately shared can cause shame or embarrassment, resulting in anger, defensiveness and a closed posture to change.

Your research report can be a powerful tool which God can use to give others a burden for the needs of your target area and a desire to see people living in that target area become followers of Jesus Christ.

The right information, in the right hands, at the right time, is a powerful tool for changing people's perceptions and for motivating them to action.

A. To Whom Should You Present Your Research Results?

Begin by sharing with one or two trusted colleagues what you have discovered about the harvest force and the harvest field. Sharing your research data with a few can indicate how others will respond and help anticipate how to encourage positive responses in faith and to gently deal with negative objections. Ask for advice and their perspective as to how to mobilize believers for church planting from what your research shows.

Sharing with authorities privately and getting their blessing to present the research to others can be one of the best ways to proceed. Show leaders how church planting will extend their ministry. Show them that under their authority, you will do the will of the Lord.

Lastly and most importantly, share with others who are interested in the church planting task. Note how people respond to the challenge to plant new churches. This knowledge can help you to build a team of prayer supporters, financial givers and team members.

B. What Are The Goals Of Sharing Your Research Results With Others?

1. Compassion For The Lost

Present information that shows the spiritual desperation of the people. Tell a true story of something that will cause people to feel the pain that those without Christ are suffering where you did research.

2. Prayer

Church plants that have prayer support prove to be more successful than those that do not. When presenting your research report, present specific needs that only God can respond to. Ask others to pray for these needs.

3. Mobilizing People To Help Plant The Church

Present information that helps people see what they can do to help. Be practical and show specific things they can do like work with children, help with construction, give finances, help with music, evangelism, or even practical help.

4. Giving

Be specific as to what you need financially. Be very open and honest and do not hesitate to present the need.

C. How Should You Present Your Research Results?

- Pray for wisdom. You will need to be discreet and not present the data in a critical manner if it shows up areas where the Christians have not been doing enough to reach unbelievers.
- Use discretion. Don't share everything, but share the important data that will help people see how they can participate in church planting.
- Determine how to best present your research results to others. Use maps, stories about interesting people, and present the vision from God's perspective.
- Do not listen to negative responses that say it cannot be done. Remember Jesus is with you.

III. DETERMINE HOW TO MOBILIZE THE HARVEST FORCE

One aspect of your research assignment (SCP Vision Appendix 4A, "Understanding Your Target Area") was to determine what resources (harvest force) were already available to help you in reaching the people of your target area with the Gospel. By sharing your research results with others, you may be able to mobilize some of these resources to help in your church plant.

A. Identify The Resources Available To Help Reach The Target Zone

1. People

Who wants to get involved? Ask people and give them a chance to volunteer to help in the church plant. How much time can interested people give toward this ministry?

Are people in your existing church interested in your church planting ministry? Who will help? Usually your existing church is a good resource for people, money and prayer. The members of that church know you and are likely to be more committed to your ministry than others.

2. Money

What finances are available? Challenge people to give sacrificially to the expansion of the kingdom.

3. *Materials*

What is available, such as literature, films, musical instruments, etc.?

B. Develop A Mobilization Strategy For Your Church Plant

What strategy will you develop for mobilizing the harvest force? Based on the information provided in this lesson, write out your strategy for sharing your research with others to get them involved.

IV. CASE STUDY ON HOW RESEARCH CAN BE USED TO MOBILIZE RESOURCES

The Power of Information by Stan and Donna Downes

In 1996, a missionary in Romania with OC International modeled a nation-wide research project by choosing Brasov county as his example. He produced a series of maps that showed the various types of churches as well as those areas without churches. He left copies of his work with local church leaders, hoping his effort would bear fruit.

Several months later, Valerica Tudor, a leader in the Brethren churches in Brasov, observed the significance of these maps and saw clearly the needs for church planting in his county. He used the maps as a rallying point for church planting efforts in Brasov county.

Since 1997, Valerica and other church leaders have helped research Brasov county more thoroughly and have produced a new map each year—to keep track of church planting progress. Twelve new churches have been planted, and about 20 cell groups have been started in villages. In another dozen villages, church leaders have identified Christians who are willing to start cell groups.

Several church leaders meet every month for prayer, Bible study, quarterly planning, and reporting. They have developed a list of the 89 villages without an evangelical church, using it to motivate local churches to plant additional churches and to direct church planting efforts.

The response from the churches has been enthusiastic. One church asked why the men had not brought them this information earlier! Another asked for periodic updates on the progress of the project. Several churches have contributed financially to the work. Though the first map is now hopelessly out of date, it keeps a place of honor in Valerica's home, a reminder of how God uses information to motivate His people in a powerful way.

QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION, REVIEW AND APPLICATION

- How is research used to develop a church planting strategy?
- In the case study, how did the research information when shared with the church and others, enable them to mobilize resources to help them in their church planting effort?
- How can sharing your research results benefit your church planting efforts?
- How can sharing research affect your relationship with Christian leaders?

ACTION PLAN

- With your church planting team, review your research data and write out what God is showing you for your church plant. Share this call to action with your trainer or mentor or other appropriate people.
- Write out a mobilization strategy to encourage others to assist you in your church planting effort. Include those to whom you will share your research results, what you will share with them, how you hope they will get involved in your work (prayer, giving, joining your team, etc.). Share this strategy with your trainer or mentor.
- Implement your mobilization strategy and share the results with your trainer or mentor or at the next training session.

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THE CHURCH

THE CHURCH

5

LESSON

The Nature of the Church

THE CHURCH IS A LIVING ORGANISM

☞ Lesson Purpose

The purpose of this lesson is to clarify the biblical teaching that the Church is an Organism, and to investigate the implications for a church-planting ministry.

☞ Main Points

- The Church is not a building or a place.
- The Church is the living body of Christ, comprised of all who have believed in Him.

☞ Desired Outcomes

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

- Know the basic biblical teaching of the Church as an organism.
- Identify how inadequate concepts of the Church have arisen in his or her culture or context, and how these concepts hinder the development of a living Church.

☞ Suggestions to Trainers

This lesson contains many good discussion questions interspersed throughout the lesson. The trainer should feel free to use any or all of them to help trainees clarify and reflect on their understanding of the material being taught.

INTRODUCTION

The concept of the Church, which is so clear in the Scriptures, has often become cluttered with erroneous or unnecessary ideas. These vary from one culture to another, but each hinders the local church from becoming all that Christ intended it to be. Understanding the nature of the Church from a biblical point of view will assist the church planter in starting churches that focus on the important things and as a result are healthy, vibrant, culturally relevant, and biblical in nature.

I. THE MEANING AND USE OF THE WORD "CHURCH"

A. Historical Meaning of the Word "Church"

The English word "*church*" is derived from the German word *kirche*, which comes from the Greek word *kuriakon*¹, meaning "belonging to the Lord" (See 1Co 11:20; Rev 1:10). (*Note to translator: Rewrite this sentence to discuss the origin of the target language's word or words for church*).

The Greek Word that is translated "*church*"- *ekklesia*², means "a called out assembly."

- In non-biblical (secular) usage- "an assembly of free citizens called together by a herald."
- In the Greek version of the Old Testament (the Septuagint), *ekklesia* translated the Hebrew word *gahal*³, meaning "an assembly." This word was often used of Israelites called together for a particular purpose (Ge 49:6; Ps 26:5).

¹ κυριακον

² εκκλησια

- The New Testament reveals a development of the term, from the simple non-technical meaning, to the designation for the people of God. The word is used 114 times in the New Testament. Ninety-two times the word refers to a specific local congregation of believers. The word ekklesia is almost always translated as "church, congregation, assembly or gathering."

B. Use of the Word Ekklesia (Church) in the New Testament

It is used geographically, to speak of Christians gathered together

- In a local house (Col 4:15).
- In a grouping in a city (1Co 4:17; Gal 1:22; 1Th 1:1).
- In larger, regional groupings (Ac 9:31).
- Of Christians scattered throughout a geographic location (Ac 8:1-3, or "the church in Algeria").

It is used of all believers of every age and every geographic location, who are spiritually united to Christ, the Head of the Church (Eph 1:22-23; Col 1:18). This is known as the Universal Church. Christians, including those who have already died, are part of His "Body," the Church. The term encompasses the whole body of believers in Jesus Christ (1Co 12:28; Eph 1:22-23; Heb 12:23). These people have been set apart by God, called out from the world for His pleasure, good purposes and eternal will (1Co 1:2; Ro 1:7; 8:28).

Typically, the word "church" is capitalized if it refers to the Universal Church (also called the Invisible Church). When it refers to local church, it is normally spelled with a small letter. As a result, it looks like this:

- The Church of Jesus Christ
- The church in Odessa

C. General Use of the Word "Church" Today

The word "church" is used in a variety of ways in society and culture. It is used to describe a building for religious activity (the "church" down the street), or a denomination or sectarian group having some kind of associational relationship (the Church of Christ). It can refer to a local congregation (1st Presbyterian Church of Odessa) or a community of professing Christians (the church that meets in Mary's home). The word is used to describe Christians in a given country (the Russian Church), in a certain theological stream of thought (the Reformed Church) or tradition (the Pentecostal Holiness Church).

II. FALSE CONCEPTIONS OF THE CHURCH

Before any construction project can begin, one of the first steps is to clear the site of debris or other obstacles. The same is true with building a concept of the Church. It is necessary to clear away the inadequate or false ideas before we can build a true understanding on the bedrock of the Word.

A. Old Testament Shadows vs. New Testament Realities

The most common errors in understanding the Church arise from a failure to distinguish Old Testament and New Testament ideas. In the Old Testament, models, types, or images were often used to partially demonstrate spiritual truths that were not fully revealed until the New Testament. One good example is the Passover Lamb. It portrayed a substitution for sin *only until* Christ was revealed as the Lamb of God Who takes away the sin of the world (Jn 1:29). The Passover Lamb was a temporary image. It pointed to Christ and is no longer necessary. There are many other such images, but the temple is perhaps the most misunderstood.

B. The Church Is Not the Temple

Many churches consider the Old Testament Jewish temple to be the pattern for the corporate gathering of the believers. The Orthodox and Catholic churches carry this to the greatest extreme. In this model, the leaders of the service are called "priests" and the building may be called a "temple." Also, proponents of this model believe that a sacrifice to God is offered every time the Lord's Supper is celebrated. While rejecting the Mosaic Law, there is usually a rigid liturgy and order of service.

This model, in effect, attempts to create a "Christian" version of the Jewish temple. Access to God is obtained through the service of the priests in the temple. Because of the sacrificial ministry of the Old Testament temple, the altar stands between the people and the priests, and only the priests are allowed behind the altar. Churches modeled on this pattern always have the congregation in front of the altar (or communion table), and the priests or other "special" persons only are allowed behind the altar.

There are a number of biblical passages that contradict the concept of the church as a modern-day temple similar to the Jewish temple of the Old Testament. For example, Paul taught that the believers themselves—and not the building in which they meet—are the temple of God (1Co 6:19). God no longer resides in a building, but in His people (Ac 17:24). They are a spiritual house, made of living stones (1Pe 2:5).

Paul taught that believers themselves are the temple of God—not the building in which they meet.

Furthermore, Christ offered one sacrifice for all time (Heb. 9:26; 10:12). He has finished His work as High Priest, and no one can add to it (Heb 7:27). At Christ's death, the veil of the temple was torn open from top to bottom—there is no longer any division between God and man (Mk 15:38). There is no longer a separate class of priests (1Pe 2:9). All believers are now priests and ministers of God and can offer themselves and their worship as sacrifices without a mediator nor earthly temple (Ro 12:1).

The New Testament believers lived in a culture where it was expected that each religious group build a "temple" to their god. Some of these beautiful pagan temples were so impressive that their remains continue to be major tourist attractions even today! Certainly, the local culture in which the early Christians lived expected and valued attractive temples. But the church understood that the only temple is their bodies, and they refused to propagate a false view of the Gospel by conforming to that cultural form.

C. The Church is Not the Synagogue

Some people think that the Jewish synagogue was the pattern for the church rather than the temple. There was only one temple—located in Jerusalem. However, there were synagogues in every city in which there were a number of Jewish families. The synagogue was a place of prayer and reading of the Scriptures. There were no sacrifices and no priests. Rather, men from the group were elected as "rulers" of the synagogue. Worship was much more informal than in the temple. The congregation normally sat in a circle, with the speaker standing in the center or sitting among them.

The early Christians made no attempt to recreate the Jewish temple. In fact, the first church buildings were not built until the fourth century!

The synagogue is a better model for the church than the temple is. As the Christians scattered throughout Asia Minor, they made no attempt to recreate the temple. In fact, the first church buildings were not built until the fourth century! Rather, believers formed house churches that resembled the informal teaching and prayer of the Jewish synagogue. Churches today should think long and hard about whether their buildings and forms of worship match this pattern of informal, comfortable worship.

While the synagogue model more closely resembles the New Testament Church than the temple does, it still lacks something important. Although local and informal, the synagogue was *never* anything more than a building in which the Jews met for instruction. The synagogue was comprised of stone and mortar—not of believers. As such, it is not an adequate model for the living Church.

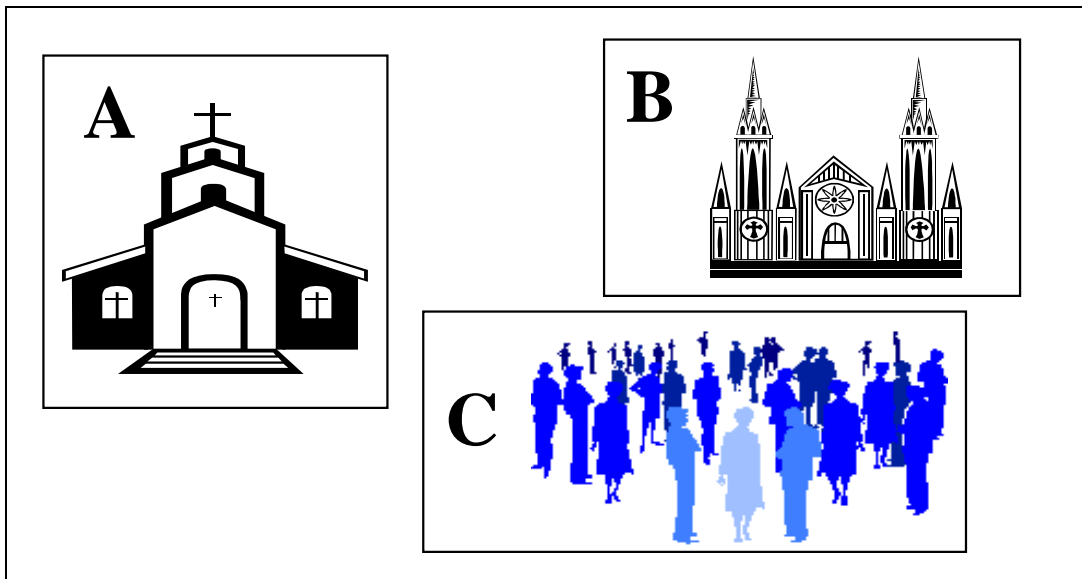
III. METAPHORS DESCRIBING THE CHURCH AS A LIVING ORGANISM

If the Church is not a building, what is it? The church was an entirely new 'thing' that Christ introduced that bears little resemblance to the buildings or temples of the other religions of that day. Rather than being a *building*, it is a *living body* comprised of believers in Christ.

There are many metaphors for the Church in the New Testament. It is striking how they picture the Church as a living organism from so many angles. A few of these are listed here.

- It is a family (1Ti 3:14-16; Eph 3:15). In this family, God is "Father," Jesus is His Unique Son, and we are His adopted sons and daughters (Jn 1:12-13, Eph 1:5); brothers and sisters in Christ (2Th 3:15, 1Pe 2:17).
- It is a body (1Co 12:12ff). This metaphor clearly shows the organic relationship of individual Christians ("the parts") to both the Church ("the body") and to Christ ("the Head"). The believers are its "members" joined to one another, even as the parts of a body are joined together to the head.
- It is a flock (Ac 20:28-29). Jesus is the One true Shepherd (Heb 13:20-21) who possesses it, and provides for it. Believers are His "sheep" who submit to the Good Shepherd's leading.
- It is a people (1Pe 2:9-10). The relationship of members of Christ's Church is not along ethnic or racial lines, but based on their new heritage as a holy "nation."
- It is a bride (Eph 5:25-33; Rev 21:2; Jn 3:29). As such, She is loved by Christ, but subject to Him. He is the bridegroom, Who gave up His life for her.
- It is a building (living temple) (Eph 2:20; 4:11). Christ is the living "cornerstone." The Church is likened to a living temple that is holy (1Co 3:16-17), growing (Eph 2:21-22), and spiritual (1Pe 2:5). Believers are living stones in this temple.
- It is a priesthood (Rev 1:5-6). The source of this priesthood is Jesus. All believers are part of this priesthood (1Pe 2:5-9), and can come confidently bringing acceptable sacrifices (Ro 12:1-2; Heb 13:15) into the King's presence (Heb 4:16).
- It is a branch (Jn 15:1-16). The believers are the living branches that bear fruit that remains.

Figure 5.1 Which is the Church?



Based on the metaphors listed above, which of the three images in Figure 5.1 best represents the Church? Why? How does this relate to your concept of a local church?

IV. PLANTING A LIVING CHURCH

How does the fact that the Church is a living organism influence our approach to planting a local church? There are a number of factors that are important to consider when the new church is planned.

A. The Local Church Members Should Be Believers

The local church should be a miniature of the universal Church. To be a member or part of the universal Church (the organism), one must be divinely related to Christ. The most basic requirement of the local church is the same—union with Christ. Therefore, the sole requirement for local church membership should be new birth. It also follows that all believers in a local area should be members of a local church. There is no biblical basis for a church to refuse membership to a believer other than blatant sin (1Co 5:2).

B. Buildings Should Not Be a Primary Consideration

As shown earlier, buildings are not the Church, nor did they even become a factor until centuries after the Church began. All too often, church planters focus too much attention or too many resources on providing a building. This emphasis can distract from evangelism and discipleship—the truly important parts of establishing the "church."

C. Relationships Are Key

If buildings are not the key, what is? The answer is that relationships are the building blocks of a vibrant local church. This includes the relationship of the believers to Christ and to one another. But it also includes relationships with unbelievers who God may have chosen for salvation. A wise church planter will focus his time and energy on developing these relationships. He will be actively spending time building bridges of trust with unbelievers, and discipling the believers in the church.

D. The Local Church Must Adapt to the Culture

As an organism, the Church is not static or unchanging. It is alive, dynamic, ever changing to meet the needs of the present situation. There is no one form or shape that it must take. The forms of the church should be developed for each local church as the church planter, guided by the Holy Spirit, seeks to express the biblical functions in a way that is appropriate for his specific target audience and cultural situation.

E. There Must Be Some Form of Order

The human body, though an organism, has organization. Its individual parts work together for the common good. The local church should also have some organization, but the organization should *always* be focused on meeting the needs, both spiritual and physical, of the body (the believers).

Examples of organization in the New Testament church included

- It had stated times of meeting (Ac 20:7)
- Leaders were chosen (Ac 14:23)
- Corporate discipline was practiced (1Co 5)
- Money was raised to help in practical needs (2Co 8-9)
- A list of widows who were eligible to be supported was kept (1Ti 5:9)

Despite the fact that this organization existed, the emphasis of the New Testament churches was always on the spiritual growth, doctrine, and moral purity of the believers. Any organization was based solely on its ability to help the body grow and care for its members.

F. The Local Church Must Grow and Reproduce

If the Church were a building or a machine, it would simply need to be maintained. However, the fact that the Church is an organism means that it must grow and reproduce—as is normal for all living things. The Church grows as individual people believe the message of the Gospel and are

born into the family of God. This growth is even more dramatic when new *local churches* are planted—each composed of *many* new believers. Since our task is to fulfill the Great Commission by reaching all nations, we should always seek the maximum growth. That occurs when local churches reproduce by planting other new local churches.

G. Cell Groups Should Play a Vital Role

Local church programs and activities should reflect the fact that it is a living organism. The most appropriate model for the living local church is the living cells that make up the body. Many church leaders believe that the cell group model taught in this material is the *only* model that adequately expresses the added dimension of *life* that must be present in the church. Cell groups focus maximum attention on the growth and health of each member, and on reproduction. Minimum resources are allotted to the issues of buildings or programs. This model seems to most closely approximate the personal fellowship and relationships that existed in the early church (Ac 2:42-46).

QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION, REVIEW AND APPLICATION

- What would you say to a Christian and believer and therefore member of the Universal Church who is not involved in a local church?
- What must a person do to become part of the Church of Jesus Christ (the Body of Christ)? Base your answer on Scripture.
- What must a person do to become part of a local church?
- Why is the Old Testament Temple model not an adequate model for understanding the New Testament church?
- In what ways does your church experience reflect the New Testament teaching about the nature of the church?

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Corporate Functions of the Church

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN YOU COME TOGETHER

☞ Lesson Purpose

The purpose of this lesson is to discuss the biblical functions that the church must fulfill when it meets together and to discuss the relationship between individual, small group, and local church functions.

☞ Main Points

- Church functions include worship, the ordinances, preaching and teaching, giving, edification, and discipline.
- Small groups should begin to fulfill many, if not all, of the biblical church functions.

☞ Desired Outcomes

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

- Know the biblical functions of the gathered church.
- Develop a plan for the corporate gatherings of the small groups that will build a good foundation for when they become a local church.

☞ Appendix

6A Baptism In The New Testament

☞ Suggestions to Trainers

This lesson recommends that small groups or cell groups should begin to fulfill many of the functions of an organized church. This is a controversial, but important, topic. You should allow time for ample discussion of Table 6.1 after the content of the material has been presented.

INTRODUCTION

This lesson will focus on the functions that the church is to fulfill when it meets together. These functions include worship, the ordinances, preaching/teaching the Word, edification, evangelism, maintaining discipline, and giving. This list is not intended to be complete—rather, it identifies the *main* church functions as a starting point for further study. The distinction between church forms and church functions was explained in Church Lesson 3.

- Church Function = **What** the church must do.
- Church Form = **How** the church chooses to do the functions.

The *functions* of the church are commanded in the New Testament and must be implemented by the church. However, it cannot be stressed enough that the *forms* of the church may and should change and be adapted to best fit the particular target people. With that reminder, this lesson will focus on the corporate functions of the church and assume that the church planter will be careful to choose relevant forms for the emerging church.

I. CORPORATE VS. PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE CHURCH

The New Testament lists many responsibilities of the church. Some of these can be carried out personally by each believer. Other activities require a group—the assembled church. Still others may be practiced both individually and corporately. For example, godly living is an individual responsibility.

Church discipline, however, assumes that there is a group. And evangelism is commanded for both individual believers and for the church as a whole. This lesson deals with those functions that are to be carried out by the assembled, or corporate, body. With this distinction in mind, we need to ask at what point a group of believers is responsible to fulfill the corporate church functions.

A. When are we "Corporate?"

Church Lesson 4 helped define the local church. In that lesson we saw that a typical definition might include

- An organized group of believers
- Qualified leadership
- Observance of the ordinances
- Regular meetings

Many people might add to this list in different ways. There is no question that an organized local church meets the above qualifications and fulfills the functions described in this lesson. However, these "corporate functions" are not necessarily limited to an organized local church. They also apply to small groups of believers.

B. Meeting as a Group

The goal of this material is to facilitate the planting of local churches. However, it is important to note that the corporate functions of the church *do not need to wait for the church to be organized*. They are too important to ignore until that time.

How many believers does it take to practice a corporate church function? A good example is found in Matthew 18:19. In this passage, Jesus states that He will be present in a special way whenever "two or three are gathered together." It is important to note that the context is specifically talking about church discipline—most definitely a corporate church function. In fact, the word "church" and the activities of two or three believers are intertwined in the text. The point is not to claim that two or three believers constitute a local church, in contrast to the definition in the previous section. Rather, it seems to indicate that the functions of the *local church* also should be applied in a *small group of believers*.

The corporate functions of the local church should also be applied in a small group of believers.

Hebrews 10:25 also commands us to not forsake assembling together. While attendance at a local church would certainly fulfill this command, there are many cases in which a local church does not exist. What do we do then? Again, the verse stresses *assembling together* but does not require an organized church. Even if there are only a handful of believers, it is important to begin meeting corporately in order to carry out the corporate functions that cannot be fulfilled individually.

II. CORPORATE FUNCTIONS OF THE CHURCH

A. Corporate Worship

One of the most important reasons for the church to gather together is to worship the Lord. The corporate worship of the church will be discussed in more detail in Manual Five, Church lesson 16, "Worship in the Local Church," and Church lesson 17, "How to Lead Worship." However, as soon as a small group of believers have been saved, they should begin to worship the Lord *together*.

Corporate worship allows Christians to identify with a larger and more diverse body of believers than just their particular cell group. It also provides a public testimony to the community of God's life and power, as well as encouragement to believers that they are not alone and that God's spirit is working through many different people's lives. In addition, corporate worship allows for the greater exercise of spiritual gifts for the edification of God's people as a body.

B. The Ordinances

The two universally accepted ordinances of the church are baptism and the Lord's Supper. While all churches accept these two ordinances, there is a wide range of opinion as to how they should be practiced. Denominational traditions normally dictate this. As you begin your new church, it is important for you and the members of this church to understand how these ordinances will be practiced.

1. *Baptism*

Evangelical Christians hold differing positions on the meaning of baptism. The three major positions on the meaning of baptism are discussed below. It should be noted, however, that baptism in the New Testament was performed *immediately after salvation*, by *whatever believer led the convert to faith* (Ac 8:36). Even in new areas, they did not wait for a church to be established to baptize converts (Ac 16:33). Furthermore, the highest-ranking person did not necessarily do the baptism even when present (1Co 1:14-17).

a. Baptism as a Sign of Personal Belief in Christ

Some believe that baptism is an outward symbol of an inner change in a believer. It serves as a public testimony of one's personal faith in Jesus Christ (Ac 2:41; 10:48). There is some variation of mode of baptism, but often it is by immersion that pictures the believer's identification with Christ in His death, burial and resurrection.

b. Baptism as a Sign of the Covenant between God and Man

Others believe that baptism is the act of faith by which we are brought into the New Covenant with God through Christ (Mt 26:28, Lk 22:20) and hence enjoy its benefits. According to this view, adult believers and their families, including infants and children, are baptized. Just as circumcision was a sign of the Old Covenant (Ge 15, 17), so baptism is the sign of the New Covenant. The fact, rather than the mode of baptism, is the significant issue.

c. Baptism as a Sign of Church Membership

There is also another group of people who might be understood to hold a third position—that baptism represents local church membership. While they might state that they hold one of the other two beliefs, in actual practice they deny baptism to new believers until they grow to the point of being accepted as members. While few would attempt to justify this position from Scripture, many practice it.

2. *The Lord's Supper*

The Lord Himself commanded us to partake of the bread and the cup in remembrance of Him. He first gave this ordinance to the disciples in the upper room the night before His death (Mt 26:26-28; Mk 14:22-26; Lk 22:19-20). Paul reminded the Corinthians of the importance of the Lord's Supper in a local church context (1Co 11:23-34). It is less clear whether the Lord's Supper can *only* be celebrated in an organized church, who is to minister it, how often it is to be partaken of. Although this is certainly the *ideal*, it seems unwarranted to limit it to a church context. It is commanded for all believers as a way of remembering the Lord's sacrifice for us.

Jesus personally explained the meaning of each of the elements. They represent His broken body and His shed blood. The key phrase is "do this in remembrance of Me" (1Co. 11:25-26). The Lord's Supper helps us remember the cost of our salvation. It causes us to focus on Christ's death on the cross of Calvary. Each time we partake of the elements, we proclaim the reality of His sacrifice. The Apostle Paul in giving instructions regarding how this should be done said that in so partaking we remember the Lord's death until He comes again. This keeps believers focused on both the price of our salvation and the fact that Christ will return again.

C. Ministry of the Word

The reading of the Word, preaching, and teaching must be a part of the corporate gathering of believers. Jesus told the disciples to teach new converts to "obey all that I have commanded you" (Mt 28:20). Paul instructed Timothy to "devote yourself to the public reading of Scripture, to preaching and to teaching" (1Ti 4:13).

It should be noted that there is a great difference between proclaiming the Word of God and simply talking *about* the Word. All too often preachers, Bible teachers and Bible discussion leaders give their thoughts and impressions of the Scriptures—or simply rehash messages that they have heard in the past—rather than actually reading the Word and allowing God to speak through it. Simply reading a few verses before a sermon or during a Bible study is not sufficient. It is a disservice to God's people when leaders present their own ideas rather than opening the Word and showing God's message clearly in the Bible.

It should be noted that there is a great difference between proclaiming the Word of God and simply talking *about* the Word.

A student of the Scriptures should study, prepare, meditate, pray, think, examine, search and listen as he comes to the Word. The Bible is living and active, and is a source of wisdom and insight. The Inductive Bible Study lessons in this program are designed to facilitate Bible study and preaching that actually *focuses on the Bible!* The goal in using the inductive method is not simply to gain Bible knowledge but to apply God's truth so that lives are changed according to God's will.

D. Building up One Another

Throughout the New Testament writings there is a series of commands on how believers should relate to each other. These "one another" commands describe how Christians should behave toward each other. One of the functions of the church is to encourage the practice of the "one another" commands. This emphasis on unity and caring for one another sets the church apart from other groups. It is only through God's Spirit working in the hearts of believers that we can obey these commands. Some of the "one another" commands listed in Scripture are:

- wash one another's feet (Jn 13:14)
- love one another (Jn 13:34; 15:12,17)
- be devoted to one another (Ro 12:10)
- accept one another (Ro 15:7)
- instruct one another (Ro 15:14)
- greet one another (1Co 16:20)
- serve one another (Gal 5:13)
- forgive one another (Eph 4:32)
- admonish one another (Col 3:16)
- encourage one another (1Th 4:18)
- encourage one another (Heb 3:13)

E. Evangelism

The Church exists to reach the lost with the Gospel. Evangelism is one of the biblical functions that apply to every level of the church. We are to evangelize individually, in small groups, and as a local church. Each of these requires that the Gospel be presented clearly. However, there are differences between the methods that work most effectively. Friendship or relational evangelism seems to be a more productive method for individuals. Small groups can begin to use a more structured situation. A local church may effectively use music or other kinds of programs to persuade unbelievers to listen to the message. Ideally, a local church program should employ and encourage all of these methods. Individual friendships should convince the lost to attend a non-threatening cell group. And a good experience in the cell group should persuade them to attend evangelistic events of the local church. They might trust Christ at any point along this journey.

F. Giving

The early church was deeply involved in meeting the physical needs of others. Although the specific emphasis of their giving was toward the other believers, their concern included both Christian brothers and sisters in their own churches, and also in other areas. In addition, they also gave to the needs of those who went out to plant new churches and reach the lost. There appear to have been organized local church programs for giving, but there was also spontaneous giving by the believers. The kinds of giving listed below should probably begin as a small group and become more organized as the church is formed.

1. *The Poor*

The believers sold their possessions and gave to their needy brothers and sisters from the very founding of the church (Ac 2:45; 4:34-35). However, it appears that this giving involved an organized program within the church. They brought the money from the sale of their goods and land and presented it to the apostles for their distribution to the poor (Ac 4:35).

The disciples did the same in Antioch. When they sent aid to the churches in Judea, they did so by sending their contribution with two appointed men (Barnabas and Saul) to the elders in Judea (Ac 11:28-30). The elders in turn would have distributed the gift. The church was to collect this money each week in an organized fashion (1Co 16:2).

2. *The Widows*

A similar system was also in place to help the widows. The dispute of Acts 6 arose because the number of widows needing aid grew to the point that the apostles were not able to adequately supervise the money. Therefore they asked that the church choose seven Spirit-filled men to take care of this task. There was also an organized list of widows in the Ephesian church while Timothy ministered there (1Ti 5:3-16). Paul gave Timothy general guidelines so that only the widows who were truly in need would be placed on the list for aid. If they had believing families, the church was not to be responsible for them. Also, if they were young enough to remarry, they should do so and not be a burden to the church.

There seems to be a clear precedent for an organized church program to distribute help to needy members. When such a program is organized, it is imperative that godly people be chosen to supervise it, as in Acts 6. It is also wise to make sure that there are several involved, so that there will be no chance of scandal.

3. *Church Planters*

The Apostle Paul was often the recipient of support from the churches as he ministered to the lost in unreached areas. In fact, the occasion for the writing of the Book of Philippians was the sending of a gift from the Philippian church to Paul as he ministered in Rome. In the final section of the book, Paul praises and thanks them for their generosity, and assures them that God will supply all their needs *as a response to their giving to him* (Php 4:18-19). Believers often claim the truth of verse 19 *without realizing the importance of the context, and to whom it was promised!* Such gifts allowed Paul and others to devote full-time to ministry rather than to the sewing of tents.

Philippians 4:19 is a promise to those who are supporting church planting.

There are many occasions in Scripture where believers supported the ministry, but one other deserves special mention. The normally gentle and loving Apostle John appears to have written his third epistle as a scathing rebuke of Diotrephes, who refused to help support the brothers who were traveling and preaching the Gospel (3Jn 9-10). Giving to the Lord's work is not optional—nor is it replaced by only helping the poor among us.

4. *Pastors and leaders*

It is the responsibility of a local church to take care of the needs of the pastor and other leaders. The Old Testament principle of the 'tithe' lays the foundation for congregations being responsible to pay their leaders. In the New Testament each church normally took care of the

financial needs of its leaders. For example, Paul told the Galatians to support their own teachers (Gal 6:6). He told Timothy to teach churches to pay their teachers of God's word (1Ti 5:18). Churches that take this responsibility seriously are normally blessed by God for their faithfulness.



III. WHEN TO DO CORPORATE FUNCTIONS

The previous section described a number of the biblical church functions. These are so important that it would be helpful to think carefully about the issue of *when* a group of believers should begin to do them. Should they wait until they are an organized church or start even while they may be very few in numbers?

Table 6.1 lists a number of functions in the left column, and has room for additions. As a group, discuss the table and do the following activities:

- Note whether you agree with those functions listed.
- Add any other functions that you think are important, but missing.
- Mark "yes" or "no" in the middle and right column to indicate whether or not you think these are required of a small group, a local church, or both. Discuss your reasoning.

Table 6.1 Corporate Functions

<i>Biblical Function</i>	<i>Small Group</i> 	<i>Local Church</i> 
Friendship Evangelism		
Giving to Church Planters		
Discipline		
Corporate Worship		
Preaching		
Personal Testimonies		
Baptism		
Lord's Supper		
Giving to the Poor		
Group Singing		
Caring for church leaders		

QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION, REVIEW AND APPLICATION

- What are the corporate functions of the church?
- How do the corporate functions relate to a small group of believers?
- What is the function of preaching in the corporate gathering? What is the function of group Bible study?

- What do you understand to be the main meaning of water baptism?
- Why is giving a corporate function of the church?

ACTION PLAN

With the members of your church planting team, decide when you will begin to hold corporate gatherings. What form will these gatherings take?



Baptism In The New Testament

INDUCTIVE BIBLE STUDY

INTRODUCTION:

One of the elementary or foundational teachings of the Christian life, according to Hebrews 6:1,2, is that of baptisms. Several different baptisms are mentioned in the New Testament, but this study is limited to a few *examples* of water baptism done by the Apostles and other leaders in the early Church, along with some *explanations* from the epistles of the Apostle Paul. For a complete study, use a Bible concordance to find all references to baptism.

I. OBSERVATION

From the following passages, tell WHO was baptized, WHO did the baptizing; WHEN and WHERE the baptism occurred; WHAT was the meaning of the baptism.

	WHO was baptized?	WHO performed the baptism?	WHEN?	WHERE?	WHAT was the meaning?
Acts 2:38-41					
Acts 8:12,13					
Acts 8:36-38					
Acts 16:31-34					

II. INTERPRETATION

From your observation, summarize the place of baptism in the early Church.

From the teachings of the Apostle Paul, we learn more about the meaning of Christian Baptism. From Romans 6:1-4, explain the connection between baptism and the death and resurrection of Christ.

Some other verses for your study: 1Co 15:12-20; Gal 3:26,27; 1Pe 3:21,22

III. APPLICATION

How will you apply the principles you learned through this study in your new church?

Note: Some other baptisms mentioned in Gospels are found in Matthew 3; Mark 3; Luke 3; and John 3.



Developing A Church Purpose Statement

WHY WILL YOUR CHURCH EXIST?

Lesson Purpose

The purpose of this lesson is to help church planters to develop their own purpose statement for emerging church plants.

Main Points

- A purpose statement answers the question "Why does this local church exist?"
- A local church purpose statement should be linked to the purpose of the Church in general.

Desired Outcomes

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

- Recognize that a clear understanding of the Church's purpose will affect the way the church planter approaches the church planting task and ministry.
- Be able to write out a clear and concise local church purpose statement for his or her emerging church plant.

Suggestions to Trainers

This is a workshop. Participants should write out their own local church purpose statements and share them with the rest of the participants.

INTRODUCTION

Churches that make a difference are guided by a sense of purpose. They have a clear understanding of the biblical purpose for the Church in the world as well as a clear conviction concerning what God wants for their particular local church. They also understand that their responsibility does not end with planting of one church but should contribute to the multiplication of churches. The New Testament Church was established in order to bring glory to God through the edification of the believers and the evangelization of the lost. The task of discipling all nations for Christ was given for all believers for all ages. Early in the church planting process, it is necessary to consider the role the church will play in fulfilling the Great Commission, to think through the purpose for the particular local church intended to be planted. The process of writing a purpose statement can unify the believers, clarify their goals, motivate action, give direction to their efforts, and generate energy and power. This statement of purpose is not just a hoped-for target; it clearly states the reason that this particular church exists. A primary task of leadership is to clarify and communicate the purpose and the vision of the emerging church to the people of the congregation. This lesson will provide the opportunity to do that.

A primary task of leadership is to clarify and communicate the purpose and the vision of the emerging church to the people of the congregation.

I. WHAT IS A PURPOSE STATEMENT?

In Lesson 4, "Defining the Local Church," you developed a *definition* of the local church. A definition answers the question "**what?**" By contrast, a *purpose statement* answers the question "**why?**" That is, a local church purpose statement answers the question "Why does this particular church exist?"

II. FINDING YOUR CHURCH'S PURPOSE

The Word of God is always the best place to start when we want to know something about the church. Your purpose statement should not contradict what the Bible affirms about the church. Read the following passages to see what each has to say about the purpose of the church. Write any principles you observe in the space provided. You have already looked at some of these verses in Lesson 4 when you were asking the question "what?" in search of a definition. This time, you are specifically asking the question "why?" in search of the purpose.

Mt 16:18

Mt 28:18-20

Ac 1:6-8

Ac 2:42-47

Eph. 3:10-11

Eph 4:11-16

Col 3:12-17

Heb 10:22-25

1Pe 2:1-5, 9-12

Other

III. WRITING A LOCAL CHURCH PURPOSE STATEMENT

The process of writing a purpose statement is one of the most exciting activities in the life of a church. The purpose should be discussed at length, prayed about, accepted by leaders by faith and then announced and explained at church gatherings, and printed and published on any church literature (such as invitations) or stationery so that it is ingrained in the consciousness of the church participants.

To write your purpose statement, ask yourself the following questions:

- Why should the church you are called to plant exist?
- What will be its unique and special place in the work of God's Kingdom?
- As God's representatives in your target location, what are you there to do?

3. It should inspire enthusiasm.
4. It should be followed faithfully.
5. It should be reviewed and adjusted periodically.

In the space below, take time now to write out a statement of purpose for your church. It should answer the simple question, "Why Does This Church Exist?"

QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION, REVIEW AND APPLICATION

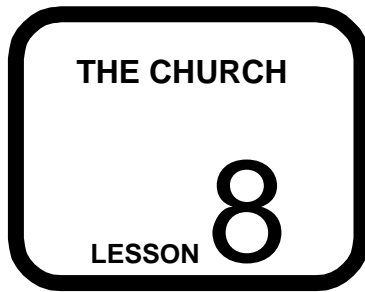
- Is your definition of the church, and church purpose statement based on your personal experience in church, or on Scripture?
- Is your purpose statement compatible with the biblical purposes of the church discussed in Lesson 2? If not, what is missing?
- Why is a written church purpose statement important?
- How is your church going to be different from other churches?

ACTION PLAN

Repeat this process of working out and writing a church purpose statement with the leaders of your church plant. These may be recently saved, emerging leaders, or others with whom you are cooperating to plant a church. If this is a daughter church, these may be from the mother church; the leaders who are most engaged in the process of birthing new daughter churches.

SOURCES

Jenson, Ron, and Jim Stevens. *Dynamics of Church Growth*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1981.



Philosophy of Church Planting Ministry

HOW CAN A CHURCH MINISTER TO THE LOST WORLD?

☞ Lesson Purpose

This lesson explains what a philosophy of church planting ministry is, and why it is important. It is intended to challenge the trainee to think through relevant issues pertaining to the "how" of a church-planting ministry.

☞ Main Points

- A philosophy of church planting ministry is built on the biblical definition and nature of the Church, rather than on human traditions.
- A context-specific philosophy of church planting ministry increases the effectiveness of the church planter and his team.

☞ Desired Outcomes

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

- Be aware of the vital need for a philosophy of church planting ministry and consequences of not having one.
- Know the essential components and priorities for an effective philosophy of church-planting ministry.
- Develop a philosophy of ministry statement.

☞ Appendix

8A Worksheet: Developing A Philosophy of Church-Planting Ministry

☞ Suggestions to Trainers

This lesson will draw upon local church purpose statements drafted in Church Lesson 7. Trainees should be instructed to read this lesson before the class session. At the outset, be sure to explain to trainees that we are here discussing very practical matters of strategy, foundations, principles and outlook. The title "philosophy" should not lead them to doubt its importance, even though this word is used in the secular world to lead people off to other structures of thought that are not based on God and His word. Our church planting task must be rooted in theories and concepts (i.e. philosophies) that are consistent with Jesus Christ, the Lord of the Church. During the lesson time, this material should be covered very quickly in order to spend most of the class time as a workshop using the Worksheet in Appendix 8A.

I. WHAT IS A PHILOSOPHY OF CHURCH PLANTING MINISTRY?

A philosophy of ministry can be used in a general sense for any kind of ministry. It can also be used with a more narrow focus on a particular kind of ministry. This lesson will specifically emphasize a *philosophy of church planting ministry*. The principles, however, can be used by any church, ministry, or Christian leader.

A. Philosophy of Ministry

In general, a philosophy of ministry is a statement or understanding that helps to answer the question "HOW will we do our ministry?" It is a practical guideline that helps us evaluate whether

we are doing the *right things* in the *right way*. A philosophy of ministry takes our values into account, and therefore it will be different for every person or group.

It is also important to distinguish a *philosophy of ministry* from a "*deceptive philosophy*." In Colossians 2:8, Paul warns us to avoid "hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition and the basic principles of this world rather than on Christ." This verse clearly describes how our philosophy can be:

- Philosophy based on human tradition—avoid
- Philosophy based on Christ—embrace

It is often unnoticed that this verse does not condemn the *idea of a philosophy*, but rather contrasts the two sources of philosophy. This wrong understanding has led many believers to react negatively to the concept of a philosophy of ministry. Sadly, when they choose not to *think about* their philosophy of ministry, they end up *blindly clinging to their current philosophy*, which is usually based on their traditions. As a result, they become guilty of doing exactly the thing that Paul was preaching against. The purpose of this lesson is to think through "how we do things" so that we can confidently say they are based on Christ and his Word rather than our human traditions.

When we choose not to *think about* our philosophy of ministry, we end up *blindly clinging to our current philosophy*, which is usually based on our traditions.

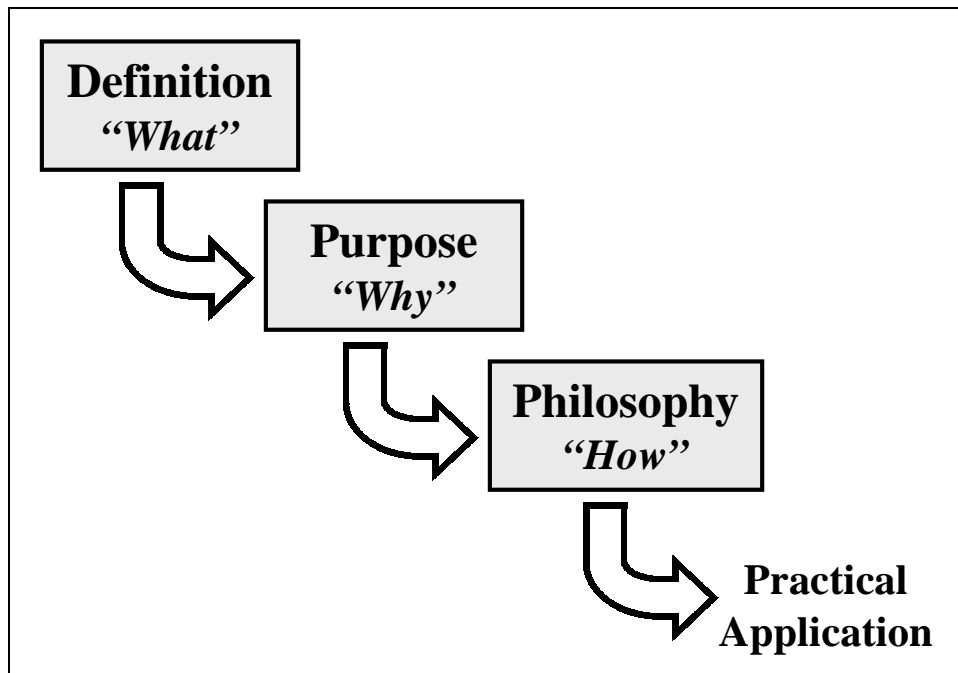
B. A Philosophy of Church Planting Ministry

Previous lessons have already looked at the definition of the Church and its purpose statement. These three build upon each other in the following manner:

- Definition – **What** the Church is.
- Purpose – **Why** the church exists.
- Philosophy Strategy – **How** the church ministers.

In this lesson, the question is specifically "How should the church planter minister?" Each trainee will have opportunity to think through this important question as he or she completes the worksheet in Appendix 8A.

Figure 8.1 The Logical Progression



II. THE NEED FOR A PHILOSOPHY OF CHURCH PLANTING MINISTRY

There are a number of reasons why each church planter should have a philosophy of ministry that is formulated specifically for his or her ministry situation. These reasons include both the biblical teaching and also the practical outworking of the philosophy.

A. The Bible Teaches the Need for Thoughtful Planning

The term "philosophy of ministry" is not found in the Scriptures, but the concept of thoughtful planning, in reliance on God, is found there.

- Proverbs 14:15: "A simple man believes anything, but a prudent man gives thought to his steps."
- Proverbs 15:22: "Plans fail for lack of counsel, but with many advisers they succeed."

1. *The Example of Jesus Christ*

Jesus' life and ministry reflect that He had a very definite purpose and a definite way by which to reach those goals. We see that Jesus always had the end result in mind. He didn't let anything distract Him from His purpose. Consider the following texts:

- Matthew 16:21-23: Jesus confidently directed His steps towards the cross.
- Mark 1:45: We see that Jesus had to refrain from doing some good things and from preaching to more people, in order to stay focused on His mission.
- John 6:5: Jesus planned in advance the miracle that He was about to perform, even though He had not revealed it to His disciples.

2. *The Example of Paul*

The Apostle Paul also planned what and how he would minister according to his Christian principles and beliefs. He recognized that God could, and often did, change his plans. However, Paul obviously did not think this should prevent him from thoughtfully planning how he would do his ministry. A few examples of Paul's planning are found in:

- Romans 15:20: Paul decided that his strategy would be to preach Christ in those places where He was not yet known.
- 1 Corinthians 2:1-2: Paul chose to limit the content of his preaching to the simple facts of the cross of Christ.
- 1 Corinthians 9:12: Paul decided not to receive support so that there would be no question as to his motives for preaching.
- 1 Corinthians 9:20: Paul chose to adapt to the cultural practices of those he wanted to reach.
- Acts 16:3: Paul circumcised Timothy in order not to be offensive to the Jews.

B. A Philosophy of Church Planting Ministry is Practical

A philosophy of ministry helps us to focus on the "good works that God has prepared for us to do" (Eph 2:10). It can guide us and help us to make decisions in difficult situations when two paths or choices seem right. It is like a measuring rod to check what does or does not fit in our ministry.

It is a fact that everyone who is involved in ministry have a philosophy of ministry. It may not be written down. They might not be able to state it clearly. They may not even be aware that it exists—but it does. This is because *we all have an understanding of how to minister!* And that constitutes a philosophy of ministry. Therefore, it is not possible to not have a philosophy of ministry. There are only two available options. We can:

- Carefully examine our philosophy to make sure it is based on Scripture.

Everyone who is involved in ministry already has a philosophy of ministry—whether or not they are aware of it.
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- Ignore it and risk propagating human traditions instead of truth.

Clearly, the first approach is the best one. This lesson and the worksheet in the following appendix are designed to help you articulate your philosophy of church planting, and to critically examine whether it is the most effective one.

C. A Clear Philosophy of Church Planting Ministry Focuses Our Actions

The definition of the Church and the purpose of the Church remain theoretical until we allow them to shape our philosophy of church planting ministry. At that point we move from theory to the very, very practical issues of "*How do I plant the church?*" The philosophy of church planting ministry statement that you will write will shape your thinking about the specific steps and priorities that you will have as you develop the new church. It will keep you from the following errors:

- Spending time on unproductive activities or programs.
- Overlooking vital activities or components that the growing church needs.

D. A Church Planting Philosophy of Ministry Should Be Specific

Each church planter, church planting team, or church should have its OWN philosophy of church planting ministry. God has given each believer different spiritual gifts. Also, each person is physically, spiritually, and emotionally unique. As a result, the method that one person uses effectively in ministry may not be appropriate for another. Similarly, the people to whom we minister are also unique. Furthermore, every town or target area has a different history and culture. Therefore a philosophy of church planting ministry should be specific to each of these areas.

1. The Church Planter

The philosophy of church planting ministry should begin with an understanding of both the strengths and weaknesses of the church planter. It should define *how* he or she can best utilize his or her strengths, and minimize weaknesses. It should take into account such things as family, work, or personal responsibilities. For instance, a church planter who is a poor speaker might develop a philosophy of church planting ministry that would stress individual relationships and friendship evangelism. Family needs might allow or rule out actually living in the target location. In every case the philosophy should be workable and effective for the person who will implement it.

2. The Church Planting Team

Teams are certainly the best way to plant new churches. In some cases a team is simply not available, but whenever possible, teams should be used. It is very rare to find a person who is so well-balanced and capable that he can accomplish more than a team. The mix of people on a good team multiplies the number of spiritual gifts and abilities, as well as the experience and energy that can be put into the planting of the new church.

For this variety of gifts, abilities, and personalities to reach its potential, there must be a workable plan to coordinate the team members and to guide their activities. A well thought out philosophy of church planting ministry will take the strengths and weaknesses of each member into account and maximize their productivity. Since every combination of team members is different, the philosophy must be created to fit each team.

A well thought out philosophy of church planting ministry will take the strengths and weaknesses of each member into account and maximize their productivity.

3. The New Church

Every new church varies greatly according to the culture, age, social level, education, experience, language, and even personal preferences of its members. It is impossible to effectively use the same plan in all situations. An appropriate philosophy of church planting ministry will examine the target area and people to determine how to *most effectively* reach them. It will also determine which *forms* would be most appropriate for the spiritual growth of that particular group.

III. CONTENTS OF AN EFFECTIVE PHILOSOPHY OF CHURCH-PLANTING MINISTRY

While every philosophy of church planting ministry will be unique, there are some common building blocks that should be present in each. Each of these requires thought and preparation, but will make the finished product much more helpful and effective.

A. Builds on Definition and Purpose

As shown in Figure 8.1, the church planting philosophy builds on the definition of the church and the purpose of the church that you have developed earlier. Once you understand **what** the church is, and **why** the new church you will plant should exist, the next step is to decide **how** you can effectively accomplish that task.

The important concept here is that the philosophy of church-planting ministry *must be based on the biblical definition and purpose of the Church*, rather than simply restating how we have done things in the past. Building on human traditions, no matter how well meaning, is *never* an acceptable substitute for making the effort to study the Word and follow its precepts.

The philosophy of church planting ministry *must be based on the biblical definition and purpose of the Church*, rather than simply restating how we have done things in the past.

B. Is Context Specific

An appropriate philosophy will be based on the specific context in which it will be used. This demands that we do the necessary research into the target area. Other sections of this material describe how to compile and analyze this research. This initial effort in research and planning can greatly reduce wasted time and effort later by guiding us in the right direction and helping us choose the right methods and approaches.

C. Is People-Centered

Buildings, equipment, transportation, finances, and other practical matters should be considered in the philosophy of church planting ministry. However, they should never *dominate* the process! It must always, always be remembered that people are the most important focus and that their salvation and spiritual growth is the object of our efforts. A good philosophy of church planting ministry will make sure that we meet the needs of the true *church—the people*—rather than focus on secondary things.

D. Is Useful as an Evaluation Tool

A philosophy of church planting ministry, correctly designed, will be very practical and useful. It will help keep us doing the most important things at the right time, and in the right way. We should see more fruit from our effort, since we are making better decisions about each step of the ministry. This is why we spend the time to prepare the statement.

To realize the maximum positive results, we need to be careful to make the philosophy simple, clear, and understandable. The entire church planting team should understand it and agree with it. It should state the consensus as to *how, exactly, we are going to plant this new church*.

IV. MAKING YOUR OWN PHILOSOPHY OF CHURCH PLANTING MINISTRY

Appendix 8A is a worksheet to help you through the process of writing a philosophy of church planting ministry. Most of the class time should be spent on this process. If you have a church planting team, you should repeat this process with them to arrive at a philosophy on which you can all agree and wholeheartedly work together.

V. SAMPLE PHILOSOPHY OF MINISTRY

Figure 8.2 following is a sample philosophy of ministry of one church. It is not specific to a new church plant, and therefore your statement will be somewhat different. It can, however, serve as a guide for you as you write your own.

As you read through this sample, note the emphasis on the people, their worship, and their spiritual growth. What are some of the other ways in which this statement is a good philosophy? What are areas that might need improvement, according to the principles that we have just studied?

Figure 8.2 Sample Local Church Mission Statement

Note to translator: If possible, please substitute examples of mission statements from churches in your own country context, rather than the using the sample statements that are given here.

<h3>SAMPLE MISSION STATEMENT</h3> <p><i>Smithville Community Church exists to:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. EXALT God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit through<ol style="list-style-type: none">a. Praise, prayer, worship and celebration of God's glory, holiness, truth, beauty and love.b. Communion with Jesus Christ as the loving, powerful Savior, Lord and King.c. Oneness and praise created by the presence of the Holy Spirit and expressed corporately through the Spirit's fruit and gifts.2. ESTABLISH a caring community of believers through<ol style="list-style-type: none">a. Encouraging an environment of love, acceptance and forgiveness.b. The development of warm, caring and supportive relationships.c. Service and sacrifice to meet each other's needs.3. EQUIP believers for effective ministry through<ol style="list-style-type: none">a. Preaching and teaching that faithfully expounds the Word of God while relating to the issues of the day and the need of the people.b. Teaching, discovery, recognition, development and use of the gifts of the Spirit by each believer.c. Ministry training and equipping believers to know Christ's will, to experience Christ's power and to do Christ's works.4. EXTEND the Good News of Christ to the world through<ol style="list-style-type: none">a. Outreach into the surrounding community that is imaginative, sensitive and compassionate using creative forms of evangelism and communication, proclaiming that people should repent, confess Christ, put their trust in God through Him, accept Him as Savior and serve Him as their King in the fellowship of His Church.b. Concern for the whole person by ministering to emotional, physical, social and spiritual needs and bringing them to wholeness within our community.c. Commitment to church planting and the revitalizing of the church throughout the world.
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QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW

- How does a philosophy of ministry help church planters?
- How is a philosophy of ministry biblical?
- What does a philosophy of ministry include?

ACTION PLAN

Complete Appendix 8A, "Developing a Philosophy of Church Planting Ministry".

SOURCES

- DeWitt, Larry. *Unpublished Notes from CPR2000*, Calvary Community Church, 1985.
- Fuller, Charles E. *How To Plant A Church; Advanced Seminar*. Church Growth Institute. 1986.
- Logan, Robert. *Beyond Church Growth*. Grand Rapids, MI: Revell, 1989.
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- Morris, Linus J. *The High Impact Church*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Christian Associates International, 1998.



Developing a Philosophy of Church Planting Ministry

INTRODUCTION

In order to develop a clear philosophy of church planting ministry, you need to consider the following:

- You should have a clear understanding of what God has called The Church to be and do (The Purpose Statement) and what God is calling your new church to be and do. What does God want you to accomplish over the next 3-5 years as a new church?
- You should have knowledge of your target audience. Who are the people you are seeking to reach?
- What are some of the possible structures you could use to establish your new church (worship services, cell groups, Bible school, outreach prayer triplets, etc.)
- What are the gifts, strengths, and weaknesses of yourself and of your team?

I. QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER FOR DEVELOPING A PHILOSOPHY OF MINISTRY

Answer the following questions with others on your church-planting team.

A. What three words would you like to describe the new church you are planting?

B. Who makes up the community you are seeking to reach? What kinds of people will become part of your church?

C. What will make this church unique?

D. What could be the most attractive things about your church?

E. What is it about your church that would appeal to the people in the town/village you are seeking to reach?

F. To whom will your church have the greatest appeal?

G. To whom would you like your church to appeal?

H. What programs and activities could be successful for the church? How will you measure this success?

II. UNIQUE DISTINCTIVES ABOUT YOUR CHURCH

What is unique or distinctive about how your church does what it does (will do) in the following areas—worship, teaching of the Scriptures, evangelism, fellowship, administration, youth and children's work, community relations, social services, missions, doctrine, finances, resources, buildings, other.

III. STYLE OF MINISTRY

In one or two paragraphs, describe the style of ministry you envision for your church. What will be your unique church "personality?"

IV. VALUES

What are the guiding **values** of your new church? What convictions will guide your ministry efforts in the coming months and years? List at least 10 values now.

V. STATE YOUR PHILOSOPHY OF MINISTRY

In two paragraphs, try to write out a statement of your philosophy of ministry that includes components from this worksheet. Can you come up with a slogan that captures your philosophy of ministry in just a few words?

My Philosophy of Church Planting Ministry:

The Slogan of My Church:

VI. DISCUSS AND COMPARE YOUR STATEMENT WITH OTHERS

Remembering that no two situations are alike, and therefore no two philosophies will be alike, discuss and compare your statement with those of other trainees. Then discuss it with church leaders and members of your church planting team. Review this statement often, and use it during the church planting process to evaluate whether or not you are doing the right things in the right way.

SPIRITUAL CHARACTER

SPIRITUAL
CHARACTER

6

LESSON

Living Like Sons Instead Of Orphans

GALATIANS 4:1-7

☛ Lesson Purpose

The purpose of this lesson is to help the church planter become more sincere in his or her relationship with God, as he understands the truth and implications of his adoption by God.

☛ Main Points

- Life as a spiritual orphan leads to spiritual insecurity and self-reliance.
- Life as a spiritual child of God leads to a walk with God based on gratitude and faith.

☛ Desired Outcomes

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

- Understand that they have been adopted by God and have become beloved sons and daughters.
- Understand how they can fall back into an orphan mentality, which paralyzes life and ministry.
- Become more confident of God's love as sons and daughters, being able to deal with failures, insecurities, and fears on the basis of their relationship with God, not on the basis of performance.
- Boldly evangelize and carry out the church planting task not as those who are alone, but as beloved sons and daughters who are in partnership with their heavenly Father.

☛ Suggestions to Trainers

Give the trainees the "tongue assignment" on the first day (found at the end of this lesson), then check to see how well they have fulfilled it after a few days. This assignment is simply to help us become more honest about the power of sin within us and our true need for grace and power.

Please note: the term 'son' is not intended to exclude women. 'Son' is used because Paul uses the term in his letter to the Galatians. Daughters are also children of God.

It would be helpful to share your own experiences related to this material. Be vulnerable!

INTRODUCTION

The Word of God teaches us that we all have a Creator who wants to be a loving Father to us (Mt 6:26, 32). Because of our tendency to rebel, we have left Him to live our lives the way we want. This decision to turn away from God greatly impacts our thinking and our behavior. In many ways, it causes us to think and act like orphans.

In this lesson, we will consider together how we think and act like orphans, even as Christians. We will look at Galatians 4:1-7, which describes the kind of relationship that every Christian enters into with God. And finally, we will learn how to live more like sons/daughters who belong to the heavenly Father and are eternally loved by Him.

I. LIFE AS AN ORPHAN

If you have ever visited an orphanage and have spent time getting to know these special kids, you may have noticed some patterns of thinking and behavior that are quite common among them. Here are a few.

A. Orphans are full of fear and great insecurity

The neglect, and in some cases abandonment, by the parent leaves the orphan with a deep uncertainty about life and what possibly could happen next. For most of us, the unforeseen future isn't anything we worry about (too much), but with a child where the unthinkable has already happened (mom and dad aren't there for him), the future looks pretty scary.

B. Orphans live with an abnormal measure of self-concern

Each orphan compares what he/she has against what the other children possess. For this reason the 'home mother' states that whenever a gift is given to one child, it ought to be given to every child. Even then, the children prefer certain colors, and terrible jealousy breaks out when one child receives a "special color."

C. Orphans carry a deep sense of aloneness

Orphaned children have the sense that because their mom and dad have given them up (or have been taken away), that they really don't belong to anyone. With the biological "right" stripped away, there is no one "connected" to them and it is difficult for these orphans to believe that someone truly cares for them.

II. CHRISTIANS WHO THINK AND ACT LIKE ORPHANS

Now lets first consider how we think and act like orphans ourselves. Orphans, as we have said, feel alone in the world. They are also full of fear and insecurity. Without a father or mother to care for them, they are full of concern for their own needs. They feel that they have to take care of themselves. *Does this sound anything like your own life?*

Perhaps we feel this the most when life seems to be falling apart or something goes wrong. How do we respond to our difficulties? What do we think? Don't we become anxious and panic? Don't we sometimes think that things go wrong because God with His many concerns has forgotten about us? We begin to worry or we become discouraged and give up. Many times, feeling that we are greatly misunderstood, we blame someone else for our problems. We consider ourselves to be the "victims." At other times, we get frustrated and take matters into our own hands by setting up strict controls. With these controls, we strive to stop the world from falling apart any further. In all these responses, we show our pride or lack of faith in what God has revealed about Himself and His relationship with us. We become spiritual orphans.

Example

A woman had become a Christian, but was unsure of God's love for her. One reason for this was because of an incident in her childhood with her own father. When she was very small, her sister and she were hanging up the wash outside. She could not reach the wash-line, so she decided to hang her dad's white shirt over the handles of a wheelbarrow, which were very rusty. Of course, when the shirt dried, it had become stained by these rusty handles. The shirt was ruined. When her father found out, he became unreasonably angry with her.

This child had done nothing wrong in her mind. She hung the shirt with the best of intentions, not knowing the consequences of hanging it on a rusty bar. Many fathers would have forgiven a child for such a thing or at least have scolded the child very mildly. Yet this father scolded her as if she had deliberately disobeyed, or rebelled against him. She grew up thinking that her father never loved her.

This is how we often view God. We think he is angry with us, that He is distant, that He is just waiting to punish us. We feel like we are never truly accepted and loved by Him. Our view of God is one of a judicious, unconcerned Judge. Our relationship with Him seems to be tenuous and uncertain, based upon how well we perform.

But this is not how our relationship with God is described in Galatians 4. We will not stop thinking and acting like orphans until we believe God's description of our relationship with Him. We need to understand the basis of this relationship, and the implications of our sonship. As we turn to Galatians 4, let's consider this analogy of our relationship with God (Read Gal 4:1-7).

III. OUR SONSHIP WITH GOD

A. Analogy of a "full grown" son

The Apostle Paul confronts the error into which the Galatian Christians had fallen. As we look at the text, we see the Galatians had begun to forget how they entered into a right relationship with God, how they were to continue in this relationship, and how they would receive the promises of God. They had gone back to thinking that they had received salvation and acceptance by God, at least in part, because of their obedience to the law of God. Paul teaches them once again, that it is by faith alone in the Gospel that they have been justified before God and have received the Holy Spirit. On the basis of faith in the promises made by God through Christ, they see His present blessing and work in their lives. He concludes at the end of chapter three that the Law was given by God to reveal our true sinfulness and to lead us to Christ. After we have believed the Gospel and are in Christ, we are no longer under this law. We now are sons of God.

Paul then, in chapter four explains in fuller detail how we have been adopted by God and what our sonship truly means. He uses the following common practice of his day to give us a picture of this relationship that we now have with God:

When the son was young, though he was certainly the heir to his father's possessions, he remained under guardians and stewards, who were responsible for the upbringing and affairs of the child. During this time, the son had no rights to do business or make decisions that would affect the father's estate. In a sense, he was no different from a slave. At a certain time which was determined by each father, this restriction was taken away, and the estate was handed over to the son to govern as he saw fit. At this time, the heir became a full-grown son of "privilege." This is how we are described in our relationship with God. We are full-grown, privileged sons. Now, what does this mean for us?

B. The meaning of this analogy

As the Apostle Paul explains, before we are in Christ, we are held in bondage by the elementary principles of the world. For the Jew, the Law of Moses holds him in bondage and condemns him, preventing the promises of God from being received. The Gentiles also experienced condemnation from their conscience (Ro 2:14-15) out of which the moral and religious norms are formed. Whatever principles we first live under, these principles accuse us of our shortcomings and our unworthiness to be loved by God. We are held in bondage by them and sense our condemnation.

But in Christ, we are redeemed; the penalty of our sin is completely forgiven. We are released from this bondage of condemnation (Ro 8:1). Therefore, we are not to go on putting ourselves under this bondage. We should believe that we have been set free, having been adopted by God as privileged sons; receiving all the promises made to those who have been redeemed by Jesus Christ. To assure us that this release has truly taken place, God has sent His Spirit to dwell within us, to call out to our spirit that the sentence of condemnation has been taken away. God is no longer a judge to us but is now our loving Father. Paul uses the word, "Abba" which in those days was the most endearing description of a father (Ro 8:15-17). Our modern day expression of "Daddy" or "Papa" captures the idea of this term that speaks of God's endearment to us. God's justice has been turned to mercy. He no longer condemns us, but has adopted us so that He may grant all His promises to us.

God is no longer a judge to us but is now our loving Father.
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We can live with boldness and confidence because of whom our Father is. No more insecurity, no reason to prove our worth. No more fear of cruel punishment. No more loneliness. We have a loving father who will not abandon us. He loves us!

IV. HOW WE FAIL TO UNDERSTAND OUR SONSHIP

Why is it that we, adopted sons and daughters, often find ourselves acting like orphans? Why do we feel all alone, full of fears, and self-concern? It is because we trivialize the Gospel of Jesus Christ and its relevance to our lives. The Gospel is the basis of our sonship. When we fail to recognize the Gospel, we fail to understand our relationship as children of God. We do this in several ways.

The Gospel is the basis of our sonship. When we fail to recognize the Gospel, we fail to understand our relationship as children of God.

A. Trivializing the Gospel through pride

The Gospel is good news but it is also a strong medicine that can be hard to take. It humbles us, reminding us that we are sinners who cannot save ourselves. Even as Christians, we often exalt ourselves above others. We even think we really don't need God's help. We live for our glory and for our own selfish purposes. We live to accomplish our own goals, to exalt ourselves. If some activity or person doesn't contribute to our agenda, then we don't want anything to do with it or him. Our independence forces Him to let us alone to struggle on our own. We become orphans because of our pride.

The fact is, we have a great problem when we put confidence in our own ability (in the "flesh" - Gal 3:3). When we are prideful, we try to establish our own righteousness instead of relying on the righteousness of Christ. One indicator of this is always thinking about how others will perceive our actions.

For example, we even do this in the area of loving our family. Imagine the man who thinks, "I can love my wife and children, how hard can it be?" As he puts confidence in his own ability, he does the things that he thinks will please his wife. One day, after he comes home with a bouquet of flowers for his wife, she shocks him and says, "Honey, I really don't feel like you love me. I know that we are having some friends over for dinner tonight. Whenever we have someone over, you buy me flowers." The ulterior (self-exalting) motive to be seen as a loving husband before others was hidden in the heart of this man, so that he didn't even notice what he was doing. If we took a closer look at the way that we love our wives/husbands, we would probably see how poorly we truly do love them.

We have been born anew by the Holy Spirit and we have been set free from the mastery of sin. The Spirit now dwells within us to help us to overcome sin. However, we are mistaken if we think this means that the flesh itself has somehow been cleaned up (Ro 7:17-18) and we will no longer fight the influence of its evil desires. **We must be extremely honest with God about our sin.** We still have a serious problem with our flesh, and we must become deeply broken over this. We need to grow in our dependence upon the Holy Spirit to help us overcome such a strong force of evil within us. The Spirit's power can be released only as we sense our need for His help, but pride will keep us from realizing this need.

B. Trivializing the Gospel through unbelief

Another way in which we trivialize the Gospel is that we stop believing God's promise of grace based solely upon the death of Jesus Christ on the cross. Out of love, many of us seek to serve God and honor Him. We fail, and we are devastated by our failure. Again, we must repent- this time for our sin of unbelief. We must keep believing the truth of the Gospel, which tells us that it is by grace, and no other reason, we have been made children of God.

We must become much more honest about our sin and stop trivializing the Gospel if we are to understand the true nature of God's love for us and the rich blessing of our sonship with Him. This is so important. Otherwise, we will go on feeling alone, thinking that life is all up to us. Our failures will continue to haunt us, as our guilt is turned into condemnation. Our service to God will become a slavish obligation, the weight of which we cannot bear. We will become ungrateful toward God and others, unmoved by the reality that Jesus Christ suffered and died for our sin in order to make us privileged sons.

QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION, REVIEW AND APPLICATION

- How have you trivialized your sin?
- How have you trivialized the Gospel?
- In what ways do you act like a spiritual orphan?
- Does God condemn His children as he does those who don't know Him?
- Why has God given us the privilege of sonship?
- How does understanding sonship help us to be honest about our sin?

ACTION PLAN

The "tongue assignment":

For the next two days, do not gossip, do not speak badly about someone else, do not complain, do not defend yourself when someone talks about a fault, and do not boast of your achievements. Speak only good of others, give thanks to God in all things, honestly admit when you are wrong, and only boast of your weaknesses.

The tongue assignment will help you see the powerful influence that sin still has in our lives and our ongoing need for the grace of God. After this assignment you will have a deeper gratitude that God has made you His son not on the basis of your obedience, but on the basis of Christ's redemption for you. This is a lifetime assignment, but consciously fulfill it in the next two days.

SPIRITUAL
CHARACTER

7

LESSON

Learning To Be Sons

☞ Lesson Purpose

The purpose of this lesson is to move deeper into the applications of believers' sonship with God. Motivation for spiritual growth and ministry should come from a heart of love and gratitude toward God rather than fear and guilt.

☞ Main Points

- A heart weighed down can be set free
- A heart of pride can be changed into a heart in partnership with the Father
- A heart of self can learn to love others

☞ Desired Outcomes

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

- Understand the implications of adoption by God.
- Understand the practical, every day expressions of thinking like a son/daughter vs. an orphan.
- Live and serve with a greater conviction of God's presence and partnership.
- Live and serve with a new compassion for people, reflecting God's grace toward them.
- Serve the Lord with greater confidence, greater power, and greater love.

☞ Appendix

7A Orphans vs. Sons

☞ Suggestions to Trainers

As in the last lesson, the term "son" used commonly in this lesson is not intended to exclude women. The term "son" is used because Galatians uses the term. Daughters are also children of God.

INTRODUCTION

The concept of adoption is foundational to how God now relates to us. How a believer understands this has daily impact upon his thinking, attitudes, actions and present relationship to God. This is an in-depth study of the ramifications and applications of adoption by God.

In order for a person to more significantly comprehend his adoption by God (which has made the believer a "son of privilege"), it is important to think through the common mindsets that are present in day-to-day thinking. How often do we function like orphans instead of like children of God? It is important that the Holy Spirit open our eyes to these matters.

There are three primary areas in which we can evaluate whether or not we are living like orphans or sons. Consider the following:

I. A HEART WEIGHED DOWN VS. A HEART SET FREE

The first "measuring stick" is whether or not you typically have a heart that is weighed down and feeling defeated, or a heart that is set free. Obviously, there are different reasons why a person's heart may be

weighed down, but in this context, the heavy heart is caused by the weight of our guilt and a sense of unworthiness.

As we grow in the Christian life, we grow in the awareness of sin. King David said, "For I know my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me" (Ps 51:3). For a young Christian, it can be very devastating to feel the weight and reality of personal sin.

For example, when "Sergei" first turned to God and received forgiveness for his sins through Jesus Christ, he felt such incredible joy. He was like a man let out of prison, and his deepest desire was to please God in everything that he did. It didn't take long before he failed in something and became very disappointed. His sin so overwhelmed him that for many weeks, he was discouraged and even depressed. He struggled to believe that God still loved and accepted him. He wasn't able to settle this issue until he finally discovered the truth about God's relationship with him.

In Romans 8, God tells us what He thinks of His children, even when they fail. Six questions are asked: "What shall we say in response to this? If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare His own Son, but gave Him up for us all- how will He not also, along with Him, graciously give us all things? Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God Who justifies. Who is he that condemns?... Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?" (Ro 8:31-35).

Whenever someone asks six questions in a row, it is obvious he is not looking for an answer. It is the same case here in this passage. The answer is obvious: God is not looking for an answer from man, but is making a statement to him: "I love you, I don't condemn you, and nothing will separate you from My love."

This declaration became clear to Sergei when he finally saw the basis for God's love for him in verse 39. God says nothing "will be able to separate us from the love of God that is *in Christ Jesus our Lord*." That final phrase provides the basis of God's unchanging love. It is based in Christ Jesus the Lord. Not in the believer, but in Him because of what He did on our behalf. Sergei discovered that if God were to stop loving him, He would be denying what Jesus Christ, had accomplished on the cross. He would have to say that His Son's death was not enough! God could never say that, and therefore, God can never stop loving His children.

God can never stop loving His children.

When Sergei discovered this, he again became like a prisoner who had been set free. The burden of his failure was lifted, and he was given new freedom to acknowledge his sin and then to disown it, claiming Christ's blood and righteousness for his own. Previously, Sergei had repented of his sin, but did not continue to believe in the finished work of Christ on the cross. Ironically, he discovered that his pride kept him from doing this. It was hard for Sergei to admit to God that his need for Christ was just as great as it was on the first day he had believed. As he humbly admitted his need, joy again filled his heart. He had never felt so deeply and unconditionally loved.

God wants to set every believer's heart free with this kind of love. Love that is not deserved; love so unconditional, love so abundant, that people can't help but love Him back.

It is easy to feel unworthy and undeserving. However, God keeps showing love anyway. And if a person's heart is not set free by this love, then his faith in Christ's work on the cross is too small. In essence, he is trivializing the Gospel message. God said, "It was for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery" (Gal 5:1). Jesus said, "For my yoke is easy and my burden is light" (Mt 11:30). It is only as we build our lives on sonship with God that we can experience this freedom. If our lives are based on anything else, our hearts will be continually weighed down.

II. A PROUD HEART VS. A HEART IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE FATHER

Anatoli was born in a strong Christian home. He repented of his sin and found salvation at a very young age. All his life, he had been able to maintain an excellent Christian testimony in spite of many who tried to discredit him. Anatoli's strong commitment to the Lord inspired him to become a missionary in Siberia where he planted three churches among Buddhists in the past few years. Many looked to Anatoli as a model Christian, and if Anatoli were honest, he would admit that he felt like one. At least he would like to

feel like one. Deep in his heart, Anatoli was proud of his strong commitment to the Lord and he assumed that God was proud of him for this as well.

If you, like Anatoli, think God blesses you because you are so devoted to Him, you think too highly of yourself. Anatoli did not have the sin of unbelief like Sergei, but he, too, was an orphan. An orphan thinks he alone can solve problems. What demonstrates this more than anything is a person's reliance upon himself as opposed to his reliance (by faith) in God. Relying on oneself eliminates God's partnership in ministry. He is forced out, and the person is truly alone, but not because God has abandoned him. He is an orphan *by choice*.

The fruit of a person's life can indicate his motivation for ministry. Self-reliance bears the fruit of fear, tight control over others, worry, sleeplessness, doubt, defeat and a complaining spirit. If a person feels he has to fix everything and make it work, this is what he will produce. He may try harder, but will end up frustrated because often he cannot solve his problems in his own strength. This can manifest itself in wasted time or neglect of other areas of ministry or family life. If a person's problems are constantly on his mind, it will take his attention away from truly caring for others. It can also lead to sleeplessness, constant complaining, and other problems.

In order to break this independence, God will often bring a challenge into a believer's life so that he seeks God's presence and partnership in his life and ministry. This is what Jesus did in the life of His disciples. For example, when Jesus fed the five thousand (Jn 6), it seems that He had a particular lesson to teach His disciples- specifically, Philip. Jesus asked Philip, "Where shall we buy bread, for these people to eat?" The text says that He asked him this in order "to test him" (Jn 6:6). It was obvious that no human resource could provide for such a multitude of people. He was testing Philip to see if he had learned Jesus' true power and identity, and if he had learned to rely upon his Lord.

As children of God, the "messes" of ministry shouldn't unravel us, if we believe that God is in control; and if we surrender our messes to God.

When you face challenges that test your relationship with God, your response will demonstrate your view of God. Are you full of fear or do you know God is a loving, trustworthy Father? Have you redoubled your efforts—perhaps even come down hard on someone else—in order to get control of a messy situation? (One pastor excommunicated most of his church because they were not falling in line with what he wanted them to do!)

If the concept of sonship is applied to the way we think and function in our daily lives, we ought to become people of prayer, continually entrusting our lives and ministry to the care of God, assured that He is in control. God's Word teaches that God has works already prepared for His children to accomplish (Eph 2:10). Through prayerful dependence, we come in step with what God wants to accomplish through us. So we ought to continually invite people to join us in prayer, and continually go to God in secret, that we might understand what God has already prepared for us.

A son has a strong confidence that God is His beloved Father who truly cares about his concerns. As children of God, the "messes" of ministry shouldn't unravel us, if we believe that God is in control; and if we surrender our messes to God.

III. A SELFISH HEART VS. A HEART FREE TO LOVE OTHERS

Whether we think like orphans or sons also penetrates into other areas. It greatly affects our relationships with others. When we are preoccupied with our problems, when we are under a load of concern, when we feel we are alone in this world, we become self-centered.

Consider a young boy named Dennis, a Russian orphan. He is full of energy and loves to have fun. He is also full of mischief. Once when Christians visited Dennis and the other orphans over the New Year holiday, they brought a few games to play. There was one game that the kids liked in particular, so the visitors decided to let them keep it. When Dennis found out that the people were giving the game to the group, he grabbed the game and wouldn't let go of it. The other orphans also fought for it, and the visitors had to step in, take the game from Dennis, and give it to the housemother.

What had been freely given to Dennis and the rest of the children became something each one felt he had to personally guard so that he would not lose it. They could not share it with one another.

We become the same way when we think that our heavenly Father doesn't truly care for us. We act like He is not strong enough to protect what He has freely given to delight our hearts. Many times, our orphan minds blind us from seeing the divine blessings He has given to cheer our hearts along the way. Even when we see His blessings, these become idols in our lives, because we feel we must cling to them to keep them. This perhaps is the saddest consequence of all. We are not led to delight in the Giver of the gift or to delight in the way He truly loves us. Ironically, when our possessions become the objects of our love, we never really feel loved ourselves. Our idolatry acts as a thief, stealing the most precious experience of our life- being loved by the Almighty.

Has this happened in your life? Has your orphan mind-set left you feeling unloved? Or do you feel you must tightly hang onto what God has given you for fear of losing it. Are you able to freely give to others, because you believe that God has freely and abundantly given to you?

CONCLUSION

As you can see, how we view God and His relationship with us greatly impacts our daily lives. Motivation for spiritual growth and ministry should come from a heart of love and humility characteristic of a son, rather than a heart of fear and guilt characteristic of an orphan. In what ways do you see you have been living like an orphan, instead of a son?

QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION, REVIEW AND APPLICATION

- How does an orphan see God?
- How does a son see God?
- What are the real reasons we see God in the particular way we do?
- How do we know that God still loves us?

ACTION PLAN

In Appendix 7A of your lesson you will find a copy of the "Orphans vs. Sons" list. Go through this list, and then pick the three areas that you struggle with the most. Think of an example for each of the three areas in which you have experienced this struggle. For each example how do you want God to change you? Then commit this in prayer to your heavenly Father.



Orphans vs. Sons

Read the list below and pick the three areas that you struggle with the most. Think of an example for each of the three areas in which you have experienced this struggle. For each example how do you want God to change you? Then commit this in prayer to your heavenly Father.

<u>ORPHAN</u>	<u>SON</u>	
LIVING BY "TRYING HARDER." JESUS OUR FLESH'S "HELPER" Jn 14:18 "I will not leave you as orphans"	LIVING BY FAITH. CHRIST IS OUR LIFE! Jn 15:4, Gal 2:20 Ro 8:15 "He has given us a Spirit of Sonship"	
Feel alone; lack a vital daily intimacy with God; "a vacuum of self concern."	1.	Have a growing assurance that God is really <u>my</u> loving Heavenly Father (1Jn 4:16)
Full of anxiety over "felt needs;" friends, money, etc.; "I'm all alone and nobody cares."	2.	Trust the father and have a growing confidence in His loving care; freed from worry.
Live on success/fail basis; must "look good" at any cost; performance-oriented.	3.	Learning to live in daily self-conscious partnership with God; not fearful.
Feel condemned, guilty and unworthy before God and others.	4.	Feel loved, forgiven and totally accepted because Christ's merit really clothes me.
Have a "little faith," lots of fear, no ability to really trust God. "I've got to fix it."	5.	A <i>daily working trust</i> in God's sovereign plan for my life as a loving, wise and best plan.
Labor under a sense of unlimited obligation, trying hard to please, burnout.	6.	Prayer is the first resort; "I am going to ask my father first!" Daddy (Abba), Father!
Rebellious towards God and others; often spiritually cold and hard-hearted.	7.	Strength to be submissive; soft (broken and contrite) heart (Ps 51:17).
Defensive; can't listen; bristles at the charge of being self-righteous (virtually proving the charge).	8.	Open to criticism since I consciously stand in Christ's perfection, not my own; am able to examine my deeper motives.
Must always be right, safe, secure; unwilling to fail; defensive; unable to tolerate criticism; can only handle praise.	9.	Able to take risks—even fail. Since righteousness is in Christ, needs no record to boast in, protect or defend.
Self-confident but discouraged, defeated and lacking the Spirit's power.	10.	Christ-confident and encouraged because of the spirit working in me.
"I'll show 'em—just watch my smoke!" "Where others failed." (will power).	11.	"I can do everything through him who gives me strength" (Php 4:13).

<u>ORPHAN</u>	<u>SON</u>	
<p>LIVING BY "TRYING HARDER." JESUS OUR FLESH'S "HELPER" Jn 14:18 <i>"I will not leave you as orphans"</i></p>	<p>LIVING BY FAITH. CHRIST IS OUR LIFE! Jn 15:4, Gal 2:20 Ro 8:15 <i>"He has given us a Spirit of Sonship"</i></p>	
Self-effort; rely on gifts and abilities to get by in life and ministry.	12.	Trusting less in self and more in the Holy Spirit (with self-conscious daily reliance).
Complaining and thankless toward God and others; must tear others down; display a bitter, critical spirit.	13.	Rely on the Holy Spirit to guide the tongue for use in praise, edification, thanksgiving and encouragement (Eph 4:29).
An expert at pointing out what is wrong; always dissatisfied about something.	14.	Not blind to wrong, but choose instead to focus on what is good and lovely (Php 4:8).
Gossip (confess other people's sins); need to criticize others to feel secure; a competent analyst of other weaknesses; has the gift of "discernment."	15.	Able to freely confess faults to others and preferring to major on their strengths; don't always have to be right; finding that I am often wrong; eager to grow.
Always comparing self with others, leading either to pride or depression (depending on how bad or good others look).	16.	Stands confidently in Christ; real self-worth comes from Jesus' blood and righteousness, not man-made props (Php 3:9).
Powerless to defeat the flesh; no real heart victory over "pet sins," yet has lost sense of being a "big sinner."	17.	Resting in Christ, and seeing more and more victory over the flesh (Ro 8:1-9), yet seeing self as a "big sinner."
Relatively prayerless; prayer is a "last resort;" prays often in public, seldom in private	18.	Prayer is a vital part of the day, not confined to just a regular "quiet time;" Talking with the Father is a joy (1Th 5: 16-18).
The Bible's promises of spiritual power and joy mock self: "What has happened to all your joy?" (Gal 4:15)	19.	God's promises of power and joy are beginning to describe self (Ro 15:13).
Needs to boast; must constantly point out own accomplishments for fear that someone might overlook them (Gal 6:14).	20.	Finds that Jesus is more and more the subject of own conversation; boasts in the Lord and in own weaknesses (2Co 12: 9-10).
Unconsciously building "a record" of works that needs noticing and defending.	21.	Christ's righteousness is own "record," stands complete in Him (1Co 1:28ff).
Self-centered: "If they would only see things my way!" Deep need to be in control of situations and others.	22.	Becoming Christ-controlled; ministering in the power of the holy spirit, not in the strength of own "redeemed flesh."
Something other than Jesus can satisfy; "idols" in life (possession, position, passions) give sense of worthiness and justification.	23.	Christ is meat and drink; God truly satisfies soul. "...and earth has nothing I desire besides you" (Ps 73:25).
Little desire to share the Gospel(since own Christian life is so miserable) when sharing, tend to be motivated by a sense of obligation and duty, not love.	24.	Desire to see the lost come to know Jesus, shares the Gospel with others, <i>even when not under the outward pressure of a church program.</i> "...the love of Christ compels us" (2Co 5:14).

PRAYER



Concert Of Prayer

WORSHIP AND MEDITATION

☞ **Lesson Purpose**

The Purpose of this lesson is to worship the Lord together and to encourage each other in the Lord.

☞ **Main Points**

God convicts and directs us as we take time to worship Him and meditate on His Word.

☞ **Desired Outcomes**

This is not a lesson, but a workshop. People will have had an experience of strategic prayer and gain an idea of how to lead a concert of prayer.

☞ **Suggestions to Trainers**

This concert of prayer is NOT a time to lecture but to lead the trainees through a time of prayer. You will need to study Psalm 95 ahead of time and notice the divisions given in the lesson.

This prayer and worship time should provide an opportunity for each trainee to reflect on the content of the seminar and humbly seek God's direction as to how it should change his or her life and ministry.

INTRODUCTION

The Psalms were written to inspire God's people to celebrate, worship and obey the Lord our God. They were not written just to be read. For this concert of prayer, follow the pattern given in **Psalm 95** as your outline for praise, worship, and prayer.

This psalm leads us through three steps, as shown in the graphic below:

<i>Psalm 95</i>	
1. Sing to the Lord	vv. 1-5
2. Bow before the Lord	vv. 6-7
3. Listen to the Lord	vv. 8-11

I. CELEBRATE THE LORD (PSALM 95:1-5)

Come Let Us Sing For Joy To The Lord

- Sing joyous songs

Shout Aloud to The Rock Of Our Salvation

- Read together in a loud voice from a Psalm of deliverance: Psalm 18:1-3, 30-36

Come Before The Lord With Thanksgiving

- Have a time of testimony, especially thanking God for what He is doing in the prayer triplets and other areas of church planting

Extol The Lord With Music And Song

- Have another time of singing praises to the Lord
- Read together verses 3-5; thank Him for His sovereign rule over all the universe

II. WORSHIP THE LORD (PSALM 95: 6-7)

Bow Down...Kneel Before the Lord Our Maker

- Encourage trainees to pray in a spirit of humility. If they feel free to do so, kneel down.

He Is Our God...We Are The People Of His Pasture

- Acknowledge Him as your personal Shepherd. Praise Him for His care for you.

III. HEAR HIS VOICE (PSALM 95: 8-11)

Do Not Harden Your Hearts...

- Confess any known sin in your life. Read 1 John 1:9.
- Take time to listen to the Lord. Ask Him to show you if there are areas where you need to yield old forms, habits, or methods of church planting that no longer seem biblical as a result of the Scripture you have studied in this seminar. Wrestle with God about what He would have you keep and what He would have you change in your life and ministry.
- Read Hebrews 3:7-19. Verse 13 says to encourage one another daily. Divide into pairs. Pray prayers of encouragement for each other.

LEADERSHIP

LEADERSHIP

1

LESSON

Biblical Principles of Leadership

Lesson Purpose

This lesson defines leadership and introduces five biblical teachings concerning leadership. When discussing leadership, it is essential that we begin with the absolute truth of Scripture, rather than with our own personal assumptions.

Main Points

- Leadership is influence.
- All authority is from God.

Desired Outcomes

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

- Know the one-word definition of "leadership."
- Know five basic biblical principles of leadership.

Appendix

1A Leadership Case Studies

Suggestions to Trainers

This lesson includes three in-class activities. Use your own judgment on the time spent on them. In addition, appendix 1A gives you an opportunity to consider the implications of the principles described in the lesson. If it is at all possible, this would be best done in class in small groups, or at least in a format that will encourage discussion

INTRODUCTION

It is often said that one of the greatest needs of the church is a need for better-equipped leadership. The search for leaders, or the training of them, can be best accomplished once we have defined what leadership is. How do we understand leadership? "Leadership" is a term with many connotations. When we discuss leadership in the specific context of the Church, then its actual meaning may be even more difficult to understand. Most of us have certain assumptions about leadership, which come from our particular cultures, traditions or experiences. Principles of leadership also come from Scripture, which contains absolute truth. When we study the biblical principles of leadership, we realize that godly leadership is dramatically different from the leadership in the world. In this lesson, we will focus on what the Scripture teaches about leadership.

I. THE DEFINITION OF LEADERSHIP

ACTIVITY: *Take a minute to define the term "leadership" in as few words as possible. Share your definition with others.*

Note the two definitions below:

*"Leadership is influence, the ability of one person to influence others" (Sanders, *Spiritual Leadership*. p. 31).*

*"Leadership is a dynamic process in which a man or woman with God-given capacity influences God's people toward His purposes for that group." (Clinton, *Making of a Leader*, p. 14; cf. p. 127).*

The key word in both definitions is "influence." A one-word definition for leadership may be that leadership is "influence." People gain influence (and thus leadership) in a variety of ways. Sometimes people have influence by virtue of their position. Others are influential because of their competence. Still others may have influence because of their personality. It may be difficult to determine what it is that gives people leadership, but somehow those who lead are able to do so because they have influence.

A one-word definition for leadership may be that leadership is "influence."

When we talk about leadership in these lessons, we are not talking about leadership as a formal position. Rather, we wish to emphasize leadership as a *function*, so that the person with the most influence in a group may be viewed as the real leader despite his or her position. This understanding can greatly change the perspective of those with leadership responsibilities. As a great Church leader recently said: *"When you understand that leadership is influence instead of position, that changes everything. You do not strive to be a leader; you strive to add value to people, and they'll let you be the leader"* (Maxwell, *The Potential Around You*. p. 25).

II. PRINCIPLES OF BIBLICAL LEADERSHIP

Many of our ideas concerning human nature, motivation and leadership come from the world. The worldly way of dealing with people can be quite devious. The secular business world often assumes that "leaders can't trust their subordinates to do what they should do," and that "if you trust people too much, they will take advantage of you." Worldly leaders may further believe that people will do what you want them to only when motivated by reward or threatened by punishment. As a result of these presuppositions, worldly leaders often assume authority purely on the basis of either the position they hold, or by the power of personality.

ACTIVITY: *In groups, take several minutes to discuss how you have felt victimized by leaders who behaved according to the above ideas.*

Since we live in a depraved world where we see these ideas at work so often, they may make sense to us. But we are called to another approach concerning leadership. Note the biblical principles about leadership.

A. Authority to Lead Comes from God

The centurion in Luke 7:1-10 was in charge of 100 Roman soldiers. Yet he described himself first of all, not as a leader of many, but as a "man under authority." It seems that he properly understood that though he was a leader, he was not free to lead in any way he chose. He answered to those over him.

God has established legitimate authority in a variety of institutions such as civil government (Ro 13:1-7, 1Pe 2:13-17), the family (Ex 20:12, Eph 5:22-23, 6:1-4) and the church (Heb 13:17). Just like the centurion, no human leader has complete authority. Rather, all authority comes from God. God alone is sovereign, so all those in leadership must always be in submission to Him. He works through those He places in leadership for His purpose (Pr 21:1). Jesus modeled this submission to His Father in His earthly ministry (Jn 8:28-29).

With this in mind, we can understand that the best leaders are good followers - followers of their Lord Jesus Christ. No one is free to lead in any way that he wishes. In fact, Christian leaders are not leaders by their own choice; rather, they are chosen or called by God (Jn 15:16). Great Christian leaders realize that they have a great responsibility to lead as God directs, and thus they strive to follow God as He leads. Instead of relying on their position, personality or personal power for authority, they look to God, the source of all authority.

The best leaders are good followers—followers of their Lord Jesus Christ.

B. Humble Servanthood Should Characterize Christian Leaders

A Christian leader is first and foremost a servant. Servanthood should characterize all that a leader says and does. Perhaps nothing is more deadly to a Christian leader than the opposite of

servanthood—pride. Not only does pride create barriers between leaders and followers, but also it is one of those things that the Lord hates (Pr 6:16-17).

The Christian leader is not a "ruler" in the sense of a dictator. Instead he is a servant. The word "rule" is never used in the New Testament to describe relationships between Christians. Seeking a position of leadership for personal ego satisfaction or as a base for exercising personal authority is contrary to the biblical concept of servant-leadership (Php 2:1-8).

The Christian leader is not a "ruler" in the sense of a dictator. Instead he is a servant.

Jesus made it very clear to His followers that leadership should not be self-serving (Mt 20:20-28; Jn 13:1-16). Only once in Jesus' ministry did He specifically state that He was doing something as an example for His disciples, when He was humbly serving them by washing their feet (Jn 13:15). Though many worldly leaders use intimidation or a sense of superiority to get followers to submit, these things should never be characteristic of a church leader (Mt 20:25-28, 1Pe 5:1-7).

Some Christian leaders start out humbly, but after some success in ministry, they develop a subtle pride or sense of status. But the apostle Paul grew in humility over the course of his ministry. Notice that early in his ministry he describes himself as "the least of the apostles" (1Co 15:9). Later in his letter to the Ephesians he calls himself "the least of all saints" (Eph 3:8). And at the end of his life he describes himself as the "chief of all sinners" (1Ti 1:15).

C. Christian Leadership Needs to be Developed through Careful Study and Exercise

We often wonder whether leaders are born or made. There can be no doubt that certain people are born with leadership ability, but Christian leaders are made. After all, who is born with the ability to do all of the tasks below, which might be expected of a Christian leader?

- Instruct the church in God's Word
- Help others to identify and use their spiritual gifts, talents and abilities
- Motivate others to good works
- Plan and organize the activities of God's people
- Encourage the weary
- Counsel the weak in faith

Most of these activities are supernatural and foreign to us. Christian leadership goes against our in-born sinful inclinations; therefore, it must be developed. Notice the table below which indicates many of the differences between worldly leadership and Christian leadership.

Figure 1.1 Worldly vs. Christian Leadership

Worldly Leadership	Christian Leadership
Self-confident	Confident in God
Understands man	Understands God and man
Makes his own decisions	Seeks to find God's will
Ambitious	Servant
Develops his own methods	Finds and follows God's methods
Enjoys commanding others	Delights in obeying God
Motivated by personal considerations	Motivated by love for God and man
Independent	God-dependent

Perhaps you know someone who is characterized as a "natural leader." Probably the qualities that have earned him that title are the ones in the left column of Figure 1.1. In the same way, one without these qualities would probably not be described as a "leader." In reality, both the "natural leader" and the "non-leader" probably need to work equally hard to become true "Christian leaders." The "natural leader" must learn to rely on God, instead of on himself. The "non-leader" must learn that he *can* rely on God, even if he himself is weak.

Both the "natural leader" and the "non-leader" need to work hard to become true "Christian leaders."

Leadership is also one of the spiritual gifts. Those who have this gift (and not all do) are instructed to exercise their gift diligently (Ro 12:8). The Holy Spirit may give this gift of leadership to "natural leaders" or "non-leaders." It does not depend on natural ability. Therefore, it is important for each believer to discover whether or not this is one of his or her gifts. This is best done through participation in serving others.

The gift of leadership might be compared to the gift of evangelism. Some believers have it, and some do not. However, all are expected to *serve* in evangelism and leadership as the occasion and need arises. Those with a gift of leadership will see more fruit from their labor, but each believer is responsible to apply the principles of biblical, Christian leadership in his life and ministry. This may be in the home, at work, in the church, in a new church plant, a small group, a cell group, or another situation. Because Christian leadership is a function (something we do) rather than a position, the Lord expects us to use it.

D. The Bible Describes a Diversity of Leadership Styles

A close examination of the Bible reveals that no two leaders are exactly alike. Leaders range from the apostolic type (Paul), characterized by the ability to motivate people to respond to God in new ways in new situations, to the pastoral type (Barnabas), characterized by nurture and management ability. Personalities and circumstances increase the diversity of leadership styles. Certainly Joshua responded differently to his leadership challenge than David did to his. Different styles are understandable because personalities and situations are always different.

Ephesians 4:11-12 describes several leadership roles that were present in the New Testament Church. Although very different from each other, each one functioned to "prepare God's people for works of service" or, in other words, to lead them into ministry.

Figure 1.2 New Testament Leadership Functions

<i>Calling</i>	Concern	Function
<i>Apostle</i>	Vision	Pioneer
<i>Prophet</i>	Sin	Preach
<i>Evangelist</i>	Salvation	Outreach
<i>Pastor</i>	Nurture	In-reach
<i>Teacher</i>	Truth	Instruct

The functions listed in Figure 1.2 are often needed in the church today. One leadership style is not necessarily better than another, but one may be more necessary than another given the needs of a group at a certain time. Throughout the duration of your ministry, you may have to assume various styles at different times because of specific needs.

ACTIVITY: Take several minutes to look at the "Church Planting Cycle" (manual 1, vision lesson 3). In small groups or as a class, discuss the styles of leadership that are necessary for each phase of the cycle.

E. The Primary Function of Church Leadership is to Equip

Traditionally, the pastors and church leaders have been thought of as the ones who "do" the ministry—as the Old Testament priests ministered for the people. However, the clear teaching of the New Testament is that *every* believer is a priest, and we are all supposed to minister. Ephesians 4:11-12 shows that the primary responsibility of the pastor should be to envision and equip the believers so that *they* are able to do the ministry. His attitude should be: "better to put 10 men to work than to do the work of 10 men." In other words, church leaders need to be facilitators.

Figure 1.3 Directive and Facilitative Leaders

DIRECTIVE LEADER	FACILITATIVE LEADER
Work oriented: "Get the job done"	People oriented: "Get people involved"
Doer	Delegator
Goal - "To do the work of the ministry"	Goal -"To equip others to minister"
Practitioner	Equipper, Enabler, Trainer

The concept of facilitation may be illustrated by the saying of an ancient Chinese wise man named LaoTse: *"When the work of the best leader is done, its task accomplished, the people will say 'we have done it ourselves.'"*

QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION, REVIEW AND APPLICATION

- What are the implications of defining leadership as "influence?" Who are the leaders in your church or ministry with this definition in mind?
- How do people become leaders in your culture?
- Why is it important that all leaders first be good followers?
- How does the understanding that your authority to lead comes from God change your perspective on your leadership?
- What chances are being taken when a new believer with natural leadership ability is given leadership in the church?
- Which of the five leadership styles shown in Figure 1.2 are most natural for you?
- In what ways are these biblical concepts of leadership contrary to worldly principles of leadership?

ACTION PLAN

Discuss worksheet 1A, "Leadership Case Studies." For each of the case studies, note what biblical principles are or are not being applied. For each situation, how would you advise the leader if you were called upon to assist?

SOURCES

- Clinton, J. Robert. *The Making of a Leader*. Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 1988.
- Sanders, J. Oswald. *Spiritual Leadership* Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1980.
- Maxwell, John. "The Potential Around You," *Leadership Journal*. Fall, 1996.



Leadership Case Studies

PRINCIPLES APPLIED

Worksheet: *answer the questions related to the case studies below.*

1. Yuri has been leading a church plant project in Yekatarinburg. Misha and Marina have been members of the team for three months. Recently Misha and Marina began to feel a great deal of frustration with the ministry. They have some good ideas for evangelism but they do not feel the freedom to even state their ideas. Their leader, Yuri, seems unwilling to listen to their suggestions. Instead he tells them what they should do and how they should do it. As a result, Misha and Marina are thinking about leaving the ministry and starting out on their own. **How would you evaluate Yuri's leadership?**
2. Gennadi is a prominent university professor who found Christ when his neighbor Nic gave him a Bible to read. He began to attend church with Nic and was impressed with the adult Bible study that meets each Wednesday night. In the first few weeks, someone suggests that Gennadi, an excellent teacher, lead the study. Gennadi's leadership could bring many visitors to the group as he is very popular and of course a good teacher as well. **Should Gennadi lead the study group?**
3. Slava leads a team of three couples in a church plant in Rostov. Slava provides excellent sermons during worship each Sunday morning and he leads a mid-week cell group, which has grown to nearly 20 faithful members. Everyone loves Slava's ability to teach and preach the Word of God, as well as his ability to organize activities. However, Slava is beginning to feel exhausted from the workload. Slava asks fellow team member Anatoli to start a new cell group with several from Slava's group. But, there is little interest, which is very discouraging for Anatoli. **Evaluate how Slava handled the transfer of responsibility to Anatoli.**
4. The new church in the Smolensk region is growing at a rapid rate. Many attribute this growth to the excellent leadership that Victor and Luba have provided. They began the church after Victor returned from Moscow with a Seminary degree. Most of those who attend are new believers with no previous church background at all. Victor does most of the preaching and Luba organizes the Sunday school program. As they have grown, Victor has had his eye out for some new leaders to assist him in the church work. But no one else seems qualified to lead. He feels fortunate to have found three young men who could be trained for church leadership. Victor found scholarships for two of them to attend the seminary in Moscow. They leave in the fall to begin a 3-year program. **How would you evaluate this method of leadership development?**
5. Boris lives in a small town in southern Russia that has no evangelical church. Boris recently discovered several believers in his village who travel all different directions to attend church- some as far away as 30 km. Under Boris's leadership, the believers are organized into a new church. As the believers gather, they are all excited about a local church and everyone enthusiastically shares ideas about how the church should be organized based on their experience in their former churches. But Boris makes it clear that he will be the pastor and that the people should forget about any traditions or practices in the churches they came from, because he is in charge as the pastor of this new church. **What do you think will be the result of Boris' approach?**

6. Keril has planted three churches in various cities in western Russia. Keril is a natural church planter. He is very energetic and outgoing, having gifts as an evangelist. He plays the guitar and sings and can entertain an audience for hours. He loves to start things and then move on to something else. The churches he starts seem to resemble his personality. They are very exiting at first but soon fizzle out when something more exciting comes along. Keril contends that this is just his personality and that there is really nothing he can do to change. He knows that God uses him in spite of this. **How would you evaluate Keril's leadership?**

7. Zhenya has been working hard in his church plant for several years. The church is doing very well. It has grown to nearly 200 in the past three years. His wife and four children sometimes go for several days without seeing him because he leaves early in the morning and returns late at night. Zhenya does not like to live this way but his people are so needy. Many are sick and need to be visited, and the soup kitchen for the homeless demands constant attention. Zhenya knows that if he stops doing all that he is, the ministry will suffer, people will not get saved and the church will not grow any more. **Do you think Zhenya is a good leader? Why or why not?**

LEADERSHIP

2

LESSON

Profile of a Leader

☞ Lesson Purpose

The purpose of this lesson is to help the trainee to understand his role as a leader in the specific context of church planting.

☞ Main Points

- There are eight characteristics of a Christian leader.
- 'Natural leaders' and 'non-leaders' can improve their leadership skills.

☞ Desired Outcomes

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

- Know the role of the leader in the church planting process.
- Know his/her personal strengths as a leader.
- Be committed to work on two specific areas where he/she intends to grow in leadership ability.

☞ Appendix

2A "The Leader"

☞ Suggestions to Trainers

Keep in mind that almost all of these concepts are expanded on in greater detail in later lessons.

INTRODUCTION

There are different styles of leaders. However, no matter what style is most natural for the church planter, he should always be a facilitator. A facilitator is someone who enables others to use their gifts and abilities more effectively. Church leaders are responsible to *prepare God's people for works of service* (Eph 4:12), rather than do most of the ministry themselves. Although a church planter must be a "doer," it is even more important that he "causes things to be done."

Below is a list of several personal characteristics and skills that enable a church plant leader to see a church planted under his ministry.

I. MAINTAIN CHRIST-LIKE CHARACTER

The church planter, first of all, must possess Christ-like character. Ministry flows from character. Consider the maxim: "private victory precedes public victory." Unless Christ has claim on your heart so that Christ-likeness is evident, how can you expect to see Christ work through you in your nation? If the church planter is not being changed by Christ, it is doubtful that others will be changed through him.

Christ-likeness springs from understanding God's love for us, and from our own need for him to work in our lives. Ministry must be a result of God's grace at work in our lives; no other motivation will be honored by God or will sustain commitment when times are tough. Awareness of God's grace in our lives is gained and sustained by meditating upon God's Word, believing his promises, prayer, and worship.

Through daily fellowship with Christ, focus on God's promises, and on the vision that He has given for your ministry. Acknowledge your dependency upon Him to accomplish His purpose in your life and ministry. Worship God for what he has done in your life already.

II. WORK WELL WITH A TEAM

Many church-planting projects start out with a leadership team in place. Other times, a church planter starts out alone and must develop others who join his team as the project develops. Whatever your situation, always work toward developing teams, both leadership teams and ministry teams. Make it a normal pattern for your ministry and for the church in its development.

Teamwork was the normal pattern for ministry in the New Testament.

Effective church planters do not work alone. On the contrary, they stand with others, or others stand with them in the work that God has called them to do. Often working with others as a team can be just the crucible in which our true character is seen and developed. Beware of the leader who is not surrounded by a team. If one cannot work with a team, how can one lead a church? Teamwork is the normal pattern for ministry in the New Testament. The Holy Spirit set apart Paul and Barnabas as a missionary team (Ac 13:2). Although Paul and Barnabas went their separate ways later in ministry, they both formed new teams with whom they ministered (Ac 15:36-41). Teamwork was so important to Paul that even when he had an open door for ministry, he held off because he was alone (2Co 2:12-13).

A "team" may be defined as a **group of people who have banded together to work toward a common objective**. A good team has common values and philosophy of ministry. The giftedness of the various team members ought to be diverse while mutual respect, affirmation and loyalty should be evident through open and constructive communication on the team. It is the job of the leader to work with the team not as a boss or chief, but as a facilitator. His teammates are not his personal staff, but his co-workers. Building and working with a team can be extremely difficult and time intensive process, but you can be certain that its dividends are great.

III. DEVELOP THE GIFTEDNESS AND ABILITIES OF OTHERS

The leader of a church plant multiplies himself through the identification and development of other workers. Many leaders try to build their ministries around themselves and their own accomplishments. But God calls us to disciple and train others (2Ti 2:2). It is always better to put 10 people to work than to do the work of 10 people.

It is always better to put 10 people to work than to do the work of 10 people.

One of the main tasks of the leader of a church plant must be to enable others to identify their spiritual gifts and to become effective in ministry. This involves training mature church workers as well as new converts to do the tasks of the ministry, and matching people with appropriate gifts to the ministry opportunities as they arise. This also means the leader is, first of all, a *trainer*. Even if he does not spend a lot of time training in the technical sense, his life models how to do ministry. People develop their gifts and abilities by just being around this person.

Part of the discipleship process of new believers is to help them identify and use their gifts. Involving them in ministry is a great way to do this. Consider taking a disciple on a visit to a sick person, or on an evangelistic opportunity. This is an effective way to train him or her for ministry.

IV. KNOW HOW TO DELEGATE RESPONSIBILITY

A wise leader is happy to delegate when it is appropriate (Exodus 18). Delegation accomplishes more than working alone, by involving others in the ministry.

There are several reasons for delegation. The church planter may delegate responsibilities in areas of ministry where he is weak and others are gifted. In other situations, he may delegate so that others will feel a sense of ownership for the ministry. People tend to be more committed to things they themselves participate in.

While a church planter always looks for ways to delegate, he does so without demanding more from others than he himself is willing to give. He avoids overworking others. When assigning people to ministry responsibilities, he also makes sure that they have the necessary resources to complete the task. When appropriate, the wise leader models ministry before expecting it from others.

V. SET GOALS, PLANS AND OBJECTIVES AND WORK TOWARD THEM

Setting goals and planning is a normal practice approved in Scripture. In Proverbs, we learn that we should "Make plans by seeking advice, if you wage war, obtain guidance" (Pr 20:18). Jesus used the illustrations of a builder who did not plan before building a tower and of a king who did not prepare properly for a battle as examples of people poorly committed to their tasks (Lk 14:28-33). If we are truly committed to our ministry, then setting clear goals and plans is proper for us as well.

A church planter prayerfully establishes goals, objectives and strategies in consultation with his team. His plans are realistic. He avoids unrealistic goals that cannot be achieved. His plans are flexible, so that he can cope effectively with ambiguity and change. He is able to adapt strategies and plans to specific situations. When necessary, he adjusts his priorities and emphasis according to the various phases of church birth and growth.

Figure 2.1 Characteristics of a Christian Leader



VI. ARTICULATE VISION IN SUCH A WAY THAT IT INSPIRES OTHERS

The leader is a person of vision. That is, he sees not only the present, but can also imagine what the future could be like. For the church planter, this means communing with God through the Word and prayer, with the result that he has a clear sense of what God wants to do through him in the future. He also recognizes the importance of persuasively communicating this vision to the church or to the other believers who will help him plant a new church. He may develop a theme/slogan that highlights the vision and philosophy of the ministry. A visionary church planter is able to keep the vision central to everything that is done in the establishment of the new church. Through his efforts, those involved in the church plant remain committed to the vision, and feel responsible for the growth and success of the ministry.

VII. BE PERSISTENT AND OVERCOME SETBACKS

A Christian leader must be persistent. Satan will resist any attempt to build the Church of Jesus Christ. Problems *will* arise. He must be willing to work hard and long and not give up. He takes initiative and is aggressive in getting things done, without being bossy or unpleasant. He is a self-starter like the ant in Proverbs 6:7 who works because of his own initiative, without waiting to be directed. He approaches challenges as "opportunities" rather than as "problems." He believes that God will do great things for His Own glory.

A leader approaches challenges as "opportunities" rather than as "problems."

Most people are reactive; meaning their activity is controlled by events as they happen to them. A reactive person is always responding to what is going on around him, and ends up being the victim of circumstances. A Christian leader or church planter should be pro-active. He needs to think *ahead* and prepare himself and those to whom he ministers so that they can victoriously work through problems when they happen. For example, a Christian leader teaches truth *before* the cults steal his sheep, and deals with problems while they are still small and manageable. Inevitably, there will be times when the best leader must react to a problem. But a good leader will lay a good foundation in advance, so that problems are easier to solve. Even in difficult times, he will remain a *leader*, rather than a *victim*.

Table 2.2 Victim or Leader?

Victim	Leader
Says: "There is nothing we can do"	Says: "Let's look at the alternatives"
Focuses on the problems	Focuses on the possibilities
Lives in the past	Lives for the future
Pessimistic	Optimistic
Waits for others to move	Takes initiative

VIII. LEAD IN EVANGELISM

It is impossible to plant a church without evangelism. Because evangelism is such an important part of church planting, it must be clear that it is a priority of the leader. Many in the church planting project will have the same attitude as the leader when it comes to evangelism. If the leader is not involved, they will not be. If the leader only talks about evangelism, and never does it, neither will they. If the leader is passionately active as an evangelist, they will be too.

Evangelism is a fundamental task commanded repeatedly in the New Testament (Mt 28:19-20). Jesus trained 12 men to take His place. Training them was His main focus - but He never lost sight of the reason He was training them. He made it obvious by His teaching and His example that His concern was for the masses who needed salvation. His disciples caught that same concern through Jesus' example as well as His explicit teaching. Paul also told Timothy to do the work of an evangelist (2Ti 4:5). Evangelism may not have been his gift, but Paul felt that Timothy had to make it a priority.

Evangelism and ministry training are both crucial activities of church planters. One may ask how the church plant leader can concentrate on each of these activities at the same time. This is a good question. One way to answer it is to involve the leaders you are training in evangelism. Always work with a partner and he will always be learning.

CONCLUSION

The above personal characteristics and skills better enable a church plant leader to successfully see a church planted under his or her ministry. A church planter will be wise to develop these skills and characteristics. Yet it should be kept in mind that church planters are not all alike. Personalities and styles differ as with any other ministry gift. In which of the above ways are you gifted as a church planter? In which ways are you limited, in your opinion?

QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION, REVIEW AND APPLICATION

- Why should a leader delegate?
- What particular task are you doing that you should delegate to another?
- What is a facilitator?
- In what ways is a church planter like a farmer?
- How can a leader get others involved in setting goals?
- Which is more important, the training of leaders or active evangelism?
- What does it mean to be pro-active and why should a church planter have this characteristic?
- Do you have a team to work with? Why or why not?
- Do you or your team have goals for your ministry?

ACTION PLAN

See Appendix 2A: "The Leader." What characteristics of Christian leadership do you see in this account of the life of Christ? List them for yourself on a sheet of paper, and then compare them to the characteristics discussed in this lesson. Do they agree? How important do you think they are? How does your life and leadership compare?

LEADERSHIP
APPENDIX
2A

The Leader

The leader had quite a job to do. His mission was to transform the world. The transformation this leader sought was not merely cosmetic, or temporary. It involved a whole new philosophy of life resulting in a new culture reaching every tribe and nation. To say the least, the leader had a most difficult task before him. Other great leaders had attempted less grand things and failed. Humanly speaking, this leader was completely alone in this mission. No one else was committed to it, nor did anyone else even understand it. How would he ever accomplish his task? How would he get his message out? How would he inspire others to live according to it?

An examination of the leader's method contains many surprises. The leader did not do many of the things that we might expect. He did not seek public office or gather an army. He didn't open an institute, or hold formal seminars to train others in his new philosophy; he did not pull his followers away for a period of secluded intellectualism. He did not submit writings to a printing press to produce books and newsletters pitching his plan. Instead, the leader started by gathering a small group of followers to himself (Mt 10:2-4). Rather than concentrate on the multitudes, he spent three years specifically training these men in his transforming way of life in hopes that they would then help him in the transformation of the multitudes.

The leader did not do many of the things that we might expect.

With only 12 men, this seemed like a hopelessly small start. Nevertheless, he lived his beliefs and deeply loved these 12 as if they were his own family. They lived together, eating, resting, working and relaxing without any constraints or barriers. In all this, the leader put his ideas into action by living them out with his followers. They traveled together from village to village where he interacted with others, meeting all kinds of needs. The leader commonly preached to enormous crowds (Mk 4:1). His sermons weren't elaborate; he used many illustrations from life as it was lived in that land at that time. He would often retreat with his followers alone to the countryside where he made his sermons especially meaningful through in-depth follow-up discussions (Mk 4:34).

The followers were committed and seemed eager to learn, but they showed little promise. Several were backward villagers, barely literate; one had been a tax collector, a profession despised by the general population; a few were in the fishing business. At best they were ordinary men, not the 'cut above' kind from whom one would expect great things. None of them possessed the statesman-like charisma desired for leaders of a great movement. And although the leader carried a spiritual message, none of the men he picked were religious leaders. In spite of all these disqualifiers, these unlikely followers were the ones that he personally picked to stand alone as the front-runners of a great movement. The leader thought that the qualifications of these men would be that they had been with him.

The followers he picked were at best, ordinary men.

The leader had an unusual humility. He paid no attention to sarcastic remarks about his hometown. He was content to be known as a small-town boy and the son of a carpenter. He did not seek attention or self-gain, but sought to empower others and to stay out of the limelight himself. Some thought that he could have had a greater impact if his leadership would have been more formal, if he had worked in the existing system. But the leader rejected formal status. He rejected the direct control of the kingdoms of the world even when it was offered to him (Mt 4:8-10). Instead of working toward reformation of the current system, the leader endeavored to ignite a whole new movement.

In retrospect, we might wonder about the leader's competency. He befriended sinners (Mk 2:15-17). His sermons and his teaching stepped on the toes of many who were in positions to help the cause. With few exceptions, this leader showed no confidence in the religious leaders of his day. His standards were high—he demanded all or nothing from would-be followers and many could not make the commitment (Mt 10:37-39).

The leader evaluated customs and routines according to their resulting function. For example, to the leader, "busy work" could be a trap that kept people from really important things (Lk 10:41-42). Concerning the religious law, the leader was always respectful while also being practical, not getting hung up on the letter of law. He vented the full extent of his anger when he observed the Temple not being used for its intended function. The leader scorned traditions and rituals that weighed people down instead of providing inner freedom. He was much more concerned with inner transformation according to the 'spirit of the law' than with outward conformity to rules and regulations (Mt. 15:7-9).

The leader loved people deeply; his mission involved servant-like ministry to other people. Perhaps this is why many people do not remember him first and foremost as a 'leader.' Misconceptions of leadership as 'rank,' 'position,' or 'status' keep many from thinking of this person as a leader. Rather, he is remembered as a servant, a teacher, a healer, a counselor, or any such designation that makes clear that this man assisted and guided people. His personal routine was often influenced by the needs of others. He always took time to talk to common people, to meet their needs by healing them or guiding them toward inner freedom. When large crowds came to him, he responded to their interests and needs with little regard to formal schedules or his own needs. He did not mind the interruptions of children (Mt 19:13-15). He dealt graciously with all sorts of unruly interruptions, even when the ceiling was torn away over his head. He did not get caught up in petty divisions of people. So important were people to him that he summarized the law relationally.

The leader loved people deeply; his mission involved servant-like ministry to other people.

He was not impressed as much by knowledge, riches, or rigid obedience to the law, as he was by faith. In fact, if you wanted to impress the leader, mustering up faith seemed like the best way to go about it. Faith was perhaps his only measurement for others. He constantly urged others to believe and was prone to almost embarrassing outburst of excitement when he found people of faith. When an outcast of society demonstrated faith in him, even in a disruptive way, the leader accepted him (Lk 7:36-38). Though he personally possessed supernatural ability, at several points he stated that he was actually limited by the lack of faith of others.

Near the end of his work with his followers, it seemed that there were many failures. His followers often could not understand what he taught. The general population was confused about who he was. His followers were committed to him when he was popular but they did not stand by him when he needed them most. Even one of his closest followers denied even knowing the leader at a crucial moment (Mt 26:69-74). Another follower betrayed him in favor of the first solid cash to come along, but then soon committed suicide. Eventually the establishment turned on the leader. He was arrested, tried, convicted and put to death as an enemy of the people. So much for transforming the world.

His followers were no doubt surprised and disheartened by the leader's strange and sudden departure. They did not feel ready for him to leave. It seemed that he had just begun. He had had an amazing impact, but the world, having just rejected the leader, was far from transformed. Because the work was not complete, the leader, in his leaving, gave his followers the mandate to lead on as he had done (Mt 28:18-20). He had sufficiently prepared them so that if they applied what they had learned from him, they would have a similar (even greater) impact.

And lead on these followers did. They emerged as people of great faith and vision for the transformation the leader had sought. With tremendous zeal and enthusiasm they carried on the mission. As they did so they made one thing very clear—the leader had never really left. It only seemed that way for a moment. In fact, his spiritual presence was key to the very transformation he sought. He, the leader, was with them as they set out to spread his message to every tribe and nation. His presence was their message and their inspiration!

These followers, showing themselves to be good followers after all, did not depart significantly from the pattern that the leader had established. They carried on influential discussions with common people in the market places, as well as the established temples and synagogues (though their own worship centers were apparently in homes). They lived their message boldly and loved others deeply, while gathering still other followers to do the same. As people accepted the message, local fellowships celebrating the leader's presence were established. Like the leader, these followers and their local fellowships had such an impact that the formal establishments of government and religion were seriously threatened—to the point of retaliation.

His followers lived their message boldly and loved others deeply.

Not many generations later, followers developed more 'sophisticated' methods of following the leader. Sometimes with more regard for "doing as the Romans do" than for doing as the leader had done, they made use of the dominant modes of worldly operations. The informal spontaneous movement that emphasized the leader's presence gave way to formal institutions and rigid programs. Impressive organizations, large buildings, and 'cutting-edge' programs replaced the simple celebrations and heartfelt proclamation which allegiance to the leader had inspired. This trend provided a certain security and control, but the leader's presence was overshadowed and much of what the leader stood for was denied. By establishing and honoring forms at the expense of functions, the real impact of his mission was lost.

Formal institutions and rigid programs overshadowed the leader's presence.

The leader's influence continues. Those who follow the leader are commanded to work as he did. As elaborate schemes for transforming the world through programs and institutions show less promise than ever, his followers should again be reminded of the unique approach of the leader. The basic idea is strangely simple: a leader, who lives what he believes, deeply loves his followers with whom he shares a way of life—this is leadership at its best. This is The Great Leader who touches lives and transforms the world.

SOURCES

Adapted from *The Teacher*, an unpublished manuscript by Ted Ward and Lois McKinney.

CELL GROUPS

CELL GROUPS

1

LESSON

Functions and Benefits of Cell Groups

Lesson Purpose

The Purpose of this lesson is to present the advantages of using cell groups for ministry.

Main Points

- Cell groups are different from small groups because they multiply.
- The four primary functions of a cell group are: fellowship, worship, discipleship and evangelism.

Desired Outcomes

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

- Be able to describe how a cell group is different from a small group.
- Be able to discuss the benefits of using cell groups in evangelism, developing relationships, discipleship and church planting.

Suggestions to Trainers

This lesson contains a reference to Vision Appendix 3A (from Manual 1) "Church Planting Models." You should review this appendix beforehand and have it available as you teach.

I. FOUNDATIONS OF CELL GROUP

A. Introduction

More and more churches all over the world are realizing the tremendous importance of cell groups. Through cell group ministry churches are growing and people are using their spiritual gifts. The body of Christ is being mobilized for ministry, and the end result is that the lost are finding the truth and love of Jesus.

Are cell groups something new, the latest fad or fashionable ministry in the church? Not at all. The use of cell groups in the church began with the New Testament Church described in the book of Acts. The "cells" of the church met in people's homes for worship, for fellowship, for growth in their new faith, and for sharing with neighbors and friends this good news they had found. These cells also came together for larger meetings in the temple courts for worship, teaching and evangelism.

Why do we use the term "cell" group? Why not call it a "small" group? Many churches have small groups that meet for various types of ministry, most often for Bible study. To understand the difference between small groups and cell groups, we can use an example from science. In biology, a cell is a living, growing organism that multiplies itself over and over again. The main difference between a cell group and a small group is that a cell group **multiplies**, whereas a small group may not. This is a vital distinction. You can perform many different types of ministry in a group, but if one of the goals of the group is not to grow and multiply itself into new groups, then it cannot be called a cell group.

The main difference between a cell group and a small group is that a cell group **multiplies**, whereas a small group may not.

B. Distinctives

Rather than giving a comprehensive definition of a cell group in this lesson, we will develop a "progressive" understanding of what a cell group is and does as we work through the cell group lessons in this manual. However, it is important from the beginning to understand the foundational distinctives of any cell group. Every cell group has:

1. ***A commitment to evangelism.***
2. ***A commitment to nurture and disciple believers.***
3. ***A commitment to develop leaders.***
4. ***A commitment to multiplication, so as to fulfill the Great Commission.***

II. FUNCTIONS OF CELL GROUPS

There are many ways to use groups in the process of church planting. Even so, cell groups that are used in church planting seem to have some common ingredients—or common functions—among them. These ingredients are fellowship, worship, discipleship and evangelism. These same functions can be found from the example of the early church of the New Testament. Of course, these are not the only functions seen in the New Testament church, but these are areas where cell groups and the early church share commonality in function. The following tables compare these functions in the New Testament Church and in cell groups.

The Function of Fellowship	
<i>In the New Testament church</i>	<i>In Cell Groups</i>
<p>The fellowship that the believers enjoyed was one of the distinguishing characteristics of the early church (Ac 2:42).</p> <p>They encouraged one another (Heb 10:25, 1Th 5:11) and often broke bread together (Ac 2:42, Ac 20:7,11).</p>	<p>In a cell group, fellowship is mutual encouragement, sharing, and friendship in Christ, in order to meet the needs of love, acceptance, unity and support.</p> <p><i>Possible Activities:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sharing problems with one another • Bearing one another's burdens • Interceding in prayer one for another • Eating meals together • Having fun together as families • Encouraging one another

The Function of Worship	
<i>In the New Testament church</i>	<i>In Cell Groups</i>
<p>Prayer and praise are a recurring theme in the New Testament church (Ac 2:47, Ac 1:14, Ac 6:4, Col 4:2).</p> <p>Their worship came from hearts that were "glad and sincere." It was a natural response to God for the joy they had found in Christ and in the presence of other believers.</p>	<p>In a cell group, worship is praising and magnifying God by focusing on His nature, actions, and words, in order to bring joy to God.</p> <p>Possible Activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Singing songs • Praising God for His greatness • Thanking God for all things • Worshipping God for who He is • Praying out loud or silently • Reading passages of worship (e.g. Psalms) • Writing and/or reading Christian poetry

The Function of Discipleship	
<i>In the New Testament church</i>	<i>In Cell Groups</i>
<p>There was a strong commitment in the early church to "the ministry of the word" (Ac 6:4).</p> <p>The first believers devoted themselves to the apostle's teaching (Ac 2:42), and as the church spread, this teaching took on the form of the letters from the apostles to the church (Col 4:16, Php 1:1, Gal 1:2).</p>	<p>In a cell group, discipleship is the process of being helped, taught and mentored by others, in order to grow in mind and spirit toward the image of Christ.</p> <p>Possible Activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Memorizing Scripture • Studying Bible passages as a group • Learning to apply the Bible to everyday life • Spending time with a mature brother/sister • Being involved in ministry with the group • Learning and using spiritual gifts

The Function of Evangelism	
<i>In the New Testament church</i>	<i>In Cell Groups</i>
<p>Sharing the good news of Jesus came naturally to the believers in the early church. Evangelism was not a "program" that they had to develop, nor was it something they had to be specially trained for – it was the love of Christ expressing itself through their lives and words to those around them (Ac 5:42, 4:20). It was the Holy Spirit working through them (Ac 4:31), as they shared Christ both in homes and in public places (Ac 20:20). The result was that people believed on the name of the Lord Jesus and were saved (Ac 8:12, 16:31-34).</p>	<p>In a cell group, evangelism is reaching out with the good news of Christ's love to people in need, in order to help them know God as Father and Christ as Savior.</p> <p>Possible Activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Praying with two others in a Prayer Triplet for unsaved friends • Inviting unbelievers to the group • Meeting needs of people outside the group • Making friends with unbelievers • Sharing Christ with unbelievers

III. BENEFITS OF CELL GROUPS

A. Benefits for Evangelism

Too often, our churches have visible or invisible barriers that keep people out. We have traditions, we have certain ways we dress and act, and we might even have expectations for those who would visit. Tradition can be good in order to provide a sense of community and continuity, but it can really make it hard for people to come in to a church from the "outside."

Research has shown that it is difficult for people to cross cultural barriers to go to church. If they perceive that they have to dress differently, behave differently, or pretend to be someone they are not, they will not attend church. They feel like there is a vast gulf between them and the church.

The informal nature of cell groups provides a more natural "bridge" to unbelievers.

Cell groups provide a much more natural "bridge" to unbelievers. As members in a cell group develop relationships with unbelieving friends, it is much more natural for them to invite them to a group meeting. And for the unbeliever, coming to a small, informal gathering is much less threatening than going to a place where they don't know anyone and aren't sure what the "rules" are.

In John 13:35, Jesus said, "By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another." As visitors come to a cell group, one of the most powerful witnesses they will have is the caring and nurturing which occurs in the group. They should see a difference in our attitudes, words and deeds, and begin to wonder why we are different. As they see the love in the group and begin to experience that caring and love themselves, they will be drawn to Jesus, the Source of that love.

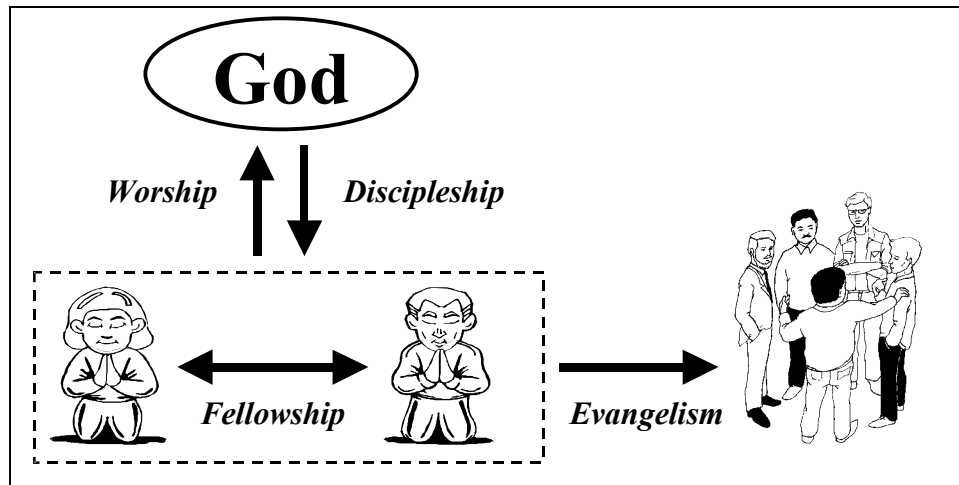
B. Benefits for Developing Relationships

When we look at Jesus' ministry here on earth, it's important to note that He chose to live in community with His disciples. These twelve men prayed together, worshipped God together, learned by Jesus' words and example, ate together, encouraged one another, and proclaimed together the good news of salvation. Of course, it's not an accident that Jesus chose to use a group to prepare his disciples for ministry. Their group was the first "cell" of an organism which, like the parable of the mustard seed in Matthew chapter 13, started very small and quickly grew very large.

Ministry that is done in cell groups has many benefits, and one of them is the natural development of relationships in the group. As the group meets for fellowship, worship, discipleship and evangelism, each of these activities fosters a unique kind of relationship. These relationships, also illustrated in Figure 1.1, are:

- Fellowship: Man to Man
- Worship: Man to God
- Discipleship: God to Man
- Evangelism: The Body of Christ to the Lost

Figure 1.1. Four Kinds of Cell Group Relationships



In a cell group, the members spend time together, participate in ministry together, encourage and pray for one another, and help each other with struggles and needs. There is a strength and intensity to their love and devotion towards God and towards each other. They feel a sense of belonging, of being part of a community that cares for them. As the group members grow in their love for each other, there is something very special about the time they spend together in worship, as they express together the love they have for God.

A cell group also provides an ideal environment for the development of mentoring or discipling relationships. More mature believers are able to come alongside younger believers to encourage them, to teach them, and to perform ministry together with them.

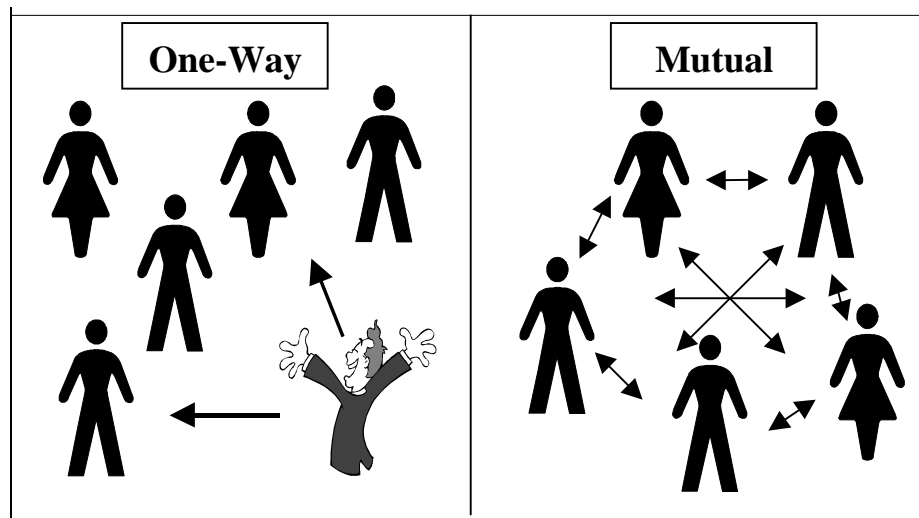
Since one of the goals of a cell group is to grow and multiply itself, the members will continually be looking for ways to reach out to the lost around them. They will be able to share ideas with each other and to learn from each other different ways that they can share Christ with their family and friends. There is a commitment in a cell group to building relationships with unbelievers, in order to share with them the good news of Jesus.

C. Benefits for Discipleship

Romans 14:19 says, "Let us therefore make every effort to do what leads to peace and to mutual edification." Cell groups provide a place where believers can be ministered to, and where they can minister to others. The Bible outlines clear responsibilities that believers have towards one another. All of these occur naturally in a cell group, as each person ministers according to his giftedness.

Ministry between believers is an important aspect of the cell group church. Believers are to try to excel in gifts that build up the church (1Co 14:12). Spiritual gifts were given to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ might be built up (Eph 4:12). We are supposed to encourage one another (1Th 4:18) and speak words that will build up others according to their needs (Eph 4:29). This assumes that we share our burdens one with another (Gal 6:2) so that we are able to help each other. Our greatest desire should be to honor one another in brotherly love (Ro 12:10) and to love one another deeply, from the heart (1Pe 1:22). The dynamics of a cell group provide a natural and effective way for believers to fulfill the biblical mandate to build up one another, as illustrated in Figure 1.2.

Figure 1.2. Mutual Discipleship



Cell groups are also the place where the spiritual gifts of each member are discovered, developed and used. In a cell group setting, people are nurtured and encouraged to learn their spiritual giftedness through their involvement in the ministry of the cell. In this way, they grow in their faith and maturity, and have opportunity to be discipled by more mature Christians. In time, they will repeat this process and begin to disciple those in the group who are less spiritually mature.

Many new Christians will have problems and needs with which the group can help. A cell group can effectively care for and meet physical, spiritual, social and emotional needs of people. The members of the group grow to know and love one another through the sharing of these needs and through working together to meet them. For many, it will be the first time they will learn that truths from the Bible can relate to their everyday life. They will learn how to study the Bible for themselves, and how to apply what they are learning to the problems and difficulties which they face.

D. Benefits for Development of Leaders

Another positive aspect of starting churches by using cell groups is the issue of leadership. Robert Logan, in his article "Multiplication of Cell Groups," says, "How many people can one Spirit-filled human care for or train? Christ himself drew the line at twelve. Yet here we are, pastors and lay leaders, attempting to draw into our fold and then single-handedly care for the needs of people in groups of 50, 100, 250, 500 and sometimes 1,000 people! Are we greater than our master? Although somewhat dependent on cultural differences, ten seems a mid-range ideal for the number of people who adequately can be cared for by a Spirit-filled Christian lay minister." The benefit of cell groups is that leaders are responsible for the spiritual development of only a handful of people, not tens or hundreds. This eliminates leaders who are trying to minister to the point of exhaustion.

The cell group approach also involves many more people as it gives lay leaders the chance to develop their spiritual gift of leadership. Instead of having "professional clergy" who are given positions of leadership based on what they know, cell group leaders are qualified by the maturity and ability they have demonstrated through their ministry in the cell group.

E. Benefits for Church Planting

The use of cell groups has many benefits in the process of church planting. In order to start new churches, you need to evangelize, build up new believers in their faith, develop new leaders and make sure that all of the functions of a church are present. Cell groups provide the means to accomplish all of these goals. Cells can also provide a sense of corporate identity in a new church.

There are many ways to start a church. Think back to the Vision Appendix 3A "Church Planting Models" from Manual 1. Some new churches are started from existing congregations (daughter church model). Others are started by a church planting team that is sent out to a new area from an existing church (colonization model). Still others are started independent of an existing church structure (mission team model). Some are started in formal church buildings, and others meet informally in people's homes. One of the greatest advantages of cell groups is that they can be used to the benefit of a church planter, no matter which type of church planting model he is working with.

Cell groups can be used to the benefit of a church planter, no matter which type of church planting model he is using.

In a saturation church planting strategy, it is the desire of the church planter to fill an area with churches that reproduce and start new churches themselves. What are some of the traditional barriers to church growth and reproduction? Ineffective evangelism, lack of discipleship, not enough money, insufficient numbers of trained leaders, and quite often, a lack of vision to reach the lost for Christ. Cell groups provide a natural and effective way to evangelize, to disciple new believers and to develop new leaders. If the groups meet in people's homes, there might not be a need for a formal church building. Eliminating this cost enables the church to start new churches when the cell groups are ready, not when funds are available. In other words, lack of funds is not a hindrance to natural church growth.

Cell groups provide the ability to develop a strategy whereby an entire neighborhood, town or country can be saturated with an effective witness for Christ. Without traditional barriers to growth, the cell groups can flourish. Simply stated, **the use of cell groups makes it easier to start new churches.**

QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION, REVIEW AND APPLICATION

- What is the primary difference between a small group and a cell group?
- Can the "one another" ministries be done in a traditional Sunday morning church service? What will be the impact on a Christian if these needs are not met? Will new Christians grow and mature if these needs are not met?
- Are there any barriers in your church that would prevent an unbeliever who has never been to church from coming to one of your services? How can cell groups be used as a "bridge" to unbelievers?
- In general, how can cell groups be used as part of an effective saturation church planting strategy?

ACTION PLAN

Find a Christian friend or acquaintance who does not know about cell groups. Explain to him the benefits of a cell group approach to ministry, and ask him to give you reasons why he agrees or disagrees with you. If possible, discuss his responses with other trainees who are studying these materials.

SOURCES

Logan, Robert. *Multiplication of Cell Groups*. Old Tappan, NJ: Fleming H. Revell Co., n.d.

CELL GROUPS

LESSON 2

Principles of Cell Group Leadership

☛ Lesson Purpose

The Purpose of this lesson is to provide a general overview of the functions and responsibilities of a cell group leader.

☛ Main Points

- The four main functions of the cell group must be balanced.
- It is vital to develop an apprentice leader.

☛ Desired Outcomes

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

- Understand the unique role of the cell group leader in the overall ministry of a cell group.
- Understand the responsibilities of the cell group leader for each of the activities of a cell group meeting.
- Know the principles of effective planning for cell group growth and multiplication.
- Complete a sample meeting plan for their "first" cell group meeting.

☛ Appendices

- 2A Cell Group Ice Breakers
- 2B Sample Activities In A Cell Group Meeting

I. OVERALL LEADERSHIP CONCEPTS

A. Model the Christian Life

Since evangelism is an essential element of cell group ministry, there most likely will be some new believers or spiritually immature believers in the group at any given time. Many of these people do not understand what it means to be a Christian or what it means to serve God in ministry. The cell group leader has the privilege of teaching them these things by the example of what he says and does. He needs to be open with his group about the blessings in his life as well as the burdens. He should share with the group both victories and struggles in his walk with the Lord, and how he reacts to the different circumstances around him. This will not only encourage the cell group members, but it will also help to teach them how to live out what they believe in very practical ways.

When the leader teaches by "modeling," the group members will be better able to understand the Christian life and to teach it to others. It is one of the teaching methods that Jesus used with His disciples. As they spent time with Jesus, they learned simply by watching and listening. In 1 Thessalonians 1:6-7, Paul, Silas and Timothy describe how the Thessalonians became "imitators" of them, and then became a "model to all the believers in Macedonia and Achaia." Paul, in 1 Corinthians 11:1, instructs the believers to "follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ." A cell group leader needs to set an example in lifestyle and ministry that his group can follow.

B. Develop New Leaders

One of the foundational purposes of every cell group is to multiply itself. When a group is ready to multiply, a trained and equipped person needs to be ready to take over as the leader of the new group.

One of the benefits of cell groups is that they provide an excellent means to develop new Christian leaders. One of the first priorities of the cell group leader is to prayerfully choose a person from the group to be the "apprentice" leader. This person should show some ability and aptitude for leadership, but by no means will have all the qualities of an effective leader. One of the roles of a cell group leader is to be a mentor for the apprentice leader. The apprentice must not only listen to and see what the cell group leader is doing, but he or she must also take an active role in the leadership ministry as well. Cell Group lesson 9 "Training New Cell Group Leaders" (in Manual 3) will examine in detail the process of new leadership development. The most important thing to remember when a new group is being started is that God desires to raise up one or more of the people in that group to be cell group leaders themselves.

One of the first priorities of the cell group leader is to prayerfully choose a person from the group to be the "apprentice" leader.

C. Equip and Release for Ministry

All Christians should understand which spiritual gift(s) they have been given by the Holy Spirit, and learn how to use those gifts. Unfortunately, many believers have little opportunity to use their spiritual giftedness, even if they do understand what it is (and many of them don't). The nature of cell groups enables Christians not only to discover their spiritual giftedness, but also to develop and use that giftedness in ministry.

The cell group leader needs to provide ways to help the members discover their spiritual giftedness. There are several "tests" or "spiritual inventories" which are available to help a person understand the spiritual gifts in general, and to help them see which gift the Holy Spirit may have given them. Quite often, a person's giftedness can be confirmed when they begin to be involved in different types of ministry.

The cell group leader must provide opportunities both for discovering spiritual giftedness, and for using that giftedness in ministry. This is done primarily through consistent and increasing delegation of ministry to the members of the group. The leader will only be able to delegate very small tasks at first, but as the group grows and matures, he should continually be striving to involve each member in the activities and ministries of the group.

II. LEADING THE CELL GROUP MEETING

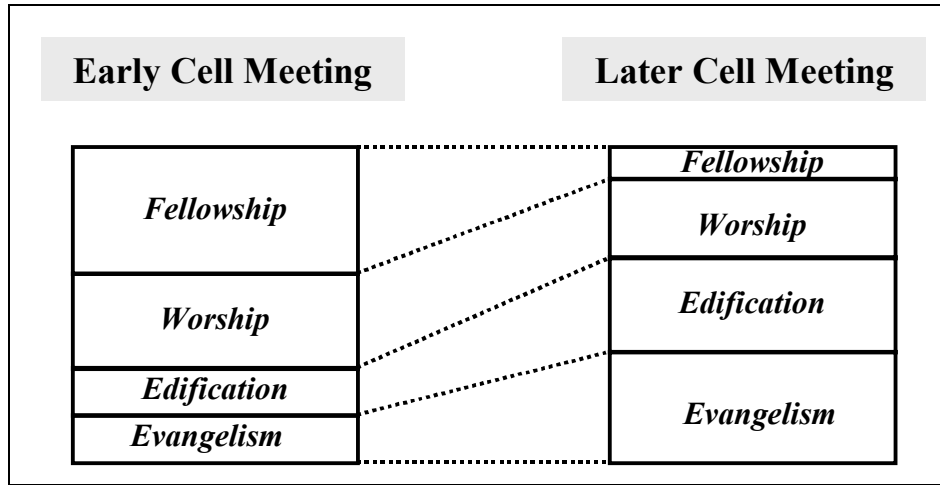
There is no "correct" format for a cell group meeting. It is the responsibility of the leader to decide how the meetings will be organized and conducted. However, each meeting should include some time for each of the four functions of a cell group (fellowship, worship, edification, and evangelism).

A "typical" cell group meeting might have the following order:

- It begins with a time of fellowship and sharing between the group members.
- It is followed by a time of worship with prayer, singing and praises to God.
- After this, there is a time for discussing and studying the Bible.
- Then the group moves to a time for ministry envisioning, where the members discuss personal and group activities to reach friends, neighbors and perhaps larger groups with the Gospel. This might include prayer time for specific individuals who have not yet been invited to the group.

The amount of time spent in each activity depends on how long the group has been meeting. Initially, the group should spend more time in fellowship and less for Bible discussion. In time, more emphasis will be placed on Bible study and evangelism. This changing balance is demonstrated in Figure 2.1.

Figure 2.1 Balancing Cell Functions



Generally speaking, the entire cell group meeting should not last more than 90 minutes. For example, the group might spend 20 minutes in fellowship, 20 minutes in worship, 30 minutes in Bible discussion, and 20 minutes in the evangelism time.

The leader has the responsibility to start the meeting on time, move the group from activity to activity, and end the meeting on time. Each of the four functions of the cell is vital to the growth and maturity of the members, so the leader must make sure that the group spends time in each.

A cell group leader is responsible for the planning and direction of each of the cell meetings. As the cell grows and matures, the leader will be able to delegate various activities in the meeting to others in the group. Each aspect of the meeting needs some type of preparation:

A. Location

The leader needs to decide where the group will meet and who will be the host. Quite often the leader is also the host. The host makes sure that a room has been set up with seats that allow the members to see each other (a circle allows for the greatest amount of interaction between members). Optionally, the host may also arrange for the preparation of refreshments (which can be as simple as tea and/or coffee).

B. Fellowship

The fellowship time can be as formal or as informal as the leader desires. If there are new members or visitors to the group, it is recommended that you use some sort of "ice breaker" activity to make them feel welcome, and to help each person in the group learn more about the others. The fellowship time is when the members find out what has been happening in the lives of the other members, to encourage them, to share joys and sorrows with them, and to build each other up.

For some examples of activities which will help cell group members get to know one another better, see Appendix 2A "Cell Group Ice Breakers."

C. Worship

Leading worship in a cell group prepares the members for the rest of the meeting, especially as they look to God to speak to them through the Bible discussion time. If the leader or someone in the group has musical ability, then a guitar, piano or other musical instrument can be used to accompany the worship time. If not, God is just as pleased to hear praises that are sung from glad and sincere hearts!

D. Prayer

Prayer will be a part of each of the activities of the cell group meeting. The leader needs to start and end the meeting with prayer. The leader should consider that praying out loud will be very uncomfortable for new members, and he should make it clear that this is optional. As they spend more time in the group and are affirmed by the members, they will begin doing this on their own.

Prayer will come naturally during the worship time, but the leader must plan to have prayer during the evangelism and fellowship time as well. **Prayer triplets** are three people who pray together specifically for the salvation of three friends or acquaintances each (i.e. three believers pray for nine unbelievers) and this can be a part of the evangelism time. During the fellowship time, prayer requests can be shared and prayed for by the group. Another alternative is to pray in groups of two, which can be used to encourage younger Christians to pray (who might otherwise be too shy in front of the group), as well as for sharing more personal needs.

E. Bible Discussion

It is the responsibility of the cell group leader to either develop a lesson for the Bible discussion time, or to delegate this to someone in the group who is gifted at teaching. Inductive Bible study is one method which should be used and taught to the cell group members, so that they can learn to feed themselves from the Word of God. While inductive Bible study is not the only method that can be used, the intent of the Bible discussion time should be a discovery of biblical truth and how to apply it to real-life situations.

The intent of the Bible discussion time should be a discovery of biblical truth and how to apply it to real-life situations, not a time to preach.

A word of caution: many groups place too much emphasis on Bible study, since this has been the model they have observed in past church experiences. An overemphasis on the Bible discussion time takes away from the other activities of the cell. It is vital that the leader maintains a balance of the four functions of the cell group.

F. Discipling

Discipleship takes place when we consciously help someone to become more Christ-like in character and to be more fruitful in ministry. A new Christian has special needs as he deals with doubt, discouragement, ignorance of spiritual matters, spiritual opposition and a sense of feeling "uncomfortable" in unfamiliar territory. He needs the genuine and sincere care of spiritual parents, who will make his welfare their top priority. The new Christian needs to have someone with whom he can discuss questions, and someone whom he knows cares for him. Because of the close nature of the discipling relationship, only men should disciple men and women disciple women.

The cell group leader should always assign a spiritual "parent" to new Christians in the group. There should never be a case when a new Christian does not have someone to disciple and care for him or her. The group will also help with this process, but just as Christ related to His disciples one on one, so each new Christian must have one person to whom they can relate one on one.

Don't forget that the cell group leader must also prayerfully choose someone from the group to be an apprentice leader, someone whom the leader will disciple to be the leader of another cell group. The apprentice should be involved in all aspects of ministry with the cell group leader, so that he can see and experience cell group leadership first-hand.

G. Evangelism

Developing a vision for ministry in the members of a cell group is the responsibility of the cell group leader. The leader gives the group a vision of the need to evangelize and develop relationships that will provide a natural way to share Christ. He helps them see how their individual efforts to reach out fit in with the evangelistic efforts of the cell group as a whole. This can also be done by studying passages from Scripture that admonish Christians to share the Good News, and then challenging the members to apply these passages to their lives.

The evangelism time of a cell group meeting is an excellent time to share testimonies about how God is working in and through the lives of the cell group members to reach out with the love of Christ. It is also the time when the cell group leader can remind the group of both the need for and the process of multiplying their group into two cell groups.

III. CELL GROUP ADMINISTRATION

Although no one enjoys paperwork, there are several reasons why the cell group leader should work with his group to prepare a plan of goals and objectives for the cell:

- **Accountability:** As Christians we must be good stewards of the resources God has given us, including the time and effort we put into leading a cell group. Planning helps us make the best possible use of the limited resources we have.
- **Growth:** If you compare a cell group to a ship on a journey, having a plan can make the difference between a cell group which follows a set course and finds itself very fruitful and one which wanders aimlessly wherever the wind blows it. God desires that the cells in a church grow and multiply, as they work towards the mandate of the Great Commission. With proper planning, a cell group will stay on target and reach this goal of growth, development and multiplication.

Planning involves a simple three-part process.

1. First, pray and ask God to give you wisdom as you plan (Jas 1:5).
2. Second, try to set realistic goals and objectives for your groups, and create a timeline with dates for each goal and objective.
3. Third, include on that timeline periodic dates for evaluation of your progress.

As you continue this process of praying, planning and reviewing, you will begin to see areas that need attention and steps that need to be taken to reach the goals that you have set. Occasionally your cell group might need to adjust its goals and dates, but this is a normal part of the planning process.

QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION, REVIEW AND APPLICATION

- Should a cell group leader delegate activities and responsibilities to all members of a cell group, and not just to the apprentice leader? Why or why not?
- Why is it important that each new member of the group be assigned a spiritual "parent" to disciple him/her?
- How long after a group starts should the cell group leader wait until he chooses an apprentice leader? What kinds of activities can the cell group leader do with the apprentice to prepare him to lead his own group?
- Why should the cell group leader bother to develop a plan for the group in general, and for each of the meetings? Why not just let the group evolve "naturally" in whichever direction it wants?

ACTION PLAN

Review Appendix 2B, "Sample Activities in a Cell Group Meeting." This appendix contains suggestions for what can be done during each of the four functions of a cell group meeting. The cell group leader can use these suggestions, or modify them as needed for his particular situation.

SOURCES

Trinity Christian Center, *Cell Growth and Evangelism Strategy Seminar*, N.P., n.d.

CELL GROUPS
APPENDIX
2A

Cell Group Ice Breakers

"Ice Breakers" are fun, non-threatening ways to get to know people better. These are often used during the fellowship time of a new cell group. Some notes:

- An icebreaker must be appropriate for the cell group. If it's too childish, people will not feel comfortable. If it's too threatening, people will draw back.
- Make it clear that everybody is expected to participate.
- Some icebreakers can be used many times.
- Be sensitive to people who might become uncomfortable with the game or activity.
- Icebreakers become shorter and less important as the group becomes tightly knit over the course of the cell group life cycle. You might spend half the time on an icebreaker the first two meetings, but you only need to spend 10 or 15 minutes after a few months.

Opening Questions

When you were between the ages of 7 – 12....

1. Where did you live? How many brothers and sisters did you have?
2. What kind of transportation did your family use?
3. Who was the person you felt closest to?
4. When did God become more than a word to you?

Who Am I?

Write the names of famous and/or Bible characters on slips of paper. Tape them on everyone's back. The person cannot read his or her own slip. They are to go around the room asking one question at a time about who they are until they guess who they are.

I'll Bet You Don't Know This

Each person in the group writes down on a blank piece of paper something that he/she thinks that nobody in the group would know about him/herself. The pieces of paper are folded, mixed well, and numbered consecutively. Then a designated person starts to read them, saying the number first. Each member of the group begins to compile a list of people that they feel best matches the number of each clue. After the last clue is read, the person with the most correct matches wins.

Introductions

Each person in the group is told they have several minutes to think up a question and ask it of the other people in the group. After everyone has thought of a question, they should begin to mingle with each other, asking their questions. Write down each person's name and answer. After about ten minutes, the group goes around in a circle and tells what they found out about each person. The better the questions, the more creative and insightful responses you will get.

Two Truths and a Lie

Everybody write down two true things about themselves and one lie. Everybody then first decides which slip of paper went with which person, and which of his statements was the lie. You may leave out the first part (i.e. each person holds up their piece of paper and people just guess which statement is the lie). (It's not fair if somebody picks a lie very close to the truth).

Weather Report

Go around the circle, beginning with the leader, and describe how you are feeling right now in terms of a weather report—partly cloudy, sunny, etc. Participants can explain why they chose that type of weather. The leader sets the example for depth.

Trust Walk

Form the group into pairs. Blindfold one person in each pair. Each unblindfolded person leads a blindfolded person around the general vicinity of the meeting place. Try to provide many different experiences—take them up some stairs, go outside and inside, help them feel different objects, walk at different paces, walk on different materials (grass, floors, dirt) but say nothing after the walk has started. You must nonverbally communicate all messages. After about five minutes, change places. After another five minutes the group re-gathers. Share what kinds of feelings you had as you were blindfolded and as you touched objects, etc. How did you feel about the other person? What was it like to have no control over what was happening? What did you learn about yourself? How does this apply to your relationship with God? With others?

Coin Game

If you have new people in your meeting sometime, you might keep the Coin Game in mind for an icebreaker. Give everyone ten coins. Each person must name one thing about himself/herself that is different from everyone else. (For example, an adventurous group member might say, "I have climbed Pikes Peak.") The speaker puts a coin in the middle. If another player has also climbed Pikes Peak, he/she can put in a coin as well. The first person to get rid of all his/her coins wins.

Team Charades

For this activity you need two teams and two rooms. Divide the group into two teams. Team A thinks up some sort of motion or activity for Team B to act out (e.g. eating breakfast) without using any words. Team A tells only one person (we'll call her "Laura") from Team B what the activity is, and Laura is not allowed to tell anyone else on her team. Team B waits in the first room, while Laura takes one other person from her team (we'll call him "Michael") into the second room. In the second room, Team A watches while Laura acts out the activity for Michael (remember, no words!) Then Laura returns to the first room and sends in someone else from Team B. Michael then acts out the activity for the next person, and Michael returns to the first room and sends in someone else from his team. This process is repeated, until the last person from Team B watches the activity. This last person then must guess what the activity is. The teams then switch roles and Team B thinks up an activity for Team A to act out.

Answers and Authors

On pieces of paper, write down four or five non-threatening questions that might reveal something about a person (e.g. What's your favorite possession? What do you wish you could do that you can't do now? What's your ideal vacation?) People should answer all of them, or at least three, but instruct them not to put their names on the sheet. The leader then collects the sheets and reads out the answers, and everyone tries to guess who gave those answers.

All My Neighbors

Everyone begins by sitting in chairs arranged in a circle, except one person who begins by standing in the middle. The person in the middle needs to find some "neighbors." To do this, he needs to make a true statement about himself, which hopefully will also be true about his neighbors (e.g. "All my neighbors play the piano"). Every person who can also truthfully say this statement must stand up and find a new seat. He cannot return to the seat where he was sitting. The person in the middle is also looking for a chair, so each time there will be one person who remains in the middle without a seat. He or she must then make a true statement and look for some "neighbors" for whom this statement is also true.

Group Discussions

Below is a series of quite a few questions that can be used during the fellowship time. Note that some of these questions are appropriate for new groups, and some questions are better suited for groups in which the members already know each other a little. Normally, only one question will be used in each cell group meeting.

1. What was the happiest moment in your life?
2. What can you tell us about your first date?
3. What is the greatest regret of your life?
4. What was the hardest thing you have ever done?
5. What was the greatest compliment you ever received?
6. Who is your best earthly friend? Describe him or her.
7. Which room in your house do you like best?
8. What is the one thing you want to accomplish next week?
9. Where did you feel warmest and safest as a child?
10. If you had a time machine that would work only once, what point in the future or in history would you visit?
11. When was the last time you did something for the first time?
12. At a meal your friends start belittling a common friend. What do you do?
13. If you could take a pill that would enable you to live until you reach 1,000 years, would you do it? Why?
14. When you do something stupid, how much does it bother you to have other people notice it and laugh?
15. Would you like to know the exact date of your death?
16. If you could change two things about the way you were raised, what would they be? If you came from a divorced family, how did it affect you?
17. Who is your favorite relative? Why?
18. What is your favorite memory time spent, as a child, with your father? Your mother?
19. Who did God use to bring you to the point where you knew you needed Jesus?
20. If you could change places with a Bible character, whom would you choose? Why?
21. What is your favorite book of the Bible? Why?
22. If you could go anywhere in the world, where would you go?
23. Imagine your house is on fire and you only have time to take one possession with you (your family is all safe). What would you take?
24. What is your favorite movie or TV show?
25. Who has had the greatest influence on your life since we last gathered?
26. What was the best thing that happened to you this past week?
27. Recall a time when you failed recently.
28. Name someone you admire who had to overcome great obstacles to get where they are now.
29. What do you value most in a human relationship? In your relationship with Christ? Your parents?
30. How do you react when you aren't thanked for going out of your way for someone?
31. What is your favorite time of day?
32. (Singles) The kind of girl/boy I want to marry...(Couples) What caused me to marry my spouse.
33. What was your greatest disappointment in life?
34. What gift (apart from your conversion) will you never forget?
35. What was the most important event in your life this past week?
36. If you could choose to go anywhere in the world for three days, where would you go, and why?
37. If you could choose to meet anyone who ever lived in your country, who would that be, and why would you like to meet him/her?
38. If you could choose to live anywhere in the world, where would you live, and why?

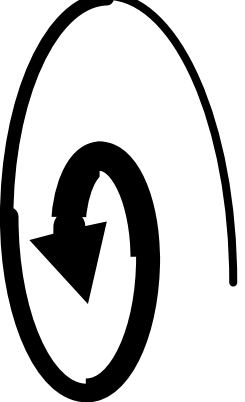
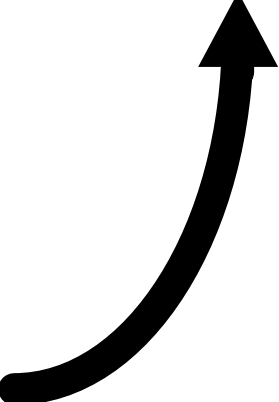
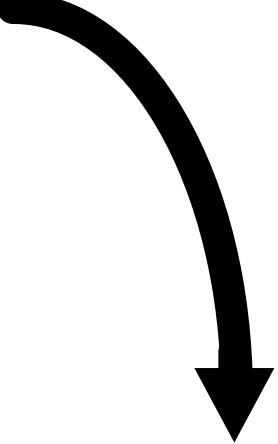
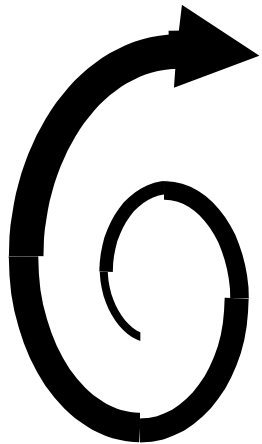
39. What gift (spiritual, emotional, mental, etc.) do you believe you are bringing to this meeting? (In other words, what do you think you are bringing that might contribute to the encouragement of others?).
40. What was a significant experience in your life that changed your value system completely?
41. What are some of your goals for the year ahead?
42. Who are your parents, what do they do and what would you like to change about them?
43. If you could choose your career over again, what would you do?
44. If you became the leader of any country in the world, which would it be and why?
45. What were the best and worst experiences of your week?
46. If you could take a free two-week trip to any place in the world, where would it be and why?
47. If you could talk to any one person now living, who would it be and why?
48. Give every one a piece of paper and ask them to draw a picture of their jobs or whatever they do on a daily basis. Explain your sketches.
49. Why are you glad to be in this cell group tonight?
50. What are some strong and some weak points in your relationship with your eldest child or your parents-in-law or your husband?
51. Inform everyone that they have just been given one million dollars. Let each share how they would use their newly gained fortune.
52. Do you have a nickname and if so what is it? What nicknames do you have for your husband and children?
53. Is there an era in time that you would have liked to have lived in? If so, why?
54. Has the cell group been a help to you? Spend time talking about it and thanking each other.
55. Tell the cell group three things you appreciate about your family and three ways in which you find them difficult at times.
56. What is one thing you would really like see happen at the moment in your family? Your church? Your cell group? The world?
57. Who is the best friend you have at this point in your life?
58. Have you had an answered prayer recently? Share the story.
59. What is your occupation? What do you enjoy about it?
60. Who has been the greatest influence on your Christian life and why?
61. What book, movie, video have you seen/read that you would recommend to others? Why?
62. What do you think delights God above everything else in your life?
63. What is the most encouraging thing said to you this week?
64. What encouraging action have you done to someone this week?
65. What made you decide to attend this church?
66. What do you still want to accomplish with your life?
67. What is your most embarrassing experience?
68. For what are you thankful?
69. What is the most memorable event of your life and why?
70. Share the most meaningful Scripture to you and why it is so meaningful?
71. How did you and your partner meet and what made you start going out together or what kind of person would you like to have as your partner?
72. How would your life be different if you knew Jesus was returning in one week?
73. Who is the most interesting person you have met?
74. What is your favorite holiday spot and why do you enjoy it?
75. Share about a spiritual experience you have had.
76. What annoys you about your spouse/friend?
77. How do you relax?

78. What is your favorite type of music/song, etc.?
79. What has happened to you during this week that you would like to tell the rest of the group?
80. When was the last time you got really angry?
81. If you could not fail, what would you like to do?
82. If you had to live your life over what would you change?
83. What do you want written on your tombstone?
84. What do you want said at your funeral?
85. What don't you want said at your funeral?
86. If you were to go and live on the moon and could carry only one thing, what would it be?
87. What would you do if you were to see (1) a person being robbed (2) a person drowning (3) a house on fire?
88. What was one thing that created stress in your life this week?
89. What is one thing that makes you feel guilty?
90. What is one thing that you do not understand about the opposite sex?
91. If you had this week to do over again, what would you do differently?
92. Describe another small group that you were a member of outside of your church. Why do you think the group worked (or didn't work)? You're not limited to "religious" groups. Most of us meet in small groups at work.
93. What is the most memorable Bible you have received? (e.g. at your baptism, wedding, conversion, etc.) Tell us about why it is meaningful to you.
94. What is the first thing that comes to mind when you think about God?
95. What are the biggest questions that you have about your relationship with God?
96. Under what circumstances do you feel most lonely? Least lonely? Why?
97. In what areas of your life is it most difficult to trust God? Other people? Yourself?
98. Why do you get up in the morning? The purpose is to find out what the motivating forces are in this person's life. It is a simple question but it takes a good deal of thought to answer honestly.
99. When was the last time you admitted you were wrong? Why is it so hard to do?
100. What have you learned recently from another believer?

**CELL GROUPS
APPENDIX
2B**

Sample Activities In A Cell Group Meeting

Following are some sample activities for each of the four parts of a cell group meeting. The times listed for each function are approximate:

Fellowship	Worship	Edification	Evangelism
Man to man	Man to God	God to man	Body of Christ to the world
"Inward"	"Upward"	"Downward"	"Outward"
20 minutes	20 minutes	30 minutes	20 minutes
 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enjoy fun activities together • Eat meals together • Get to know one another better • Encourage one another • Share joys with each other • Share problems with each other • Pray for one another 	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sing songs of praise • Thank God for His greatness • Thank God for all He has done • Pray aloud or silently • Read passages of worship (for example, the Psalms). • Read Christian poetry 	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Study passages of Scripture as a group • Apply biblical truth to everyday situations • Be involved in ministry with the group • Discover and use spiritual giftedness • Memorize Bible verses 	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Form a "prayer triplet" and pray for unsaved friends • Invite unbelievers to the group • As a group, meet the needs of people around you • Develop friendships with unbelievers • Share the Good News of Christ with others

CELL GROUPS

LESSON 3

Starting a Cell Group

☞ Lesson Purpose

The purpose of this lesson is to provide practical steps for starting a new cell group.

☞ Main Points

- Prayer support is extremely important.
- It may take time to develop initial contacts.
- A successful cell group must be planned.

☞ Desired Outcomes

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

- Understand what needs to happen in order to start one or more cell groups.
- Develop a plan to start a new cell group.

☞ Appendix

3A Planning Worksheet

☞ Suggestions to Trainers

This lesson is closely complemented by lesson 2 "Principles of Cell Group Leadership." Both of these lessons should be completed before the trainee starts his first group.

I. PREPARE FOR A NEW CELL GROUP

A. Form a Prayer Team

The most important step in starting a new cell group is prayer. The cell group leader should form a team of intercessors who will pray for him and the new cell group on a regular basis. These could be people from his local church, Christian friends and family members, or believers from other churches in the area where the cell group will be started.

Pray for God's clear leading and ask for wisdom concerning timing, location, etc. Pray for the revival of hearts of existing believers in the target area. Pray for each new cell group that is to be started. Satan will try to attack a new cell group church being started. Paul, in his ministry of church planting, specifically requested intercessory prayer (Eph 6:19, 1Th 5:25, Ro 15:30). The church planter must be a person of prayer, and must be surrounded by prayer.

B. Form a Leadership Team

Although it is possible for one person to start a cell group, it is preferable to have a leadership team of two to four people. The leadership team members can more effectively do the research, evangelism and initial startup of the cell group. In addition, they are able to pray for one another, to hold each other accountable and to disciple the new believers who are brought into the group. Jesus Himself modeled this when He sent out the seventy-two in pairs for their first ministry experience (Lk 10:1). One person from the leadership team should be chosen to be the leader of the new cell group.

C. Research Your Target Area

In order to study how and where to start cell groups as part of a church planting strategy, research must be done in the target area. In Manual One there is a lesson entitled, "Principles of Research" (SCP Vision lesson 4). If this research has not yet been completed, the leadership team should review this lesson and conduct the research. Research that is done according to the principles listed in the lesson will reveal key factors about how the future cell group should be formed.

II. MAKE CONTACTS

Decide who your target audience is, and think about their felt needs (as identified in the research you did after completing Manual One). Pray about how your cell group could begin to meet these needs. Pray that God would show you key people in your target area. These are the people who are influential in their community, and who have vision, ambition and energy. Often, key people are already in some type of leadership position. They have the potential as Christians to be powerful witnesses in the lives of the many people with whom they have relationships.

If your target area is your neighborhood, then the process of bringing family, friends and acquaintances into the group is not difficult. You already have relationships developed with these people. Pray that God would use your relationships to give you opportunity to invite them to the cell group. On a piece of paper, make a list of those people whom you talk to or run into during the course of a week. Begin praying about each person on your list, that you will have opportunity to share Christ with them and invite them to the cell group.

No matter who your target group is, begin praying for their salvation even while you are developing relationships with them.

If your target area is not your immediate neighborhood, then the process of developing relationships is slower. You must first get to know those whom you would invite, and begin developing relationships with them. Spend time with them, look for ways to serve them and help them. Be "salt and light" to them even before you start the group. No matter who your target group is, begin praying for their salvation even while you are developing relationships with them. If there are several different social levels or ethnic groups in your target area, you might need to have a cell group to reach each group. Start with one cell group to target one of these social or ethnic groups, but make plans to start other cell groups to reach all levels of society in your target area.

You should also contact any other churches in the target area to talk with them about your plans for starting a cell group church. If possible, get to know the leadership in these churches and ask them for their blessing on your ministry. Make sure that they understand you will not be "stealing" any of their sheep, since your cell groups will grow as a result of evangelism done with non-believers, many of whom do not ever go to a church.

Even if your target area has no churches and no Christians, the process is the same. Get to know people in your target group, spend time with them, learn about them, and try to serve them and demonstrate through your words and actions the love of God. If you are involved in this type of pioneering work, make it a priority to spend time in prayer to break down spiritual strongholds. Expect a lot of resistance from Satan, who will not easily give up an area that has no Christian witness.

III. CHOOSE A LOCATION

The most natural location for your cell group to meet initially is at your home or apartment. If this is not possible, the second choice would be the home of someone on the leadership team. The next choice would be the home of someone with whom you are developing a relationship. If this is your only option, pray first about approaching them with your request.

The most natural location for your cell group to meet initially is at your home or apartment.

Try to avoid choosing a meeting location for which you have to pay rent. It is an unwanted expense for the cell group, and it has the potential to cause many problems. Right away the group would have to deal with how they would pay for the location, and the focus of the meetings could be sidetracked. Newcomers might feel pressured to have to help financially, especially if other

members are already doing this. This can be a strong barrier that would prevent many people from coming to the group, or from returning to the group once they have visited.

After deciding where to meet, you need to decide when. You should choose the day and time based on job schedules, usual weekend activities and weekday evening activities of your target audience. If everyone in your target group has to shop for food and necessities on Saturday morning, don't schedule your cell group meeting time then. Try to choose a time when most people can come. Use your target area research to determine what times would be best, and ask those whom you would be inviting what times would be good for them.

IV. PREPARE FOR THE FIRST MEETING

Your first meeting should be well prayed for and well planned. Review with your leadership team what will happen during the meeting time. Make sure the host (if it is not you) understands how many people have been invited, how to set up the meeting area, and (if appropriate) what refreshments will be available during the fellowship time. Plan ahead for songbooks or copies of lyrics for the songs you will be teaching and singing. Have some extra Bibles on hand for those who don't own one or cannot bring one.

Since many of the people coming to the first meeting do not know each other, it's important to have some "ice breaker" activities to begin with. These are activities which simply allow the members of the group to get to know one another in a fun, non-threatening way (see Appendix 2A "Cell Group Ice Breakers").

Keep things informal and natural. Don't begin with a twenty minute prayer, and don't do a Bible study which will confuse and bore the visitors (e.g. don't study the book of Revelation at the first meeting). Instead, the cell group leader should lead the group in a time of Bible study that is appropriate for the group. This might be discussion of a passage in the Bible, inductive Bible study, or authoritative teaching. Introduce the Bible as the word of God, which has answers to the questions and daily problems of life.

Don't begin with a twenty minute prayer, and don't do a Bible study which will confuse and bore the visitors!

Teach them one or two songs and use the songbooks/lyrics to help them sing. Do your first Bible discussion with the group. Don't expect a lot of input or involvement at this stage of the group. Try to show practical application to the felt needs that were identified in the target area research.

Discuss the purpose(s) of meeting together in the cell group. Decide with the group if the day and time of this first meeting is good for most everyone, or if it should be changed. Ask them if there is anything about which you can be praying for them. Write this down somewhere so that you can remember to ask them about it at the next meeting. Close the meeting with prayer. Don't be too hasty to have everyone leave! Many times visitors will be more relaxed after the "meeting" is over, and you can use this time to get to know them better.

After the visitors have left, evaluate with your leadership team what went well and what could be improved for the next meeting. It is best to do this right after the meeting, while details are still fresh in everyone's minds. Write down any suggestions for change or improvement.

QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION, REVIEW AND APPLICATION

- What basic components would you include in a plan to start a new cell group?
- What are some of the unique problems you might encounter when you are doing "pioneering" church planting in an area with no Christian witness? What could be done to overcome these obstacles?
- What would you say to a believer who is part of your cell group but who is fearful to open his home to the visitors he would not know?

ACTION PLAN

- Let's say you are going to have your first cell group meeting in one week. Use Appendix 3A, "Planning Worksheet, Cell Group Meeting," to create a plan for this first meeting. Go into as much detail as possible. Are there other aspects of the meeting you would also put in your plan? When finished, share your plan with one of the other trainees and have him evaluate it. You evaluate his plan as well.
- If you have not yet completed your target area research, you need to do this now. After performing your target area research, use the principles and practical steps in this lesson to create a plan to start a new cell group. Include names of people on the leadership team, names of your intercessors, how you will make contacts, which felt needs your cell group will try to meet, when and where the group will meet, and anything else you feel should be part of the plan. After completing this plan, have a trainer or your supervisor review it with you.



Planning Worksheet

CELL GROUP MEETING

Date and time of meeting: _____

Location and Host: _____

Fellowship

Refreshments: _____

Activities, Games: _____

Worship

Song Leader: _____

Prayer

Prayer activities: _____

Bible Discussion

Discussion Leader: _____

Scripture Passage: _____

Ministry Envisioning

Sharing Time: _____

Group activities: _____

Individual activities: _____

Other Planning Items: _____

To think about:

- Who is your apprentice leader?
- Who is discipling each member of your group? (Whom are you discipling?)
- What are you doing to help your apprentice leader develop leadership skills? How are you delegating ministry to him/her? How are you modeling ministry with him/her?
- Are you praying for each member in your cell group?

CELL GROUPS

LESSON 4

Cell Group Evangelism

☛ Lesson Purpose

The purpose of this lesson is to explain the process of evangelism in cell groups.

☛ Main Points

- *Oikos* evangelism reaches those you already have relationships with.
- Target evangelism reaches those outside your immediate circle.
- There are two types of unbelievers: type A and B.

☛ Desired Outcomes

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

- Have an understanding that in general, unbelievers can be grouped into two categories (Type A and Type B), and that different types of evangelism are needed to reach each of these types of people.
- Understand the concept of *oikos*—each person's network of relationships.
- Make a list of their own personal *oikos* relationships.
- Understand the process of *oikos* evangelism and target evangelism in a cell group.

☛ Appendix

4A "About *Oikos*"

☛ Suggestions to Trainers

This lesson describes one way to look at the spiritual condition of unbelievers by categorizing them into two groups—basically, those who are interested in the *Gospel* and those who are not. This simple definition helps the trainees better understand how evangelism can work in cell groups. Note that the concept of the spiritual condition of an unbeliever and his understanding of God is more fully developed in this manual in evangelism lessons 6,7 "The Process of Conversion."

Be sure to leave enough time during the lesson to have the trainees do the "Making a List of Your *Oikos* Relationships" exercise.

I. TWO TYPES OF UNBELIEVERS

In order for a cell group to effectively reach lost people around it, there must first be an understanding of how best to minister to those people. In the second chapter of Ephesians, Paul writes about how Christ came to break down the barrier between Jews and Gentiles and make salvation available to all who would believe. Ephesians 2:17 says that Jesus came and preached peace to those who were **far away** (the Gentiles) and peace to those who were **near** (the Jews).

We can use a similar analogy when we look at those who have not yet accepted Christ as Savior. Some people are very far away from this commitment, and others are much closer. Ralph Neighbour has categorized those unbelievers who are **near** as "Type A" unbelievers, and those who are **far away** as "Type B" unbelievers. These designations are arbitrary, and we could call them whatever we wanted. The point is that because these groups of people are different, the cell group is going to have to use different methods to evangelize each of them.

A. Type A Unbelievers: Those Who Are Interested

Type A unbelievers are people who may already believe in God, and know that Jesus is the Son of God. They might have some knowledge of the Bible, and understand that Jesus died on the cross. They may or may not attend a church, or perhaps just attend occasionally (e.g. Christmas and Easter).

These are people who are open to God's direction for their lives and are searching to find spiritual answers to their problems and questions. Type A unbelievers would not be opposed to coming to a Bible study to learn more about God and His word. Many times, a Type A unbeliever is very close to making a commitment to Christ. Often, he simply has not had the Gospel message clearly explained to him.

B. Type B Unbelievers: Those Who Don't Want To Know

Type B unbelievers seldom or never attend church, and may or may not believe in God. They don't necessarily accept the Bible as an authoritative book, and probably do not know much about the Bible. Jesus is probably nothing more than a historical figure or they may not even have heard of Him.

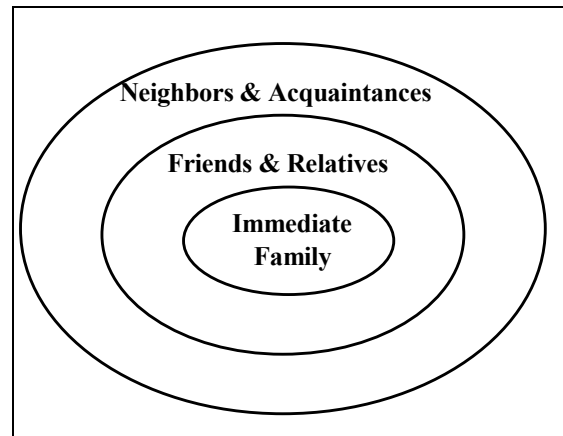
Type B people are perhaps happy with their way of life, and are not searching for God's purposes for them. They will not listen to an evangelistic outreach, and they won't attend any type of "church" activities. In fact, some Type B unbelievers are openly hostile to the Gospel message. They do not want to attend a Bible study, and do not see how "religion" has any relevance to their everyday lives.

II. UNDERSTANDING OIKOS

*Oikos*⁴ is a Greek word that appears frequently in the New Testament. It is a term that describes the personal community of relationships which exists for each person. Strong's Greek Dictionary of the New Testament defines *oikos* as "a house, all the persons forming one family, and/or a household." For example, in Acts 16:15, it is used to describe Lydia's family: "When she and the members of her household were baptized, she invited us to her home."

Each of us has an *oikos*, the circle of people in our lives with whom we have relationships. These relationships include our family, close friends, people we work with, neighbors and others with whom we spend time on a regular basis. Figure 4.1 shows the relationship of these groups that make up our own personal *oikos*.

Figure 4.1 Oikos Relationships



Our most effective personal evangelism is usually with the people who are already in our lives, the people with whom we have relationships.

There are many methods for doing evangelism, depending on the situation and whom you are trying to reach. We can and should sometimes speak to total strangers about Jesus Christ, as the Holy Spirit gives us opportunities. But our most effective personal evangelism is usually with the people who are already in our lives, the people with whom we have relationships. In His wisdom, God has given us a method to share Christ with others that is based on the trust and caring that comes from having a personal relationship with them. It is not an impersonal "program" with people you do not know; rather, it is a very genuine way to

⁴ OIKOS

show a friend that you care about them.

Being a "living example" is a powerful witness to the people in our *oikos*. The Holy Spirit uses our problems and victories to show others that Christ makes a real difference in our daily lives, that the Bible has answers to life's problems, and that joy and peace can be found in an often troublesome world.

A. Exercise: Making a List of Your *Oikos* Relationships

On a piece of paper, take a few minutes to write down the names of the people with whom you talk or interact with on a regular basis during the course of a week or a month. Write one name per line. Limit your list to no more than 20 people (if there are more, choose the 20 with whom you have the closest relationships).

Now, examine the names on your list. For each person who you know is a believer, place a cross in front of his or her name. Next, think about the people who are not believers. For all the "Type A" people, place an **A** in front of their names. These are people whom you think would be open to spiritual things, to studying the Bible, or to learning more about God's purpose for their lives.

Finally, look at the rest of the names. If these are people you know are not interested in God or spiritual things, who would not want to come to a Bible study, and who do not see God as relevant in any way to their daily life, place a **B** in front of their names. These are "Type B" unbelievers.

Save this list, perhaps in your Bible. The people with a cross in front of their names are believers who could possibly help you start a new cell group. The people with an **A** in front of their names are those for whom you can be praying and inviting to your cell group. The people with a **B** in front of their names are those for whom you can be praying about spending more time with.

You might be surprised to see how few (if any!) unbelievers are in your personal *oikos*. Many Christians have few relationships with unbelievers. A new believer will have the most relationships with unbelievers. However, as Christians begin to fellowship with other Christians, they soon find that they spend little or no time any more with their non-Christian friends.

III. SHARE GROUPS

When we think about the functions and activities of a cell group, we see very quickly that this type of group would appeal to a Type A unbeliever. They would probably feel comfortable as the group prays, worships and learns from the Bible. However, it is just as easy to see that a Type B unbeliever would feel very uncomfortable in a cell group. Type B people would either never come to a cell group meeting in the first place, or if they did attend, would most likely never return.

In order to reach a Type B unbeliever, we need to use something which Ralph Neighbour calls "Share Groups." You can call it whatever you like, but the basic principle is that for a Type B unbeliever, relationships must be built before the Gospel can be explained. Developing these relationships takes time and effort, but it is the best way to reach people who are indifferent or antagonistic towards God.

A **Share Group** is simply two or three Christians who begin spending time with Type B unbelievers from their circle of relationships. Initially, this will not be time for Bible study, for prayer, or even for talking about God. Rather, it is time for relationships to be developed, so that the unbelievers can see that the Christians are genuinely interested in them, in their problems and in their families. In time, the Holy Spirit will provide opportunities for the Christians to share how God is working in their lives, how He helps them with problems, and how the Bible has answers to life's questions.

When we think about the functions and activities of a cell group, we see very quickly that this type of group would appeal to a Type A unbeliever.
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IV. THE PROCESS OF CELL GROUP EVANGELISM

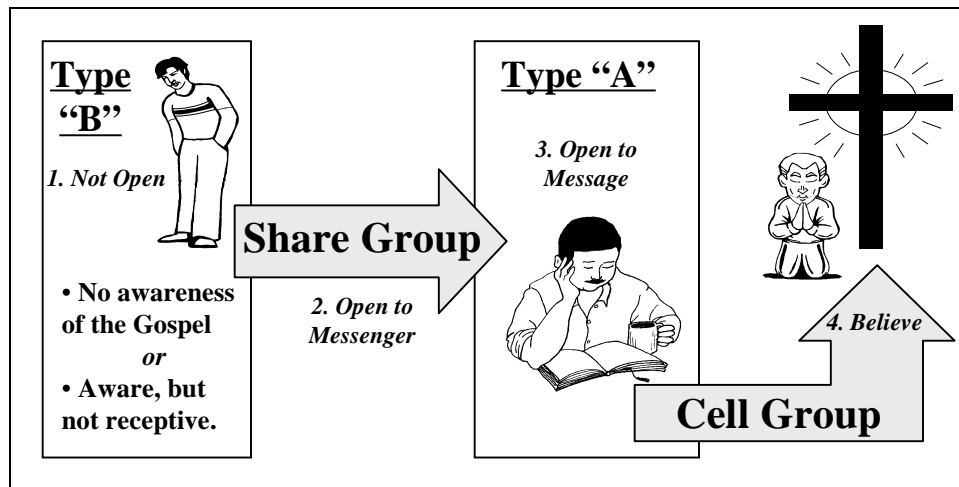
A. *Oikos* Evangelism

A new cell group is usually started with several Type A unbelievers. These are the people for whom the Christians have been praying and to whom they have been witnessing. The first Bible discussions with the group are very evangelistic in nature, and should be designed to introduce the new members in the group to Christ. As the Holy Spirit convicts hearts, the unbelievers will commit their lives to Christ, and begin growing in their faith. As new believers, these people will have many natural contacts with unbelievers in their *oikos*. As they are grounded in their faith and begin to mature, they also will reach out to the Type A people they know, by praying for them and inviting them to the group. In this way the process of praying, reaching, commitment and growing in the Lord is repeated in the group. Conversion and growth happen along the lines of *oikos* relationships that God gives to each one of us.

A new cell group is usually started with several Type A unbelievers.

At the same time that the Type A unbelievers are being brought into the group and are committing their lives to Christ, the mature Christians in the group begin to pray about which Type B unbelievers to reach out to. They choose only several people for this type of ministry, since a large amount of time and effort is required. At least two and possibly three of the Christians begin to pray for and spend time with each of the Type B unbelievers. This is not time for Bible study, prayer or "religious" things. Initially, this is time spent simply to build trust relationships. Figure 4.2 illustrates how share groups and cell groups help to present the Gospel to both Type A and B unbelievers.

Figure 4.2 Reaching Type A and B Unbelievers



As these relationships deepen, the Holy Spirit will give opportunities to begin sharing how God is actively working in and through the lives of the believers. They can let the unbelievers know they are praying for them in times of trouble, and give credit to God for answers to those prayers. A simple study of the Bible might be started between members of this "share group," but not yet in the cell group. In time, the Holy Spirit will bring the Type B person to a point where he is ready to learn more about spiritual things, and the Christian is able then to invite him to the cell group meetings. This Type B person (who at this point is probably closer to being a Type A) feels comfortable in the cell group, since the same people who were spending time with him before are also in the cell group. He then moves along the path of discovery, conviction, commitment and growth. In time, this new Christian will begin reaching out to the people in his *oikos* who need to learn about Christ's love.

B. Target Evangelism

Oikos evangelism is one of the most natural and effective methods for reaching the lost around us. This is the primary method of evangelism to use with new believers in a cell group. After the group

has been involved in *oikos* evangelism, a second type of strategy (which Ralph Neighbour calls "targeting") can be introduced. **Target evangelism** reaches out to people who are strangers, but share common needs, interests or problems. Target evangelism should be used only in cell groups that are already involved in *oikos* evangelism.

Target evangelism groups are similar to share groups because the people they reach are not necessarily interested in the Gospel. They come together to discuss their needs, problems or common interests. The topic or theme for these groups ranges widely, from self-esteem, building marriages, raising children and divorce recovery to groups that meet to discuss music, pets or car repair! The best way to decide what type of group to offer is to talk with the new members of the share group as they are reaching out to the people in their *oikos*. The need for a certain type of target group is often determined by the hurts or interests of those people with whom new members are building relationships.

<p><i>Oikos</i> evangelism reaches friends and acquaintances. <i>Target</i> evangelism reaches strangers with common interests.</p>

As the groups meet to discuss needs, hurts, interests or problems, the Christians have an excellent opportunity to share how God and the Bible provide answers, encouragement and relief to these areas of life. Those who express deeper interest can be invited to the cell meetings, where they can begin to experience the fellowship and encouragement of the group. Target evangelism is often an appropriate method for reaching out to an area where natural lines of *oikos* do not exist, as in the case of a "pioneering" ministry.

C. Group Size and Multiplication

The ideal range for the size of a cell group is 8-12 people, and it should never grow larger than 15 people. Once a group grows larger than 15, the dynamics of communication and interaction change, and it no longer is able to provide the sense of togetherness and intimacy that a cell group will naturally have.

As the group begins to reach out through *oikos* evangelism and target evangelism, the Holy Spirit will convict hearts and people will begin to join the group. Consider the rate of growth of the group versus the maturity of the apprentice leader with whom you are working. Do not allow the group to grow so large so quickly that multiplication must happen before the apprentice is ready. Once the group begins to approach 15 people, share with the group that it must stay at this level until the apprentice is prepared spiritually, mentally and emotionally to take over leadership of the new group.

Once multiplication takes place, the leader of each group will begin working with an apprentice, and evangelism will continue in earnest in both of the groups.

QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION, REVIEW AND APPLICATION

- In Luke 5:32, Jesus said, "I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." How much time did Jesus spend with "sinners" during his earthly ministry? Give two or three examples of people Jesus met with who would be considered Type A and Type B people.
- What types of activities can you think of to build relationships with the Type B people from your own personal *oikos* list? What other Christian can go with you as you build these relationships?
- How much time do you think it takes to build meaningful relationships with unbelievers? What priorities, if any, would have to change in your life in order to spend more time with unbelievers?

ACTION PLAN

In your cell group, develop a strategy for reaching out through the relationships of each member. If others in your group have not made a list of the relationships in their *oikos*, have them do it at the next meeting. Have the group decide which Type A people to pray for and contact, and which Type B people to pray for and begin spending time with. The cell group leader should maintain a list of these names, so that the group can hold itself accountable to reaching out to them.

SOURCES

- Neighbour, Ralph. *A Guidebook for Cell Group Churches*. Houston, TX: Touch Publications, 1990.
- Neighbour, Ralph. *Knocking on Doors, Opening Hearts*. Houston, TX: Touch Outreach Ministries, 1990.
- Trinity Christian Center, *Cell Growth and Evangelism Strategy Seminar*, N.P., n.d.



About "Oikos"

To fully understand the importance of cell groups in a church planting strategy, we must consider the word *oikos*, a biblical term that describes the basic building block of any society. It appears throughout the Bible and refers to the personal community that exists for us all. It is translated into English as "house" or "household." For example, in Acts 16:31, Paul and Silas used it when they said, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved—you and your household."

OIKOS: THE WORLD'S WAY OF FORMING CELL GROUPS FOR ALL

The *oikos*es each of us lives within are not large. We may know several dozen, even several hundred, people, but quality time spent with others is extremely limited—and only those to whom we devote quality time can be said to be a part of our *oikos*, our personal community. Each of us has a primary group that includes some of our relatives and some of our friends who relate to us through work, recreation, hobbies, and neighbors. These are the people we talk to, relate to, and share with, for at least one hour per week.

Only those to whom we devote quality time can be said to be a part of our *oikos*.

It is most unusual to find a person who has as many as 20 people in his or her *oikos*. For many years, I have surveyed the sizes of the *oikos*es of those attending my seminars and classes. Christians usually average nine people, and a large percentage of them had not developed a single new *oikos* relationship in the past six months!

Life is made up of endless chains of *oikos* connections. Every person is already entwined in these relationships. If people are accepted into an *oikos*, they feel a security that does not exist when they meet strangers.

In every culture of the world, the intimacy of *oikos* connections is considered to be sacred. The Chinese have a special word for close friendships, and such bonds are considered to be a sacred thing. In Argentina, I was shown a gourd and a metal tube with holes on one end of it for the drinking of "mate tea." A most intimate *oikos* custom in their culture is sharing with a friend by drinking from the same tube. Usually, the ceremony is limited to family members.

OIKOSSES VARY WITH EMOTIONAL STRENGTH

Since the world began, people have always lived in *oikos*es. Every single culture, without exception, has them. The security of the individual is in the affirmation received by those who are significant in the *oikos*. In the earliest hours of childhood, the mother is the one who provides affirmation by her presence and her attention. As the child develops, this affirmation is received, or not received, by the other household members. Then the school teacher becomes a part of the *oikos*, and later it becomes the adolescent's *oikos* group that must approve him. In the workplace, affirmation is tied to promotions and raises in salary.

Each *oikos* becomes a part of a larger social structure. The important thing for us to grasp is that every human being lives in a special, tiny world, often being compelled to relate to people who are forced upon him or her by *oikos* structures. Today, the hurts of being thrust into a home where the mother is an alcoholic or the father is a child molester composes a significant ministry for cell group churches.

As you read this, consider the implications of this in your own life. Take a moment to write down the names of all the people you spend one full hour each week sharing with in a direct, person-to-person manner. (This hour can be accumulated a few minutes at a time, scattered over seven days, but it must be regular—and it

must be face to face). The overpowering impact of a limited few upon each of our lives must be considered. For example: Who are the significant others in your life? Whose approval or disapproval is important to you? (I have counseled those who are still trying to please a disapproving father who has been dead for years). Who do you fear may reject you, and whom do you look to for affirmation? Meditating upon one's own *oikos* can bring great insights!

CHRISTIAN WORKERS HAVE *OIKOSES* LACKING UNBELIEVERS

My own survey of this subject among Christian workers has revealed amazing facts. I am certain I have polled over 5,000 pastors, pastor's wives, church staff members, and missionaries in at least thirty countries. It is a rare thing to find those who are in "full time Christian work" who have unbelievers in their primary *oikos*.

It is a rare thing to find those who are in "full time Christian work" who have unbelievers in their primary *oikos*.

Unless she is employed in the secular world, the wife of a Christian worker is least likely to have a single contact with the unchurched. Her *oikos* is filled only with church people. On one occasion an educational director of a large church put his head in his hands and wept with embarrassment as he realized he had spent his entire career within the confines of church work. He could not remember having an *oikos* with an unbeliever in it since he graduated from a secular college.

JESUS CONSTANTLY INVADED PAGAN *OIKOSES*

While the church pulls people out of their *oikos*es and gives them membership in an organization which swallows them up, the New Testament reveals a different approach to people relationships. Jesus constantly did His work by invading *oikos* groups. He knew there was no other way to share the Gospel except to penetrate these small clusters of people. It is obvious that each *oikos* is based in a house, not an institutional building. Thus, the Lord spent His time going from one house to another.

In Luke 19:2-5, we see Jesus making contact with Zacchaeus. He says to him, "*Zacchaeus...I must stay at your house today.*" In Luke 7:36-38 we find Him in the *oikos* of a Pharisee who has invited Him to have dinner with him. While He reclines at the table, a prostitute comes and pours perfume on His feet. What amazing examples of *oikos* penetration!

In Matthew 8:14, He enters Peter's house and heals one of the *oikos* members living there. In Matthew 9:10, He eats dinner with His disciples and many tax collectors and sinners at Matthew's house. Again, He penetrates an *oikos* in Matthew 9:23 as He enters the ruler's house and sees the flute players and the noisy crowd. In Matthew 17:25, Peter finds Him in a Capernaum house, where Jesus speaks to him about paying taxes. We read in Mark 3:20 that Jesus entered a house and a crowd gathered, "*so that He and His disciples were not even able to eat.*" In Mark 7:17, He enters a house where His disciples quiz Him about a parable. In Mark 7:24, He enters a house to be alone, only to be swamped by a crowd that has learned where He was staying.

THE EARLY CHURCH PENETRATED *OIKOSES*, TOO!

In Acts 5:42, we read that the early church went from house to house. In Acts 8:3, when Saul wanted to destroy the church, he knew where to find the people of God. We are told that "*going from house to house, he dragged off men and women and put them in prison.*"

It is interesting to see in Acts 10 how the Holy Spirit arranged for Peter to get from the house of Simon the tanner to the residence of Cornelius, where Cornelius' conversion took place. The penetration of *oikos*es is the pattern for ministry in the first century.

The penetration of *oikos*es is the pattern for ministry in the first century.

Conversions are frequently recorded as sweeping an entire *oikos* into the Kingdom. In Acts 16, both Lydia and the jailer are converted along with the members of their *oikos*. The first act of Lydia after her conversion was to invite Paul to stay at her house.

REJECTION BY ONE'S *OIKOS* FOR BECOMING A CHRISTIAN IS PAINFUL

Jesus reminded us in Matthew 10:36 that following Him can be a costly decision: *"a man's enemies will be the members of his own oikos."* Making a decision to follow Him can cause confusion in relationships with primary people. This is why He said in Matthew 10:35, *"For I have come to turn a man against his father, a daughter against her mother, a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law...."* In verse 37, He calls for a decision between the *oikos* and the Kingdom: *"Anyone who loves his father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me; anyone who loves his son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me...."*

In Singapore today, there is a Zone Pastor Intern on the staff I work with who is from a Hindu home. After he committed to follow Christ, the *oikos* descended on him with wrath. His uncle waited until he was present to say to his father, "Why do you allow your son to disgrace us all like this?" In contemporary Southeast Asia, a young physician followed the Lord at the price of his Muslim family declaring him dead and buried. *Oikos*es can be ruthless when one chooses another path for life.

OUR LORD'S BODY IS CALLED AN "*OIKOS*"

However, there is a very special *oikos* for those who have faced the ultimate rejection. Hebrews 3:6 says, *"But Christ is faithful as a son over God's oikos. And we are His oikos, if we hold on to our courage and the hope of which we boast."* Consider these additional Scriptures that speak of this truth, found in 1 Peter 4:17, 1 Timothy 3:15; Ephesians 2:19; and 1 Peter 2:5:

"For it is time for judgment to begin with the oikos of God; and if it begins with us, what will the outcome be for those who do not obey the Gospel of God?"

"If I am delayed, you will know how people ought to conduct themselves in God's oikos, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and foundation of the truth."

"Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God's people and members of God's oikos."

"...you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual oikos to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ."

The concept of *oikos* describing the church should make us recognize the significance of the cell as the basic Christian community. Scripture refers to the early Christians as members of this spiritual *oikos* by speaking of those who have come to faith by family units, rather than just by personal commitments:

"Crispus, the synagogue ruler, and his entire oikos believed in the Lord... Greet also the church that meets at their house... Greet those who belong to the oikos of Aristobulus... Greet those in the oikos of Narcissus who are in the Lord... some from Chloe's oikos have informed me that there are quarrels among you... Yes, I also baptized the oikos of Stephanas... You know that the oikos of Stephanas were the first converts in Achaia... Aquila and Priscilla greet you warmly in the Lord, and so does the church that meets at their oikos... the saints send you greetings, especially those who belong to Caesar's oikos... Give my greeting to... Nymphas and the church in his oikos... May the Lord show mercy to the oikos of Onesiphorus... Greet Priscilla and Aquila and the oikos of Onesiphorus."

Truly, the early church thought about the chains of *oikos*es to be won while they simultaneously rejoiced that God had formed them in basic Christian communities. For the church to live at *oikos* level was certainly God's plan. The heart of the Christian life is not related to a word for "temple," or "synagogue," or "church building." As the basic fabric of human life is embedded in the *oikos*, even so the life of the Body of Christ is to be *oikos*-based.

The early church thought about the chains of <i>oikos</i> es to be won.

By R. W. Neighbour, edited by J. Geske
From "Where Do We Go From Here?"- used with permission.

CELL GROUPS

LESSON **5**

Cell Group Demonstration

☞ Lesson Purpose

The Purpose of this lesson is to provide a demonstration (using in-class participation) of some activities of a typical cell group meeting, in order to familiarize the trainees with some "hands on" practical experience.

☞ Main Points

- Participants with "hands on" experience with a cell group format will be better equipped to lead their own cell groups.

☞ Desired Outcomes

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

- Observe and participate in one or more aspects of a typical cell group meeting.
- Evaluate the actions and responses of group members as they practice leading and participating in the activities.

☞ Suggestions to Trainers

This lesson requires planning and preparation in order to be beneficial. The trainer must think beforehand which activities he would like to do with the group of trainees, and plan accordingly. If any type of Bible study time is to be part of the in-class activities, the trainees should be given one or two days before this lesson in order to prepare.

There are basically four types of activities to choose from, and they relate to the four parts of a typical cell group meeting: fellowship, worship, edification and evangelism. Unless there is more than an hour available to spend in this lesson, it is doubtful that the trainer will have enough time to practice all four areas. A more likely scenario is for the trainer to choose one or two activities to practice. These choices will be based on the number, type, experience and needs of the trainees.

The examples and suggestions given in this lesson are only guidelines. If the trainer is aware of certain areas of difficulty or questions related to a specific context, he should by all means adjust the activities of this lesson to answer those problems or questions.

If the group of trainees is large, they should be divided into several smaller groups of no more than 8-10 persons for the in-class exercise. The trainer should assign a cell group "leader" to each of the working groups. Depending on the activity, the trainer might want to have several people assume the role of leadership during this exercise time.

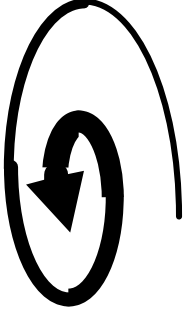
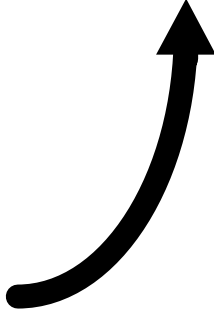
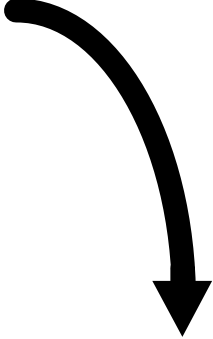
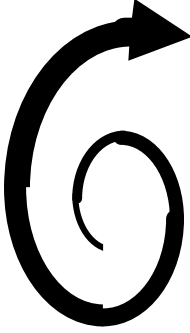
Keep in mind that the overall goal of this lesson is to give practical, hands-on experience in various aspects of cell group life and ministry. It should also be fun!

I. CELL GROUP DEMONSTRATION

The purpose of this lesson is to provide an opportunity to observe and participate in various aspects of a cell group meeting. Remember that a cell group meeting has four parts: fellowship, worship, edification and evangelism. This lesson has been designed to give the trainer flexibility in choosing which of these four functions to demonstrate. If the group would benefit from practicing a time of fellowship and worship, the trainer may choose to focus on these areas. If the group would like to spend some time in

discipleship, they might practice inductive Bible study. The activities for this lesson will be limited only by the size of the group and the time that is available.

Figure 5.1 The Four Functions of a Cell Group Meeting

Fellowship	Worship	Edification	Evangelism
Man to man	Man to God	God to man	Body of Christ to the world
"Inward"	"Upward"	"Downward"	"Outward"
			

Following are suggestions for each of the four areas of a cell group meeting. The trainer should decide which areas should be practiced, and in what specific way(s). If there is time, some evaluation should be done after each activity. If needed, refer back to Cell Group Appendix 2B "Sample Activities in a Cell Group Meeting" for a review of typical activities for each of the four functions.

A. Fellowship

Scenario: the cell group is having its first meeting. Friends and acquaintances of the believers have been invited, and in general, the people in the group do not know each other. The cell group leader would like to have the group spend some time in activities which will help the members get to know each other better. (Take some time to work with several of the icebreakers in Appendix 2A "Cell Group Ice Breakers." Or, if he prefers, the trainer can use his own activities that will help the group members get to know one another better).

B. Worship

Scenario: the cell group has been meeting for several weeks. So far, the worship time has consisted of simply singing a few songs that the group has learned. The cell group leader would like to share some other ways in which the group can worship God together. This might include praying through or reading through some of the Psalms (each person reads a favorite Psalm, or each person reads several verses of one Psalm), singing new or unfamiliar worship songs, praying in groups of two or three people, etc.

C. Edification

There are several activities that would aid in understanding what happens during the edification time of a cell group meeting:

- *One-on-one discipleship.* Scenario: The cell group has been studying Luke 14:26: "If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his father and mother, his wife and children, his brothers and sisters—yes, even his own life—he cannot be My disciple." The younger Christians in the group are confused, and the cell group leader has asked the more mature Christians to spend some time during the cell group meeting to help explain this passage to them. (The trainer should divide the working group into two parts. The first half of the trainees will play the role of older, more mature Christians. The other half will play the role of brand new Christians).
- *Inductive Bible study.* Scenario: the cell group is going to study a passage in the Bible using the inductive method. (The trainer should ask the class beforehand to prepare a brief inductive

study on a favorite passage. As time allows, each person will lead the group in a time of inductive study using the passage and questions each has prepared).

- *Authoritative teaching.* Scenario: the cell group leader wants to give several people in his group the opportunity to share some teaching from Scripture. However, he wants them to give practical insights rather than a sermon. He has asked them to prepare some thoughts that they can share in 4-5 minutes with the group. The cell group leader is responsible to make sure each person stays within the given time limit. If there is time, the other people in the group can ask questions about statements or ideas that were not clear to them. (The trainer will need to ask the trainees to prepare beforehand for this activity.)

D. Evangelism

The evangelism time can be practiced in several different ways:

- *Personal testimony.* Scenario: the cell group has invited several visitors who are not believers. The leader has asked one or two people in the group to share their personal testimony in 2-3 minutes using "normal" language that would be understandable to a non-Christian. Several people should play the role of those giving their testimony, and several others should play the role of the non-Christians who are hearing something like this for the very first time. If the "visitors" hear something which is not clear or confusing, they should stop the person sharing and ask the group for clarification. (For this activity the trainer needs to ask the trainees beforehand to prepare a brief personal testimony).
- *Future ministry plans.* Scenario: the cell group is located in an area which is highly industrial and where mothers and fathers usually both work. So far, attempts at building relationships and inviting people to the Wednesday cell group meetings have been unsuccessful. The only day the local population has off work is Sundays. There are a lot of children in the area. The cell group needs to discuss how they could reach out to this target group of people. (The trainer needs to assign one person to be the cell group leader).
- *"Share" group.* Scenario: the cell group has a vision and burden to reach out to the men in their community. However, most of the men have no interest in anything spiritual and refuse to come to the cell group meeting. The cell group decides to start a "share group" which will somehow involve the men of the community in an activity or in a discussion of some topic of interest. It will also provide an opportunity to build relationships with them in order to eventually share Christ with them. In this particular community, the men seem to enjoy playing soccer, and working on their cars on the weekends. The cell group needs to discuss concrete ways in which they could start a share group with some of these men. (The trainer needs to assign one person to be the cell group leader).

II. EVALUATION

The trainees should evaluate the different activities of the "cell groups." What were their strengths and weaknesses? How did the cell group "leader" handle different problems or questions? What could have been done differently?

QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION, REVIEW AND APPLICATION

- Why is it important to plan for each part of a cell group meeting?
- In what ways did the leaders of the "cell groups" in this exercise have difficulty with the roles they played? Will there be similar difficulties in your actual cell group meetings?

ACTION PLAN

Remember the things you learned from this lesson when you are leading your own cell group, or when you are training others how to lead their groups.

CELL GROUPS

6

LESSON

Philosophy of Cell Group Ministry

☛ Lesson Purpose

The purpose of this lesson is to examine the role of cell groups in an overall saturation church planting strategy.

☛ Main Points

- Cell groups facilitate Saturation Church Planting.
- There are many ways to use cell groups in ministry.

☛ Desired Outcomes

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

- Learn that cell groups are foundational building blocks for larger ministry strategies.
- Understand the life cycle of a cell group.
- Understand the role of cell groups in a saturation church planting strategy.
- Be able to develop his own cell group ministry strategy.

I. CELL GROUP PHILOSOPHY

Each cell group should function as a "community" of Christians who fellowship with one another, who worship God together, who disciple one another, and who encourage and help each other as they reach out to the lost around them. Within the cell group, there are many areas of responsibility and many activities to plan for and carry out. The cell group leader, as well as the members of the group, will indeed stay very busy meeting the needs and accomplishing the goals of the group.

Cell groups are foundational building blocks for a larger ministry strategy.

However, in the midst of all the activity of individual cell groups, it is important to understand the overall concept of cell group ministry. We need to consciously step back from an individual cell group and examine

how cell groups in general fit into a larger ministry plan. Simply stated, cell groups are foundational building blocks for a larger ministry strategy. In terms of starting new churches, cell groups provide a foundation upon which the new churches are "built."

A. Cells Have a Life Cycle

As a cell group is formed and develops, it will move through different phases of "life," much in the same way that people change as they mature and get older. Every cell group goes through identifiable, systematic phases of development. The cell group leader must think about the current phase of his group as he plans the activities for each meeting, and he must anticipate what may or may not happen during that meeting. By understanding which phase his group is in, a cell group leader can make sure that his group is on target to multiply itself.

Every cell group goes through identifiable, systematic phases of development.

In a typical **small** group, multiplication does not happen. In fact, experience has shown that the tendency in small groups is to stop growing or even die out after about two years. The current group members become comfortable in their relationships, and new people are not welcomed into

the group. Similarly, without proper planning and vision, a cell group can also become stagnant and never multiply. In order to reach the goal of multiplication, there must be evangelism in the group so that new people are brought in, and the cell group leader must consciously guide the group through the life cycle phases so that the group does not get "stuck" and remain in any one phase.

Cell groups can only be part of a strategy to see new churches started if they are consciously aware of where they are in the life cycle, and what they need to do in order to continue moving through the different life cycle phases. The following chart describes the life cycle phases through which every cell group should pass. Note that the times given for the duration are only approximate, and will vary depending on the particular location and context of the cell group. The cell group leader should refer to this chart periodically to determine where the group is in the life cycle, and what he can do so that the group moves to the next phase.

Table 6.1 Phases of a Cell Group

Phase	Duration	Description
<i>Orientation</i>	Week 1-4	People learn about each other. There is a very shallow level of sharing and a low level of trust. The cell group leader directs almost the entire ministry.
<i>Transition</i>	Week 5-10	Members get to know and accept each other. They adjust to what is considered "normal" behavior in the group. There is a growing level of trust, and the beginnings of real relationships.
<i>Community</i>	Week 11-15	Members align themselves according to the expectations of the group. There is a growing level of commitment, openness, and involvement in the group's purpose. The members of the group find identity in the group. The leader is able to delegate more activities and areas of responsibility to the group members.
<i>Action</i>	Week 16-35	There is dynamic group interaction, and people are applying biblical truths to real-life situations. Quite often, the group is actively involved in ministry together. Trust runs very deep between group members, and relationships continue to develop and grow.
<i>Multiplication</i>	Week 36-40	The group approaches the time when it is necessary to multiply into two groups. Apprentice leader(s) start new group(s), and the original group begins to plan for repeating the multiplication cycle.

B. Cells Work Toward a Common Goal

Cell groups, much like the cells in our own bodies, each have a "job" to do. In a certain city, one cell group might reach out to a particular geographical area, while another cell works with a certain segment of the population. Both of the cells are working toward their individual goals, but at the same time, they are working together to help evangelize the city in which they live.

Research tells us that a group of people working together can accomplish more than the collective result of each person working on his own. In the same way, cell groups working together can also accomplish much greater goals than any of them could on their own.

Before the first cell group is started, thought needs to be given to the group's overall goal. Start with the end result in mind, and work backward from that goal. What types of groups are needed, and where? How many groups would be needed to meet the goal? Each new cell will have its own identity, but it will also be part of a larger "body" of cells who are working together for a common purpose.

C. Cells Are an Essential Part of a Saturation Church Planting Strategy

A saturation church planting strategy is by nature a "grassroots" movement of reproducing churches. A movement of new churches requires methods that are simple, portable, flexible and reproducible. Without these qualities, a movement cannot be generated or sustained. It is nearly impossible to have a movement of new churches that require paid "professional" pastors and large, expensive church buildings.

A movement of new churches requires methods that are simple, portable, flexible and reproducible.

Cell groups provide the simplicity and flexibility that a movement requires. It is a model that is easily started and reproduced. It has little or no financial needs. It provides hands-on ministry training and application. It provides for community and fellowship among the believers. The focus of a cell group ministry is on people and needs, not on programs and systems. Cell groups work at the level of meeting the most basic of human needs for love, acceptance and significance.

Most importantly, in regards to a saturation church planting movement, cell groups provide the movement with both a vision to reach the lost and a vision to multiply. Without a vision to reach the unreached for Christ, there is no need for a church planting movement. Without the vision and ability to multiply churches, a movement cannot exist.

The mandate of the Great Commission can best be fulfilled by a saturation church planting movement. A saturation church planting movement can best be realized through the use of cell groups as the foundation upon which reproducing churches are established.

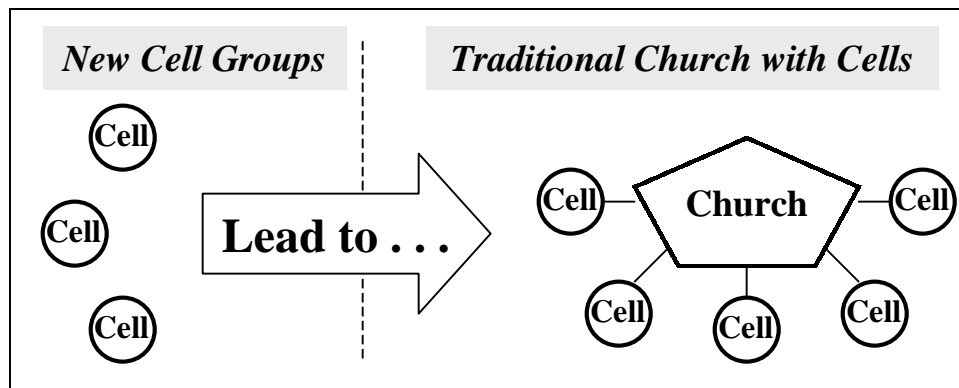
II. MODELS OF CELL GROUP MINISTRY

One of the main benefits of cell groups is that they can be used in a variety of ways, and especially in the ministry of a church planter. Following are several models that can be used in cell group ministry. Each model has it's own advantages, and the church planter should feel free to choose the model (or a variation of a model) that will work best in his situation.

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

In this situation, one or more initial cell groups grow and multiply. When a certain number of people are meeting in the groups (perhaps a total of 50 people), a decision is made to start a new, traditional church. This church will meet in a central location with a traditional worship service appropriate for the local context and culture. The church will continue to use a ministry of cell groups for evangelism, fellowship, discipleship and continued growth of the church. It may also choose to develop traditional ministry "programs" such as Sunday School, women's ministry, an outreach to children on the weekends, etc. Figure 6.1 shows this kind of model.

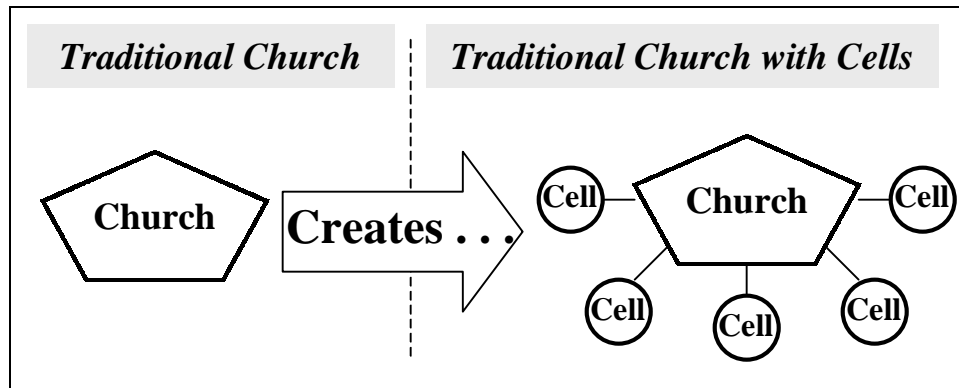
Figure 6.1. Cells Start Church



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

It is possible for an existing church to begin using cell groups for fellowship, evangelism and discipleship. (Cell Group lesson 12 "Using Cell Groups in an Existing Church" in Manual Five will discuss this in detail). The existing leadership in the church must decide how many groups are needed/possible based on the number of members in the church and the number of people who could be trained to be cell group leaders. In time, the church will begin to grow as the cell groups grow and multiply. This arrangement is shown in Figure 6.2.

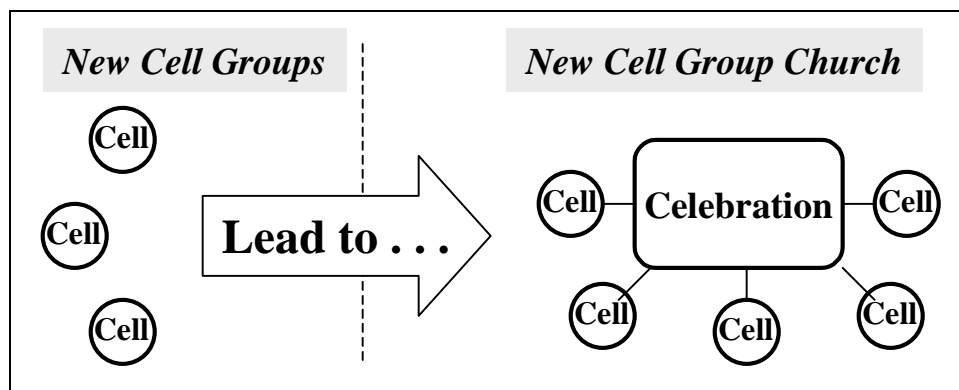
Figure 6.2. Cells Added to Church



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

A cell group church differs from a traditional church in the sense that there is no church building, no regular Sunday morning worship service, and the church does not exist to create and maintain "programs" within the church. The church is comprised of the cells themselves, and all the functions of a church happen in each cell, including baptism and communion. The cells come together on a regular basis (e.g. once a month) for a "celebration" meeting. This is a time of encouragement, fellowship, worship and/or teaching. In areas where a cell group movement has grown very large, sometimes theaters and even large stadiums are needed to hold all the people from the cell groups for these celebration gatherings. The cells all consider themselves to be part of one, large church. Figure 6.3 demonstrates this model.

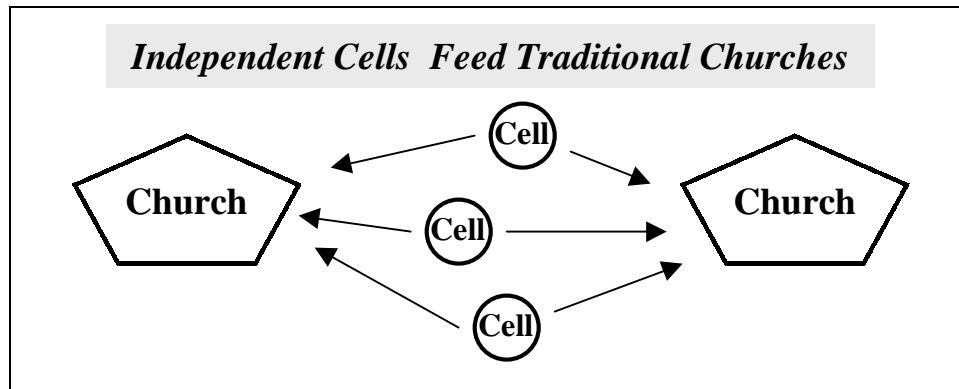
Figure 6.3. Cells Start a Cell Church



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

It is not a requirement that cell groups directly start new churches. It may be more strategic to build up and strengthen existing local churches, which in time will start new, daughter churches. Cell groups are started independently of the existing churches. As new people are brought into the cell groups, they are encouraged to begin attending a local church as well. Often they will continue to be a part of their cell group as well as attend a church. This process is shown in Figure 6.4.

Figure 6.4. Cells Feed Churches



E. In-Class Exercise: Case Studies

Following are some case studies of church planting strategies which many or may not use principles from the cell group models listed above. In class, discuss (1) which model the scenario is based upon (if any) and (2) the advantages and disadvantages of this scenario as a church planting strategy.

Case Study 1

Resurrection Church needs some help. The church is more than fifty years old, and has about 25 people who meet together for services. Three deacons approach the pastor with an idea to direct the 25 members into three cell groups. The cell groups will be led by the deacons, and will have a focus on evangelism, discipleship, growth and multiplication.

Case Study 2

A church planter moves to a city with no church and is able to start several new cell groups. The cell groups are very successful, and begin to grow and multiply themselves. The people in the cells feel very close to one another, and decide that they will start a single church from the groups. Each new cell group that is started will continue to be a part of this one large church.

Case Study 3

First Baptist Church has more than 1000 members. They have several services on Sunday and another service on Wednesday. The senior pastor decides that the members should be meeting together in small groups. The leaders of the church divide the congregation into groups of ten, and assign members to particular groups.

Case Study 4

Several church planters begin starting cell groups. The groups have a vision to evangelize and multiply, but do not want to start new churches. Instead, they are guiding new believers into one of several existing churches in town. Some of the groups have members who continue to meet in the groups, as well as attend local churches of different denominations.

Case Study 5

A few years ago a ministry from the West brought over missionaries who started some small groups independent of the existing local churches. These groups meet once a week and do inductive Bible study.

Case Study 6

An evangelical church has many small groups that meet for Bible study. The same people have met in these groups for several years, and the groups have not grown. Several of the groups contain people who live near each other, but who live far from the church. These groups decide that they would like to start a new church closer to where they live.

Case Study 7

A church planter moves to a new city and begins doing evangelism. The people are receptive, and soon he has started several cell groups, each of which has a vision to evangelize and to multiply. The groups meet on Sundays for a time of worship and teaching, and on Wednesday evenings they invite non-believing friends for a time of fun and fellowship. There is no plan to build a church building, and once every six weeks the groups rent a hall for an evening of corporate worship and teaching.

There is not one "correct" way to use cell groups in a church planting ministry, but each church planter must consider the best model(s) to use in his context. No matter what the emphasis of a cell group might be, multiplication will always be a goal for that group.

III. DEVELOPING A CELL GROUP MINISTRY STRATEGY

Since cell groups are building blocks for a larger ministry strategy, thought must be given to the overall strategy for church planting, and how cell groups might be used in order to achieve the goals which have been set. At every phase of the cell group, it is helpful to reflect on the ultimate goal of the group. Following are several points that should be considered:

1. Identify the overall ministry goals. Are you starting a saturation church planting movement? A single church? Enough churches to fill a neighborhood, city or geographical region? Your end result will determine the type, number, and ministry focus of your cell groups.
2. How do the cells need to work independently and together in order to see the goal accomplished? How will this work be coordinated and evaluated?
3. What is the target area, and who are the target people? Research should be done in order to better understand the types of activities which are needed in the cell groups (see the Vision lesson "Principles of Research" in Manual 1).
4. What types of evangelism are appropriate for the target area/people? How will you incorporate this into the new cell groups?
5. Who are the key leaders in the target area? How would it be possible for one or more cell groups to develop relationships with these people and hopefully win them to Christ?
6. What type of cell group "models" do you need in order to accomplish your goals? (E.g. many cells which form one church, cells which are used by existing churches, cells which start a cell group church, etc.). More than likely, you will need to use several different variations of the cell group models presented in this lesson in order to accomplish your overall ministry goals.

QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION, REVIEW AND APPLICATION

- Your cell group will always be in one of the life cycle phases (orientation, transition, community, action or multiplication). Why does this matter when you are planning for your meeting activities? Why does it matter from the perspective of an overall cell group strategy?
- Why are cell groups an essential part of a saturation church planting strategy?
- Which of the models (if any) from the "Models Of Cell Group Ministry" section would work well in your target area?

ACTION PLAN

- In several sentences, write down a concise but comprehensive definition of a cell group. Give this to the trainer.
- Based on what you know about your target area and the goals you have set for that area, write a basic strategy for how you could use cell groups in order to reach those goals. Include the points from the "Cell Group Strategy Considerations" section in your plan. Share your plan with another trainee, and each of you evaluate the other's plan. For the purposes of this exercise, your plan should be no more than a few pages long.

BIBLE STUDY METHODS

BIBLE STUDY
METHODS

8

LESSON

Various Ways to Use Inductive Bible Studies

☞ Lesson Purpose

The purpose of this lesson is to encourage the use of inductive Bible study methods in various kinds of studies in addition to short passages.

☞ Main Points

- The purpose of *any* Bible study should be to determine what the Bible has to say, and this is best done through the inductive method.
- Types of study that can benefit from the inductive method include biographical studies, book studies, and theme studies.

☞ Desired Outcomes

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

- Be convinced that the inductive method should be used in whatever kind of Bible study he or she is doing or leading.
- Know how to approach the study of a Bible character, book or theme from an inductive perspective.

☞ Appendix

8A Biographical Study on Barnabas

INTRODUCTION

The previous manual explained how the inductive method of Bible study focuses on discovering and applying the meaning of the Word of God. The emphasis is on the Scriptures rather than our prior understanding of the passage. Hopefully, it has already enhanced your study of the Word.

So far, we have only used the inductive method to look at short passages because of the brief time available during the lessons. However, the inductive study method can be used to study much larger portions of the Bible or to compare verses from different sections—as would be necessary in a theme or biographical study. In this lesson, we will discuss some of the guidelines for applying the inductive method to those other kinds of studies.

I. REVIEW OF THE PRINCIPLES OF INDUCTIVE BIBLE STUDY

Before you apply the inductive Bible study method more broadly, you should look back through the Bible Study Methods section of the first manual.

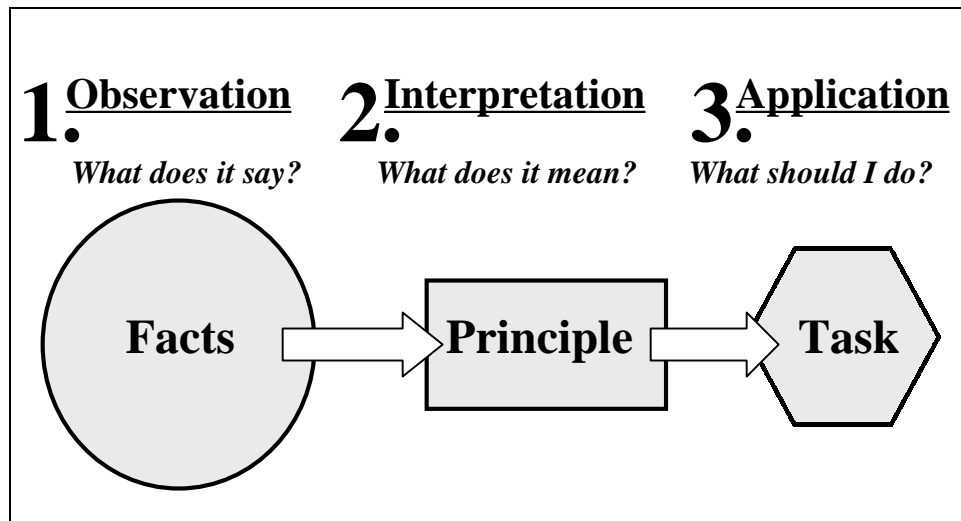
A. The Reason for the Inductive Method

The deductive method begins with a pre-existing understanding or fact that determines the meaning of the situation being studied. When we use this method to study the Bible, we end up trying to make a verse say *what we already understand* rather than learning from it. By contrast, when we use the inductive method in Bible study, we come to the passage *to learn* and allow the Word to speak to us.

B. The Steps of the Inductive Method

The three steps of the inductive method—observation, interpretation, and application—are shown in figure 8.1. The inductive method leads us through the process of asking what the Bible says, what it *means*, and what I should *do* about it. It begins by taking time to examine closely the content of the Scriptures, and ends with putting it into practice in my life and ministry.

Figure 8.1 The Three Steps



It is important to work through the steps *in order*, without jumping ahead. The process is like a pyramid, where it was necessary to build a large and strong foundation of observation before building our interpretation on it, and applying it to our lives.

C. The Emphasis of the Inductive Method

The inductive Bible study method can be used for many kinds of Bible studies, as we will see below. There are a number of general principles that are important, no matter what kind of study you are doing. These include:

- Ask Lots of Good Questions Such as *Who?*, *What?*, *Where?*, *When?*, *How?* and *Why?*
- Look for the Main Point
- Understand the Author's Purpose
- Allow for Progressive Revelation
- Understand the Context
- State the Biblical Principle
- Compare the Biblical and Modern Context
- Pray

Refer to the previous lessons for more information on these principles.

II. BIOGRAPHICAL STUDIES

Biographical studies, or character studies, involve studying everything recorded about a particular person in the Bible. If this involves a great number of passages, it might be helpful to study a particular event or time frame in that character's life. For example, you might study Paul during his missionary journeys or David during his flight from King Saul. However, even in this situation, consider the entire life of the person, and how the chosen section fits into the whole.

A. Why Do a Biographical Study?

Everyone likes a story. It is easy to relate to the problems, challenges, temptations, joys, and victories of others when these are seen in story form. The Bible is full of both negative and positive examples seen in the stories of people's lives.

By studying the lives of biblical personages with their strengths and weaknesses, we can learn many lessons to help us conform to the image of Christ. Much of the Bible is concerned with God's working with individuals to restore this process. For example, from Abraham we learn about faith; from Joseph we learn how to face temptations; from Esther we learn about God's sovereign working; from Daniel we learn about prayer; from Jonah we learn what happens to a person trying to run away from God; from Paul we learn about missions. 1Co 10:11 is a key verse: "These things happened to them as examples and were written down as warnings for us." What other examples come to your mind?

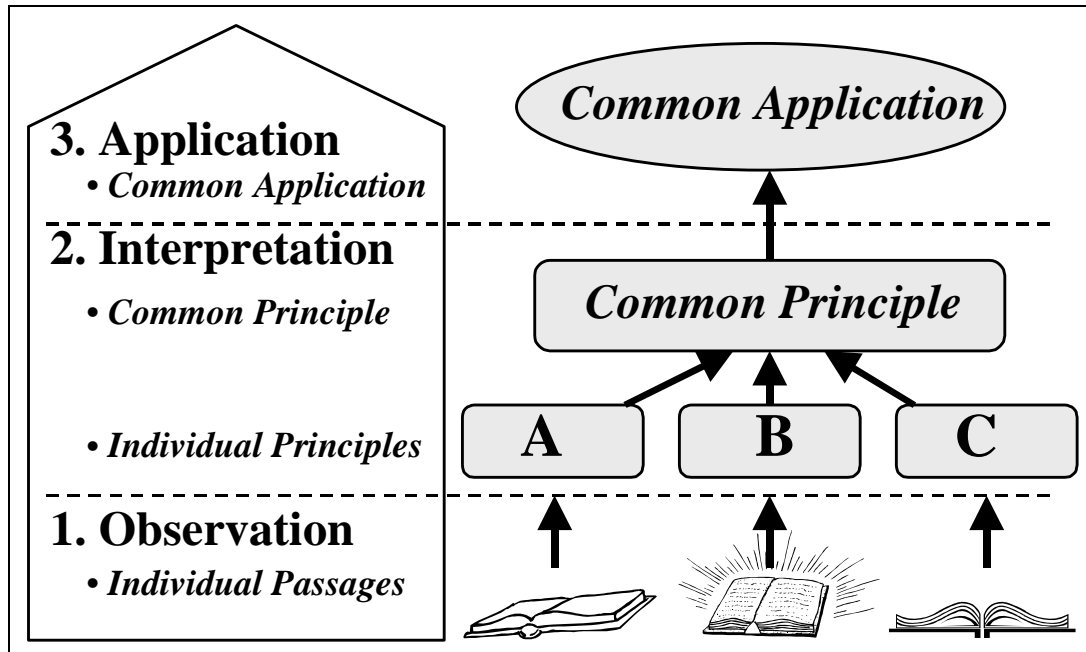
By studying the lives of biblical personages with their strengths and weaknesses, we can learn many lessons to help us conform to the image of Christ.

By using stories about the lives of biblical characters, church planters must be able to communicate many important truths to those they are seeking to evangelize and train. But in order to apply the Bible most accurately, it is necessary to understand what the Bible is teaching through a person's life. Good Bible study principles must be applied to biographical studies the same as to any types of Bible study.

B. How to Do a Biographical Study

Inductive biographical studies follow a similar pattern of observation, interpretation, and application as the individual texts do, with one significant exception. Figure 8.2 illustrates how *observation* is done on each passage. However, *interpretation* requires an extra step. First, the biblical principle for each passage is determined. Then, a *common principle* is formed from the individual principles. Finally, the *common application* that summarizes all the passages is formulated and put into practice. The sections below will expand these concepts.

Figure 8.2 Biographical Study



1. *Observation*

Observation involves thoroughly looking at all the relevant passages—one at a time. Each passage is teaching a particular truth in a specific context. You need to discover what that truth is for every passage before proceeding on to interpretation. Use the steps below as a guide:

- Select the Bible person you wish to study.
- Make a list of ALL biblical references to that person. If available, use a concordance or Bible dictionary.
- Arrange the verses in chronological order.
- Formulate and ask as many observation questions as possible (*Who?, What?, Where?, When?, How? and Why?*)
- Pay special attention to clues as to the character, personality, thoughts, or actions of the person you are studying. For instance:
 - What can we learn about his ancestry and family?
 - Is the meaning of his name significant? Was it changed? If so, what was the significance of that change, e.g. Abram to Abraham, Jacob to Israel, Simon to Peter, etc.
 - When and where did he live? What do we know from other sources, both biblical and non-biblical, about life in his day?
 - What significant events occurred in his life: crises, accomplishments, call to a specific task, problems faced, etc.
 - Relationships: What was his relationship to God? How did he get along with others?
- Record and summarize your notes on each verse.

2. *Interpretation*

Interpretation is a two-part process when it involves more than one passage of Scripture—as is often the case in a biographical study. Each of the passages that you select to study has a specific purpose and teaching of its *own*. Because of the unity of Scripture, these purposes will never contradict, but they may be different. Usually, they add further information. Each of these purposes should be discovered and stated as a biblical principle, using the guidelines presented in earlier discussions of the inductive method.

Each of the passages that you select to study has a specific purpose and teaching of its <i>own</i> .

Once these principle for each individual passage have been stated, it is possible to finish the process of interpretation by combining them carefully and thoughtfully into one principle that sums up the contribution of each part. Suppose you chose to study a portion of the life of David. One passage taught that he was devoted to the Word. Another stressed his prayer life. A third emphasized his trust in God in times of trouble. An appropriate common principle might be, "We should be devoted to the Word and prayer as we trust God in difficult times." This principle summarizes the teaching of all three passages.

3. *Application*

Once your study of the character has defined a common biblical principle, you can compare your situation to his or hers and determine *what you should do*. That is, you will look for ways in which your context and that of the Bible character are similar, and respond according to the teaching that you have seen in the Word. As you do this step, you may want to review some of the passages when the Holy Spirit brings it to mind, and allow Him to teach you and guide you through the process.

There are many interpretation questions that you can ask to help discover the most important application for you. These include:

- How is my experience similar to his?

- Do I have the same strengths? Weaknesses?
- Why did God include this person in Scripture?
- What specific things does God want to teach me through the study of his or her life?

Note: An example of a biographical study on the life of Barnabas is found in Appendix 8A.

III. BOOK STUDIES

Most Bible scholars agree that the Bible has one common theme—although they debate how exactly to state it. Each book of the Bible develops that common theme by contributing something unique. A good example of this is seen in the Gospels. Four Gospel writers each wrote about the life of Christ. There are many similarities in the Gospels, and also many differences. Each is written from a unique perspective.

- Matthew – presents Christ as the Jewish Messiah (royal)
- Mark – presents Christ as the Servant (humble)
- Luke – presents Christ as the Son of Man (human)
- John – presents Christ as the Son of God (divine)

Each of these portraits of Christ are true, and yet, each is different. Each Gospel describes an important aspect of His person or character better than the others. The four Gospels work together to more fully describe the Lord. In the same way, all sixty-six books of the Bible work together to present the full message that God has for us. One book best describes His love, another His patience, another His wrath. One book emphasizes the lost condition of fallen man, while another describes our glorious salvation through Christ's atonement.

All sixty-six books of the Bible work together to present the full message that God has for us.

A. Why Do a Book Study?

Since all sixty-six books work together to present God's message to us, we need to carefully examine each book if we want to accurately understand its contribution to that message. There is also another benefit. When we understand the theme of each book, we know where to turn to quickly find answers to a particular problem. Does someone struggle with legalism? Turn to Galatians. Do we doubt our salvation? Read Romans. Do we question the deity of Christ? Read John. If we doubt the seriousness of sin, we should read Judges. Each book has a special emphasis and message.

B. How to Do a Book Study

A book study uses the same steps of the inductive method that we have been learning. Normally, a book study will require quite a bit of time to do it right. The benefits, however, will easily make it worth your time. A book study consists of four stages:

1. *Read the Book Several Times*

Many of the books of the Bible are simply short letters or messages. They were intended to be read from beginning to end without interruption. The best way to study them is to read them several times until you begin to notice the theme and repeated or stressed ideas. Some of the longer books (such as Isaiah and Jeremiah) were written over many years, but they are also addressed to one audience and will communicate more clearly if we read them in their entirety. Once is not enough—nor is simply looking at selections from the book. Take time to read it repeatedly before you attempt to interpret it.

Take time to read a book repeatedly before you attempt to interpret it.

2. *Study the 'Setting' of the Book*

There are a number of important factors that we will call the 'setting' of the book. You may find some of this information in the book itself or in notes in your Bible. Other questions will

require the use of commentaries, Bible handbooks, or other helps. As you start your study, limit your use of these helps to introductory facts about the book, and not at the commentator's dialog. Save that for later, once you have had time to let the Scriptures speak to you first. As you start your study, look for the following 'setting' facts:

- *Author* – If possible, decide who wrote the book, and then learn as much about that person as you can. Why did God choose him as the human author? What was his background and experience? What kind of person was he? Who was his family? When and how was he saved? How old was he? What was his profession? Answer as many other questions about him as you can.
- *Recipients* – To whom was the book written? What was their situation at that time? Why do you think the book was written? How was it delivered to them (preached, prophesied, hand-carried letter, etc.)? What was their relationship to God? To the human author? What was their political situation? Their religious situation?
- *Date* – When was the book written? What important events were happening in history at that time? Where does this book fit into God's progressive revelation to man? What was the time span of the writing of the book?
- *Literary Style* – What kind of writing is used (poetry, prophesy, historical, didactic, etc.)? See Bible Study Methods Appendix 2A: "The Language of the Bible" for more information on styles. How will this style affect your interpretation? How would it have affected the recipients?

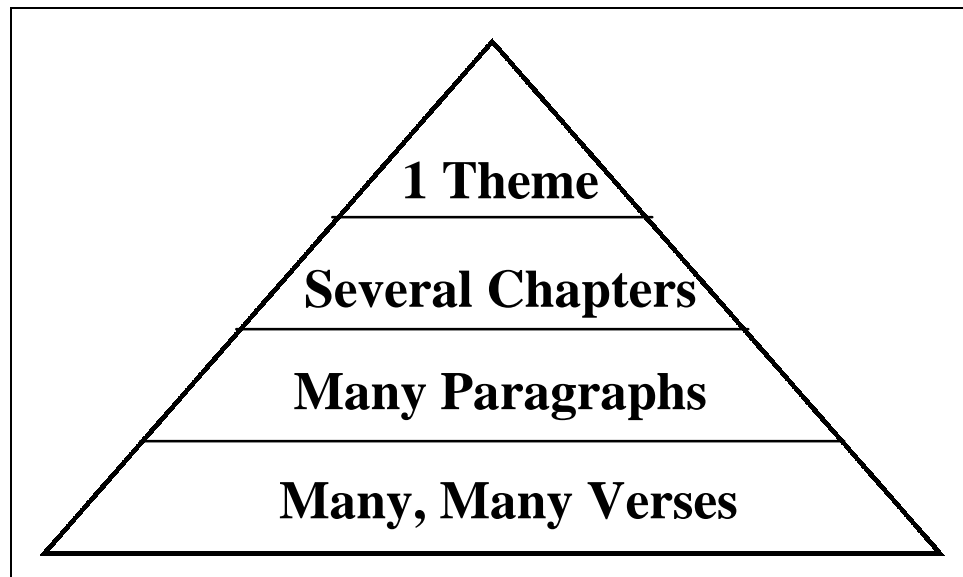
3. *Study the Content of the Book*

There are two main considerations in a book study. The first is the theme and the second is how that theme is developed. In other words, the author wanted to communicate a specific idea to us, and he did so in a particular way. Both are important.

a. *The Theme of the Book*

Now that you know many facts about the book, study the content of the book. The book will have one major theme that might or might not be easy to determine. For example, John states clearly the theme of his Gospel (Jn 20:31). So does Jude (Jude 3). Other writers are less clear.

Figure 8.3 Parts of a Book



b. The Development of the Theme

The content of the book will work together to communicate the theme of the book to the recipients (and to us). As you study and ask questions, note how the writer accomplishes that task. What kind of attitude does he express (authority, gentleness, love, anger, etc.)? What kind of language does he use—clear, sarcastic, eloquent, persuasive, etc.? Does he focus on the mind or the emotions? How? Why do you think he uses those approaches?

4. *Chart the Development of the Theme of the Book*

One helpful technique in a book study is to make a chart of the major themes, characters, places, etc. that are discussed in the book. Often a study Bible or commentary will include such charts. There are also other sources of these charts, such as Jensen (see Sources). However, you can also make your own. In fact, your study will be much more profitable if you attempt to chart the flow yourself before consulting another source. These charts need not be elaborate—they are meant to help you see the overall nature of the book. Figure 8.3 is a sample chart for the Book of Acts.

Figure 8.3 Chart of the Book of Acts

<i>The Book of Acts</i>						
Theme:	"You will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth" (Acts 1:8)					
Chapters:	1-7	8-12	13-28			
Places:	Jerusalem	Judea & Samaria	The Ends of the Earth			
Ministry to:	Jews	Jew & Gentile	Gentiles			
Key People:	Peter John Stephen	Peter Philip Saul/Paul Barnabas	Paul Barnabas Silas			
Key Events:	Ascension Pentecost	Eunich Cornelius	(13-14) 1st Missionary Journey	(15-18) 2nd Missionary Journey	(19-20) 3rd Missionary Journey	(21-28) Paul Goes to Rome
Principles:	Growth	Persecution	Missions			

5. *Apply the Theme of the Book to Your Situation*

At this point, you should have a good understanding of *what the book says* from your observation. You should also have determined the theme and its development—that is, *what the book means*. The final step is to think about *what you should do*. As in the previous lessons, this involves examining your own life and situation to see what similarities exist between it and the original context of the book. Questions you might want to ask yourself to help this process include:

- What in my life resembles the situation in the book?
- What in my life resembles the author of the book?
- How would I have addressed this situation?
- What particularly spoke to my heart as I read the book?

IV. THEME STUDIES

Often, we want to study a particular subject of topic. This kind of study is also referred to as a 'theme' study. The normal rules of inductive study still apply.

A. Why Do a Theme Study?

Many topics or truths are developed throughout the pages of the Bible. Many span both testaments. Book studies will show only a portion of these themes. For instance, teaching on prayer is everywhere in the Scriptures. The only way to adequately study it is to do a theme study.

B. How to Do a Theme Study

Once you have decided which theme you will study, you will want to work through the following steps:

- *Find the Related Verses* – Notes and cross-references in the margins of your Bible can help you find verses that relate to your theme. Find one verse that you know is relevant, and then begin to follow the links from verse to verse. However, a more thorough method is to use a concordance to look up *all* the verses that discuss your topic. Be careful, though—verses that have the same word do not necessarily relate to your topic.
- *Arrange the Verses in Order* – The theme you have chosen may be developed gradually through the Bible. Read the verses that were written earlier before the later ones. That way, you will discover the truth in the same way that God originally revealed it.
- *Study and Summarize Each Verse in Context* – Avoid being guilty of ripping a verse out of its context and trying to make it say what you want it to say. Let the Holy Spirit speak to you through it. Observe and interpret each verse carefully. Summarize what it is teaching about the theme.
- *Summarize the Teaching on the Theme* – After you have studied the individual verses and know what they say and mean, summarize their teaching into a clear statement that includes the contribution of each verse. This process is essentially the same as the method for a biographical study that is shown in figure 8.2. The main difference is that each passage concerns a theme instead of a person.
- *Apply the Truth* – Prayerfully and thoughtfully ask God to show you how this truth should change your life and ministry. You have "looked in the mirror"—now go out and do what you have learned (Jas 1:22-25).

Sample theme studies and key verses for them are listed for you in Bible Study Methods Appendix 10A: "Passages for Inductive Bible Study."

SUMMARY

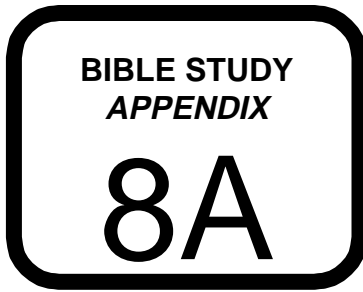
The inductive Bible study method is helpful for many kinds of Bible study. It is so powerful because it reminds us at every step to let Scripture speak to us, instead of enforcing our understanding on it. Even when we study a book or multiple passages (as in a theme or biographical study) we need to be careful to study every verse in its context so that it can speak clearly to us.

QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION, REVIEW, AND APPLICATION

- What is an advantage of doing a biographical study?
- What is the difference between the 'setting' and the 'content' of a book of the Bible?
- Why is it important to arrange verses for a biographical or theme study in chronological order?

ACTION PLAN

- Work through the biographical study on the life of Barnabas in Appendix 8A. Think through his role in the church planting process in Acts. What application do you see for your own life and ministry?
- Take the time to use the inductive method for a book study and for a theme study. Pick a smaller book or a more manageable theme for your first attempt. Evaluate the effectiveness of this method in helping you discover things you had not formerly seen in the Word.



Biographical Study on Barnabas

Use the inductive method of Bible study as you work through this biographical study on the life of Barnabas. As you have questions about the process, refer back to point II, "Biographical Studies" of Bible Study Methods Lesson 8: "Various Ways to Use Inductive Bible Studies."

I. STUDY THE RELEVANT PASSAGES

The verses where Barnabas is mentioned by name are listed for you. Read each verse or passage in the following list, and record your observations. Then summarize the passage. The first one has been done for you.

A. Acts 4:36,37

1. Observations:

- Was a Levite
- Was from Cyprus
- His given name was Joseph
- The Apostles nicknamed him "Barnabas"
- Son of Encouragement
- He sold his land to help fund the work of the church
- He presented his gift humbly ("at the apostles' feet")

2. Interpretation / Summary:

Barnabas was an 'encourager' by his very nature—even to the extent of giving of his possessions to encourage and enable other believers.

B. Acts 11:19-24

1. Observations

2. Interpretation / Summary

C. Acts 11:25-26

1. *Observations*

2. *Interpretation / Summary*

D. Acts 11:27-30

1. *Observations*

2. *Interpretation / Summary*

E. Acts 12:25

1. *Observations*

2. *Interpretation / Summary*

F. Acts 13:1-13;42-43

1. *Observations*

2. *Interpretation / Summary*

G. Acts 14:1-23

1. *Observations*

2. *Interpretation / Summary*

H. Acts 15:2-4, 12, 22, 25, 35-39

1. *Observations*

2. *Interpretation / Summary*

I. Colossians 4:10

1. *Observations*

2. *Interpretation / Summary*

J. Galatians 2:11-13

1. *Observations*

2. *Interpretation / Summary*

II. SUMMARIZE THE TEACHING

Now that you have looked at the individual passages, it is time to look at the results and summarize what the Bible teaches about Barnabas. As you do so, think through the following questions:

- What kind of background did Barnabas have?
- Why do you think the apostles gave Joseph the nickname "Barnabas?"
- What evidence do you see from these passages that Barnabas was an encourager?
- What is the significance of the order in which Paul and Barnabas (or Barnabas and Paul) are mentioned?
- How did Barnabas respond to the shift in leadership to Paul?
- How did he respond to conflicts? (Ac 15:1-4 and Ac 15:36-40)
- Why do you think he responded as he did in Gal 2:11-13?

Now write down a statement to summarize what you have learned about the life of Barnabas. Make sure that it includes all the key ideas that you have seen in each of the passages:

III. DECIDE WHAT TO DO ABOUT IT

A study of Scripture is of little value until we decide how we need to apply it to our lives. Think through the teaching of Barnabas' life as you consider the following questions:

- Have you had any "Barnabases" in your life? Who were they and how did they encourage you?
- Do you know of a Christian that needs encouragement? What can you do to encourage him/her?
- In Ac 9:26ff and 11:25-26, Barnabas risked his own reputation to encourage another. Are you willing to do the same for the sake of the Gospel?
- Barnabas moved aside and allowed Paul to assume the first place in leadership. Are you willing to train new leaders and allow them to assume leadership even if you must take a secondary position?
- What specific lessons has the Lord been teaching you as you studied the life of Barnabas?

Prayerfully consider how God would have you live differently as a result of this study. In the space below, write what you intend to do about it, and then ask the Lord to help you faithfully accomplish this:

**BIBLE STUDY
METHODS**

9

LESSON

Leading Inductive Bible Studies

LEADING OTHERS TO DISCOVERY

☞ Lesson Purpose

The purpose of this lesson is to explain how to lead an inductive Bible study group in such a way that the members are able to discover the meaning and application of the Scriptures they study.

☞ Main Points

- Discovery is more powerful than "telling."
- Good questions facilitate discovery.

☞ Desired Outcomes

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

- Know the difference between "teaching" and "leading in discovery."
- Be able to create appropriate questions that lead to discovery.

☞ Appendix

9A Inductive Bible Study on Matthew 20:17-28

9B Inductive Bible Study on Luke 15:1-7

☞ Suggestions to Trainers

Lesson 10,11 will be a 2-hour workshop to give the trainees practice leading an inductive Bible study. Trainees should have at least one evening to think about how to use the discussion techniques presented in this lesson before the workshop.

I. CHARACTERISTICS OF AN INDUCTIVE BIBLE STUDY GROUP

Inductive Bible study is first and foremost a method for personal growth of the Christian. However, it is also a very effective form of ministry to others. It can be used for evangelism, or for discipleship. This normally occurs in a group context.

An inductive Bible study group is a small group of people who come together for the purpose of studying the Bible. The members may or may not be believers—although, of course, the leader should be. Inductive Bible study is a good way for unbelievers to discover the message God has for them—that is, repent and trust Christ for salvation. If the members are unbelievers, the leader will want to choose a portion of Scripture for the study that explains the Gospel clearly. The Gospel of John, and especially chapter 3, is a very good example. If the members are believers, the topic can be anything that is of interest to them.

An inductive Bible study group is a small group of people who come together for the purpose of studying the Bible.

There are a number of differences between an inductive Bible study group and a sermon. Three of the most important of these differences are listed below.

A. The Authority is the Scriptures

In a sermon, the source of authority is all too often perceived as residing in the teacher. As a result, if the speaker is very capable, people listen to what *he* says, and may or may not realize that

message comes from God. In the opposite case, the message of the Word can be clouded or confused by a poor speaker. In both situations, a person stands between the hearers and the Word of the Lord.

Inductive Bible study, by contrast, allows each member of the group to focus on the Scriptures. The living and active Word of God is capable of touching the innermost being of a person, bringing conviction or comfort. Nothing stands between the Word and the hearer. No human interferes. The Holy Spirit applies the message directly to the heart of the reader.

Obviously, there is a time and a place for teaching. Sometimes it is helpful to listen to a teacher when people are not willing to read the Word for themselves, or when the teacher has particularly good insight in to a particular passage or subject. However, teaching should be balanced wherever and whenever possible by personal study of the Scriptures. Teaching should *add to* what we are learning on our own—it should never *replace it*.

Teaching should always be balanced by personal study of the Scriptures.

B. The Goal is Discovery

Educational theory has strongly and repeatedly proved that we learn and remember something best when we discover it for ourselves. Having someone tell us what fishing is like is far inferior to actually going fishing and experiencing it for ourselves. The same holds true for the truth of the Word. When we discover the truth in the pages of the Bible, we are more likely to understand it, believe it, and act on it than when someone preaches it to us. In order to enable this discovery, an inductive Bible study group should be small enough to allow for interaction among the members. Less than 10 people would be ideal, although some group leaders can stimulate interaction with even larger groups.

C. The Leader is a Facilitator

Since the best method of learning spiritual truth is to discover it ourselves, the leader of an inductive Bible study must help the members *discover* truth in the passage—not *tell* them. This is accomplished through the skillful use of questions. Questions are a way of directing the attention of the members to important facts in the passage, without actually telling them. It guides them, but allows them to discover. That is the goal.

The best method of learning spiritual truth is to discover it ourselves.

It should be obvious, therefore, that the questions you choose to ask the group are very important. There will not be time during a group study to ask all the questions the group can think of. Rather, the responsibility of the group leader is to study the passage ahead of time, and note which questions were most helpful for him or her. This includes all areas—observation, interpretation, and application. The number of questions needed depends on the length of time of the study session, but you will not need a lot since you will want to allow enough time to discuss the answers. Also, you should definitely allow the groups members to ask and answer their own questions—especially as they gain experience in the process.

II. PREPARATION FOR THE STUDY

Before the study, the group leader should plan the study carefully.

A. Study the Passage Yourself

It is important that the leader discover the central truth(s) and main application(s) of the passage. The leader should observe, interpret, and apply the passage on his own according to the inductive Bible study guidelines taught in Manual One.

B. Write Down the Purpose of the Study

The leader should decide the general direction for the small group Bible study to take. This direction should not be too specific. Remember that the Holy Spirit may teach the group in ways that you did not anticipate.

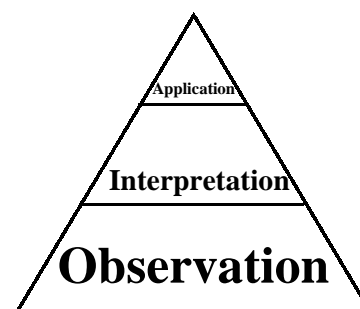
C. Prepare Questions on the Passage for the Group Which Cover All Three Parts of the Study

The leader should prepare to lead the group to **apply** sound **interpretation** based on careful **observation** by guiding the group through the same process of discovery that he has already taken. Thought-provoking questions should build on one another so that the discussion concentrates on the main purpose and application of the passage. The questions should not require simple "yes or no" answers. Rather, they should guide the group to search the verse for the facts, meaning, and application. If it takes a few minutes and several attempts to adequately answer a question, that is fine. The questions should help the members discover—not insult their intelligence.

The previous manual showed you how to prepare these three kinds of questions, and asked you to prepare a sample study. In all future studies that you lead, you should work through the same process. As you prepare, you will think of far too many questions to use in a group. After you have completed the study of the passage for yourself, you will need to sort through your questions to identify the most helpful or informative ones, and use only those in leading others in a study of the text.

Make sure to include several questions for each of the steps—observation, interpretation, and application. Remember the example of building a pyramid with a strong base. It is preferable to have more observation questions than interpretation questions, and even fewer application ones. This does not mean that application is less important—it is the *most* important thing. However, it will require a number of questions to lead the members of the study group to the point of discovering the one application that is most needed in their lives. Guiding people to discovery through skillful questioning is difficult, but rewarding.

Figure 9.1



D. Review the Questions

When the questions have been formulated, the leader should ask:

- Are my questions clear?
- Is each brief enough to be readily grasped?
- Do the questions make the group search the passage?
- Do the observation questions provide a solid basis on which to ask interpretive and application questions?
- Do the questions move the group through the whole passage?
- Do the application questions lead the group to specific actions?

E. Prepare an Introductory Question to Get the Members Excited about the Bible Study

The introductory question can focus on how this passage speaks to a particular situation with which the members identify. For example, 1 Peter was written to churches facing persecution. Studying of this book, you might ask: how do you act when you are persecuted for being a Christian? How did the people Peter was writing to react to persecution?

III. LEADING THE STUDY

A. The Study Should Be Started and Closed with Prayer

Studying the Bible is not just a mechanical process. It requires the help of the Holy Spirit to open our eyes to the truth that God wants to communicate to us. We should pray for enlightenment before we study, and then ask the Lord to help us apply what we learned after the study.

B. The Leader Should Be Prepared to Learn from the Group

Remember that the same Holy Spirit who speaks to the leader speaks to others. Others will have insights that the leader missed. If the leader is not prepared to learn, then he will appear to be an 'expert.' The presence of an 'expert' can kill honest discussion. In many cases, people will not want to share their opinions in the presence of an expert who may correct them.

The presence of an 'expert' can kill honest discussion.

C. The Leader Should Not Answer His Own Questions or Questions That Might Arise from Within the Group

The leader should avoid answering his own questions. It will limit group thinking. If the leader does answer his own questions, the questions begin to sound like test questions with correct answers. Many people will be reluctant to answer questions that they could get "wrong." When there is a lot of hesitation after a certain question, the leader should be alert to rephrase the question in case the group has difficulty understanding. Likewise, questions that arise from within the group should be reflected back to the group for their consideration. For example, "Sasha has a question about _____. What do you think about it?" Or, you can direct Sasha's questions to a particular person in the group: "Tanya, how would you answer Sasha's question?"

D. Do Not Be Afraid of Silence

The leader should allow sufficient time to answer the question. There may be a few moments of silence—which is perfectly all right. People need time to think. Silence is a group pressure that works on the behalf of the leader.

E. The Leader Should Not Always Be Satisfied With the First Answer Given

If the leader constantly accepts an answer and moves on to the next question, then the group can fall into a question/answer, question/answer pattern. It would be better for the group to have a discussion, not a quiz. By soliciting several responses to the question, a natural discussion is more likely. Also, the first answer given is often not the most complete or insightful. Sometimes there can be more than one answer. By taking time to discuss other answers, a more comprehensive understanding of the passage is gained.

F. Questions Not Answered By the Group May Be Left Unanswered

The leader should refrain from answering questions that the group has not been able to process. To do so would be to stifle individual and group thinking by providing the answer. Also, if we trust the Holy Spirit to be the real teacher, then we have to trust that an unanswered question is something that the group is not ready to handle at that moment. The unanswered question may hold their curiosity and bring them back the next week.

G. Incorrect or Partial Answers Should Be Corrected By the Scriptures and/or the Group, Not the Leader

There will be wrong answers and incorrect statements. The natural response is for the leader to correct and rebuke. But doing so can discourage group members from opening up. This will in turn kill open and honest discussion. Instead of correcting a wrong or partial answer, the leader can do one of the following:

- Ask the person answering to re-read the text, or refer them to another text.

- Ask the group whether it is in agreement with the answer or not.
- Ask group members for other related Scripture verses to support or correct the answer.

H. Keep the Discussion on the Main Theme of the Passage

Satan is a master at getting people to divert their attention from the main truth. The discussion of Jesus with the Samaritan woman (John 4) is a good example of an attempt to divert Christ from addressing the woman's real needs. It is likely that good questions, even important ones, will arise out of the discussion. If they are not related to the main theme, then the leader should say something like the following: "Sasha, that is a very interesting question. But since it is not really related to our theme tonight, we will save it until after the study to answer." Or, "Sasha, your question is very important. It deserves a whole study itself. We will plan a study later on. Tonight we want to focus on our theme of this passage."

I. Do Not Forget to Ask the Application Questions

The goal of the study is not just to gain knowledge about God's word, but to discover how to practically obey God's word. The leader should not be afraid to use rather direct questions that prompt people to action. Group members will not want to be like the man in James 1:22-24 who did not act on what he learned. The leader should help everyone be as specific as possible in application so he can look back after a week and see the progress he has made in the application of Scripture to his life.

J. Control the Participation of Those Who Talk Too Much or Too Little

Most small groups will have a couple persons anxious to answer every question, the majority who will answer occasionally, and a couple persons who have to be really encouraged to participate. For those who always answer, the leader needs to say something like this: "Sasha, we can always count on you for an answer. Let us hear what Tanya thinks about _____." For those who rarely participate, the leader can ask them to read the text or answer an observation question with an easy to see answer in the text. As confidence builds, they can be encouraged to participate in easy interpretation and application questions.

K. At the End of the Study, the Leader Can Summarize What the Group Has Learned and Expressed

The leader should avoid adding new information the group did not consider. Adding new information not only sets up the leader as the "expert," it also shows a lack of trust in the leading of the Holy Spirit to reveal what He wanted the group to discover. It is better to affirm what the group has learned and move on.

QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION, REVIEW, AND APPLICATION

- Why is discovery necessary for Christian growth? Why is preaching alone not enough?
- What would constitute a good discussion question?

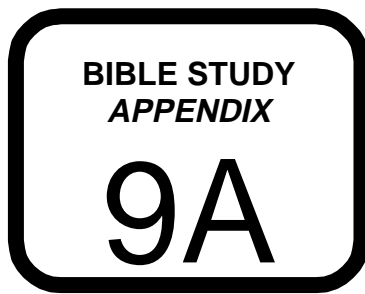
ACTION PLAN

- In the last manual, you were instructed to prepare a brief inductive Bible study on one of the following passages:

Acts 13:4-12 (Paphos)	Acts 17:10-15 (Berea)
Acts 13:13-52 (Antioch)	Acts 17:16-34 (Athens)
Acts 14:1-7 (Iconium)	Acts 17:16-34 (Athens)
Acts 14:8-20 (Lystra and Derbe)	Acts 18:1-17 (Corinth)
Acts 16:11-40 (Philippi)	

In preparation for the next lesson, you should have this completed study with you, including your observation, interpretation, and application questions. In the next lesson (10,11), you will lead some of the other trainees through that study using the principles in this lesson. Take time to review that study, and think through how you will lead the discussion.

- If, for some reason, you do not have a study prepared, you may use one of the sample studies in Appendix 9A or 9B, but it is *strongly recommended* that you use your own study. Leading your own study will better help you to evaluate your question preparation and your proficiency in using the inductive Bible study method.



Inductive Bible Study on Matthew 20:17-28

Note: This study is provided as a model of an inductive Bible study. If absolutely necessary, it may be used for the Workshop in Lesson 10,11. However, it is strongly recommended that this only serve as a guide, and that you do your own study on one of the passages assigned in the first manual.

INTRODUCTION

The Leadership lessons in this church planting course will be looking at the ministry of Jesus as our model for leadership. There are many kinds of 'leadership' in the world, but Jesus presented a very different understanding of what it means to lead others. As we will see in Matthew 20:17-28, even His disciples had a difficult time grasping the implications of this new kind of Christian leadership. We want to answer the question: "What is Christian Leadership?"

I. PRAY

Begin the study by praying for God to remove other distractions from your mind, and allow you to focus on learning the truth of the passage so you can be a better Christian leader.

II. READ MATTHEW 20:17-28

Read the passage carefully and thoughtfully. One person can read it all, or you can divide the reading among the members of the study group.

III. OBSERVATION

Our first task is to discover what the passage *says*. Look closely at the verses and answer the following questions:

From the context (Mt 19:27-20:16)

- In **what** way might Jesus' teaching in Matthew 19:27-28 have sparked James' and John's desire to rule in the kingdom?
- **What** is the main point of the Matthew 20:1-15 parable, as summarized by Jesus in verse 16?

From the passage (Mt 20:17-28)

- **Where** were the disciples and Jesus are going, and **what** was going to happen to Him there?
- **What** favor does Mrs. Zebedee ask of Jesus?

- **How** did the other disciples react to her request, and **why**?
- **Who** decides who sits where in the kingdom, and **what** are the criteria for this seating?
- **How** do these criteria differ from the world system (the Gentiles)?

IV. INTERPRETATION

Now we are ready to look at the *meaning* of this passage. Think carefully about the following questions as you refer back to your observations:

- **How** would you summarize the attitudes of Mrs. Zebedee and the disciples as they went to Jerusalem? What did they anticipate it would be like there (think about the meaning of "right hand and left hand"). **What** does this imply about their reasons for following Jesus?
- **What** did Jesus mean by "the cup?" (Note: we have the benefit of hindsight!) **What** did it involve in Jesus' life, and **how** was it later fulfilled in the disciples' lives? Is it a specific kind of service, an act, an attitude, or something else?
- Is it OK for me to desire to be honored in God's kingdom? Was the problem that the disciples wanted to be honored, or that they wanted to be honored now rather than when Christ returns?

Summarize in a sentence or two the *main point* of these verses. State it in terms of a *biblical principle* if possible. Write it in the space below.

The principle of the passage:

V. APPLICATION

Now you need to think about how this principle can be applied in your own life and ministry today. Think carefully about the following questions:

- **What** are my motives for serving Christ as a church planter? **What** do I hope to get out of it, and **when**?

- If my desire is to please Christ, **how** should my leadership differ from that of others around me? What specifically should I be doing in order to lead as a servant and to give my life for those Christ ransomed?

SUMMARY

As you have worked through this passage, you should have answered the question, "What is Christian Leadership?" You also thought about what that would mean for you personally in your life and ministry. Now is the time to begin to pray to God for help in living that kind of life. Specifically ask Him to help you in those areas where you now see that you have weaknesses or wrong motives.



Inductive Bible Study on Luke 15:1-7

Note: This study is provided as a model of an inductive Bible study. If absolutely necessary, it may be used for the Workshop in Lesson 10,11. However, it is strongly recommended that this only serve as a guide, and that you do your own study on one of the passages assigned in the first training session.

INTRODUCTION

Have you ever lost something important? How did you feel? What did you do to try to find it? If you found it, how did you feel? In Luke 15, Jesus explained how He and His Father feel about God's "lost" children.

I. PRAY

Begin the study by asking God to help you understand how these verses should affect your life, and your ministry of church planting.

II. READ LUKE 15:1-7

Read the passage carefully and thoughtfully. One person can read it all, or you can divide the reading among the members of the study group.

III. OBSERVATION

Look closely at the passage and try to discover what it says by answering the following questions:

From the context (Lk 14:12-24)

- **What** kind of people has Jesus been saying that we need to invite to come and associate with us and with the Lord (14:13, 23)?
- **How** might the illustration of worthless "salt" in verse 34 relate to those who are or are not inviting the lost to come to God?

From the passage (Lk 15:1-7)

- To **whom** was this parable addressed—the sinners or the religious Pharisees and teachers of the law (v. 3)? **What** do you know about this group?
- **What** was the complaint of the Pharisees and teachers of the law against Jesus?

- **How** many lost sheep are equal to **how many** sheep that are safe in the fold?
- **What** was the response of the shepherd to one lost sheep?
- **What** does Jesus say is the point of this parable (v. 7)?

IV. INTERPRETATION

Now we need to think about what this story of lost sheep *means*. This is somewhat easier than usual, since Jesus stated the theme in verse 7. The following questions can help you think through the principle that He was teaching:

- Remember to whom Jesus addressed this parable. **How** would the idea of "rejoicing over one who repents" relate specifically to them? **Why** do you think Jesus chose to use a parable rather than just state the truth?
- **Why** do you think they needed to hear this parable? **What** should have been different in their lives?

Summarize in a sentence or two the *main point* of these verses. State it in terms of a *biblical principle* if possible. Write it in the space below:

The principle of the passage:

V. APPLICATION

We now need to decide how to apply this teaching to our own lives. Think carefully through the following questions to help you do that:

- Do you really believe that one lost sinner trusting Christ is more important than a church full of, say, 99 believers living righteous, holy and faithful lives? If so, what implications would that have for our ministry?

- How do I respond when someone associates with sinful people in order to win them to Christ? Can we do that and remain "holy?" Is it possible to build close relationships with unbelievers in order to live out our testimony before them (1Co 5:9-12)?

- How do I react when a 'sinner' repents, but has not yet 'cleaned up his life' so that he is as holy as I am? Do I rejoice with him and help him or her to grow, or do I condemn the things that are still not right in his or her life?

SUMMARY

Throughout the history of the world, as recorded in the Scriptures, God has been seeking lost men to repent and return to Him. Christ left the glories of heaven and became a man in order to pay the price of our redemption and make our reconciliation to Him possible. He has left us with the command to fulfill the Great Commission by taking the message of the Gospel to everyone. What will be my contribution? Is the Lord calling me to plant a new church where the lost are perishing in ignorance of the Gospel? What should be my response?

**BIBLE STUDY
METHODS**

LESSON

10,11

Workshop On Leading Inductive Bible Studies

☞ Lesson Purpose

The purpose of this lesson is to give the trainees "hands-on" supervised experience in leading an inductive Bible study.

☞ Main Points

- The focus should be on discovery.
- All the stages—**observation**, **interpretation**, and **application**—should be covered.

☞ Desired Outcomes

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

- Know how to lead an inductive Bible study.
- Know his or her strengths and weaknesses in leading the study.

☞ Appendix

10A Passages for Inductive Bible Studies

☞ Suggestions to Trainers

This 2-hour session is entirely devoted to allowing the trainees to practice leading inductive Bible studies, and evaluating each other as they do so. Your job as the trainer is to get the groups organized, and then to circulate between them to listen to the presentations, and make sure the trainees are doing a fair and thorough job of working through the checklist after each study. Encourage the trainees to be honest, but positive.

WORKSHOP FORMAT

Each trainee should have prepared a brief inductive Bible study on a passage of his or her choosing. Ideally, trainees should take about 20 minutes to lead their study, followed by a 7-minute evaluation using the checklist included in this lesson. Since this is a 2-hour session, that means each group should have four people, so that each one can lead their study. Divide into as many groups of four as needed for the number of trainees. It might be a good idea to take a 5-minute break between the two hours.

As each trainee leads his study, he should remember that this is not a preaching session. The goal is **discovery**. The trainee should lead the group by asking questions that help the other trainees uncover the facts, meaning, and application for themselves. For this reason, the trainee who is leading should already have chosen a few helpful questions in each of the areas—**observation**, **interpretation**, and **application**. After each question is asked, allow time for finding the answer, and discussion. Encourage discussion, but limit the number of questions you ask so that you have time to move all the way through to application.

Remember to pray for enlightenment. This should not be just an exercise. The groups should see the passage clearly, and learn from it if the study is properly lead. This is a *real* study of the Scriptures, and each one should be encouraged from it. The difference from a 'normal' inductive Bible study is the 20-minute time limit. Usually, a personal inductive Bible study would take hours, or possibly days to adequately complete. A group study would normally require an hour, depending on the length of the passage chosen. 20-minutes is very brief, so you will not be able to cover all

This is not just an exercise. The groups should learn from the study.

that you have learned in your preparation. It will, however, give you a good idea of what is involved in such a study.

Even the trainee who prepared the study should gain a clearer understanding through the eyes of the other trainees. Don't be discouraged if the group arrives at an understanding that is different from the leader's original one. This is normal and natural. We never fully plumb the depths of the Word. There is always more to learn.

THE CHECKLISTS

There are four checklists included below, one for each of the four trainees in your group. Do not fill out the checklist during the Bible study. Rather, participate whole-heartedly in the discussion of the passage. Then, after each trainee has completed his or her study, circle the answers to each question in the right column of the checklist for that trainee.

After you have completed the checklist for the first trainee, take the remainder of that 30-minute segment to share your evaluations with that person as a group while they are fresh in your mind. Be honest, but also remember that this is their first attempt, and therefore, be encouraging.

There are two major areas of concern. The first is whether or not the study actually followed the inductive method, and whether you learned something from it. The second area is how well the leader of the study was able to guide the group to discovery through the use of good questions and appropriate discussion dynamics. If you have a helpful comment that is not covered by the twelve questions on the checklist, add that information to the "comments" section on the bottom of the checklist.

Move on to the second trainee and Bible study only when the group has finished with the evaluation of the first one. However, try to keep to the 30-minute limit so that the fourth trainee will have the full 30 minutes for the final study.

Checklist 1: Trainee Name _____

Evaluation Questions	Evaluation	
1. Did the study follow the inductive method—observation, interpretation & application?	Yes	No
2. Were the questions clear and understandable?	Yes	No
3. Did the questions help you to understand the passage better?	Yes	No
4. Did the leader allow the group to answer questions, rather than answer himself?	Yes	No
5. Did the leader feed questions the group asked back to the group?	Yes	No
6. Did the leader rephrase questions that were hard to understand?	Yes	No
7. Was the leader able to help all the members become involved in the discussion?	Yes	No
8. Was the leader able to keep anyone from dominating the discussion?	Yes	No
9. Did the leader summarize the things the group discovered in the study?	Yes	No
10. Did the leader allow the group and Scripture to correct any wrong answers?	Yes	No
11. Was the leader able to complete the whole study in the given time?	Yes	No
12. Did the leader open and close the study in prayer?	Yes	No
Comments:		

Checklist 2: Trainee Name _____

Evaluation Questions	Evaluation	
1. Did the study follow the inductive method—observation, interpretation & application?	Yes	No
2. Were the questions clear and understandable?	Yes	No
3. Did the questions help you to understand the passage better?	Yes	No
4. Did the leader allow the group to answer questions, rather than answer himself?	Yes	No
5. Did the leader feed questions the group asked back to the group?	Yes	No
6. Did the leader rephrase questions that were hard to understand?	Yes	No
7. Was the leader able to help all the members become involved in the discussion?	Yes	No
8. Was the leader able to keep anyone from dominating the discussion?	Yes	No
9. Did the leader summarize the things the group discovered in the study?	Yes	No
10. Did the leader allow the group and Scripture to correct any wrong answers?	Yes	No
11. Was the leader able to complete the whole study in the given time?	Yes	No
12. Did the leader open and close the study in prayer?	Yes	No
Comments:		

Checklist 3: Trainee Name _____

Evaluation Questions	Evaluation	
1. Did the study follow the inductive method—observation, interpretation & application?	Yes	No
2. Were the questions clear and understandable?	Yes	No
3. Did the questions help you to understand the passage better?	Yes	No
4. Did the leader allow the group to answer questions, rather than answer himself?	Yes	No
5. Did the leader feed questions the group asked back to the group?	Yes	No
6. Did the leader rephrase questions that were hard to understand?	Yes	No
7. Was the leader able to help all the members become involved in the discussion?	Yes	No
8. Was the leader able to keep anyone from dominating the discussion?	Yes	No
9. Did the leader summarize the things the group discovered in the study?	Yes	No
10. Did the leader allow the group and Scripture to correct any wrong answers?	Yes	No
11. Was the leader able to complete the whole study in the given time?	Yes	No
12. Did the leader open and close the study in prayer?	Yes	No
Comments:		

Checklist 4: Trainee Name _____

Evaluation Questions	Evaluation	
1. Did the study follow the inductive method—observation, interpretation & application?	Yes	No
2. Were the questions clear and understandable?	Yes	No
3. Did the questions help you to understand the passage better?	Yes	No
4. Did the leader allow the group to answer questions, rather than answer himself?	Yes	No
5. Did the leader feed questions the group asked back to the group?	Yes	No
6. Did the leader rephrase questions that were hard to understand?	Yes	No
7. Was the leader able to help all the members become involved in the discussion?	Yes	No
8. Was the leader able to keep anyone from dominating the discussion?	Yes	No
9. Did the leader summarize the things the group discovered in the study?	Yes	No
10. Did the leader allow the group and Scripture to correct any wrong answers?	Yes	No
11. Was the leader able to complete the whole study in the given time?	Yes	No
12. Did the leader open and close the study in prayer?	Yes	No
Comments:		

SUMMARY

This has been an exercise to help give you a taste of the dynamics of an inductive Bible study. This should be the beginning rather than the end. Inductive Bible study is the *best* method for learning from the Scriptures. The process allows you to reach new levels of truth and understanding, with the help of the Holy Spirit. This method is valuable for:

- Personal study
- Sermon preparation
- Sunday School classes
- Small groups
- Cell groups
- Evangelistic studies with unbelievers
- Mid-week church services
- One-on-one discipleship
- And many other uses, limited only by your creativity

QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION, REVIEW AND APPLICATION

- How were these studies different than the Bible studies you have attended in the past?
- Did this method help you personally to learn? Do you think it would be effective with those you teach or lead? Why or why not?

ACTION PLAN

It is up to you to take the tools you now have, along with the evaluation by the other trainees of your ability to lead a study, and use them to enhance both your personal spiritual growth, and your ministry.

**BIBLE STUDY
APPENDIX
10A**

Passages for Inductive Bible Studies

The following passages can be used to develop inductive Bible studies about basic concepts of Christian life and faith. The trainee may use them with new believers, cell groups, one-on-one, etc.

The Authority of the Bible Re 1:1-3 Lk 24:27-48 Ps 119:94-118 Ps 119:159-168 2Pe 1:19-21 1Pe 1:24-25 2Ti 3:14-17	Evangelism Mk 5:1-20 1Pe 3:15-16 2Co 3:1-3 Ac 22:1-21 Ac 4:1-20 Ac 18:24-28 Mk 16:9-20	Forgiveness Ge 45:4-15 Ps 103:2-18 Mt 6:12-15 Lk 15:11-32 Eph 4:31-32 Mk 11:24-26 Mt 18:21-35
Prayer Ps 55 Mt 26:36-44 Mt 6:5-13 Mt 5:44-48 Jas 5:13-18 Mk 11:20-26 Ro 8:26-28	Giving 2Co 8:1-5 2Co 9:6-11 Mk 10:17-23 1Jn 3:16-18 Mk 4:24-25 Mt 6:1-4 1Co 16:1-2	New Life in Christ 2Co 5:16-21 Jn 15:5-8 Gal 3:26-28 Ro 8:1-11 Php 3:7-11 Ro 6:3-11 Col 3:1-4
Bible Study De 17:18-20 Ps 1 Lk 4:1-13 Lk 4:14-21 Jos 1:7-9 Pr 2:1-5 Pr 4:20-22	Temptation Ro 6:1-14 Lk 4:1-13 He 2:17-18 1Co 10:13 Gal 6:1-11 Rev 3:7-11 Jas 1:12-15	Self Discipline Pr 6:6-11 1Pe 1:13-16 Jn 14:21 Ro 12:1-3 Col 3:15-17 Jas 1:19-25 Lk 6:47-49
God's Plan for Living Php 4:6-7 Pr 3:5-6 Pr 16 Ecc 2:1-26 Mt 4:18-23 Lk 22:39-42 Jas 4:1-10	Repentance Lk 5:29-32 Lk 13:1-9 2Pe 3:8-9 Isa 1:10-20 1Jn 1:8-10 Ac 26:20 Jnh 3:1-10	Christian Fellowship 1Th 5:11-15 Lk 22:24-27 Heb 10:24-25 Eph 1:15-23 Ro 12:3-16 Ac 12:5-19 Ac 2:38-47

EVANGELISM

EVANGELISM

4

LESSON

Evangelism and Church Planting

RUNNING THE WHOLE RACE

☞ Lesson Purpose

The Purpose of this lesson is to demonstrate that evangelism should be done in a relational way in order to help the new believer naturally continue on into a discipling relationship.

☞ Main Points

- Evangelism is only the first leg of the Christian race—discipleship is the second.
- Natural webs of relationships and "gatekeepers" facilitate effective, relational evangelism.
- New Christians are perhaps the most valuable evangelists.

☞ Desired Outcomes

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

- Understand why relational evangelism facilitates assimilation of new converts into the church.

☞ Appendix

4A Evaluating Evangelism Strategies

☞ Suggestions to Trainers

Appendix 4A can be used as a discussion tool during this lesson.

INTRODUCTION

It is impossible to plant a church without evangelism, but evangelism alone is not enough. Church planters need to use an appropriate evangelistic method that will lead to the establishment of growing churches—not just the salvation of individuals.

When we consider the vast amount of tools and methods available for evangelism and try to determine which to use, we must remind ourselves of our goal. As church planters, our goal is not just to expose people to the Gospel, nor is it even simply to help them to make a decision for Christ. Our goal is to make disciples who will come together to worship and grow with God's people.

I. THE NEED FOR A NEW APPROACH

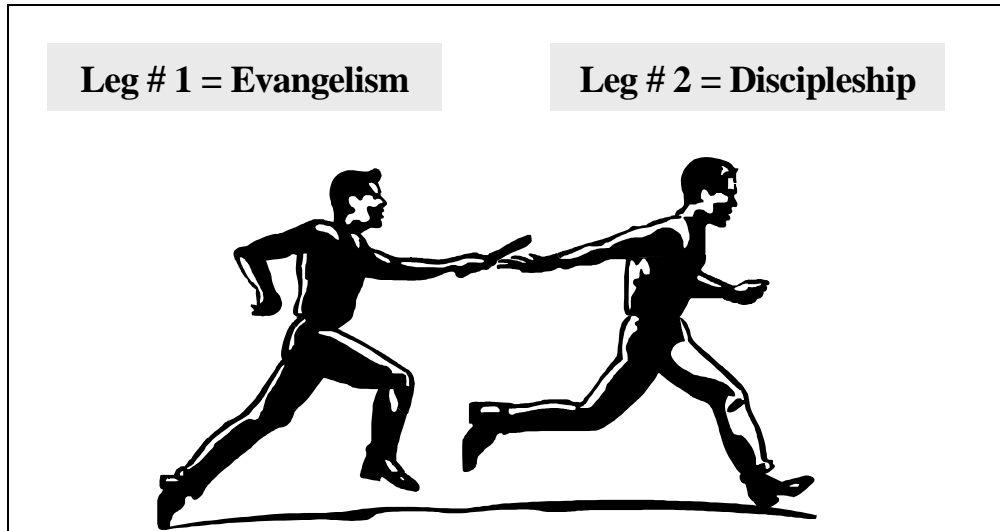
Many of the popular evangelism programs today are quite unlike the evangelism of the early church. The emphasis today is often on intense, structured, one-on-one situations. Many programs are strong in establishing the content of the Gospel and the mechanics of sharing it, but they do not emphasize the relational dynamics of coming to Christ, and thus are not geared toward assimilating people into a local church. The result is that people are often won to Christ and never assimilated into the church. One very large ministry in the CIS researched the results of evangelistic efforts and found that "5-10% remain in church after evangelism. 90 - 95% leave because they find no help and answers to their needs." Obviously, this is not desirable. Our mandate is not to make converts, but *disciples*, and disciples join in fellowship with the Body (Mt 28:19; Heb 10:25).

The church planter needs to use a method of evangelism that assimilates people into the church. He needs strategies that naturally lead to follow-up, and lead naturally to discipleship and growth in the church.

II. THE RELAY RACE

There are many kinds of individual races, but the relay race is a team effort. The important characteristic of a relay race is that the first runner must successfully pass the baton on to the second runner in order to complete his task. If the first runner completes his section of the course in record time, but does not hand the baton to the next runner, he has failed. The process of evangelism may be compared to the first leg of a relay race, and discipleship may be compared to the second leg. After the evangelist has led a person to trust in Christ (evangelism), he must be discipled and helped to grow to maturity in Christ (discipled).

Figure 4.1 Passing the Baton



Both legs of race must be completed in order for the unbeliever to be saved and also assimilated into the local church. The first leg involves understanding the basic content (theological truths) of the Gospel that lead to a relationship with God. The second leg is more sociological or relational. Maturity is best gained through relationships with other members of the family of God. Unfortunately, well-meaning Christians often rush to present the content of the Gospel without taking time to develop a relationship with the lost person to whom they are witnessing. When the lost person repents, he has no significant relationship that will naturally carry him into a discipleship relationship, and therefore the process of making disciples is hindered.

Figure 4.2 Two Legs of the Relay Race

<i>First Leg</i>	<i>Second Leg</i>
Evangelism	Discipleship
Relationship to God	Relationship to the Body
Salvation	Sanctification
New Birth	Growth to Maturity

Most evangelistic tools take only the first leg into consideration. The Gospel is presented in such a way that it will be understood and received. Praise God for these evangelistic tools. However, as church planters, we must take both of these legs into consideration. Somehow, those we witness to must hear the Gospel and see how it impacts people.

We will have a head start into the second leg of the race if the lost see relationships among believers that communicate love, joy, etc. People should look at our lives and know that we are different. When non-believers begin to say, "I've never sensed love like this before," then evangelism is taking place the way in which it was intended (Jn 13:35).

It should not surprise us to learn that the agency which found only 5 - 10% of its fruit remaining in church also came to this conclusion: "In our opinion, the most successful answer to the follow-up is a structure of home groups in the church." Cell group ministry is a great place to focus on both legs of the race. The content of the Gospel can be made clear with opportunity for questions and feedback. In addition, cell groups are small and intimate, with opportunity for healthy relationships to grow and be seen.

III. PRINCIPLES FOR EVANGELISM

The following concepts are good general evangelistic principles by any standards. They are listed here because they are of particular benefit to the church planting process. As we have said above, many people will make a personal decision for Christ but will not continue on in a discipling relationship. The church planter must be able to help the lost complete the entire race so they will be saved and become active participants in the Body of Christ.

A Use Natural Webs

Every person has a network of friends, relatives, co-workers, and others whom they know well and with whom they have regular contact. These natural relationships provide for the free flow of ideas (whereas discussions between strangers may be filled with misunderstandings and resistance). Often conversions "travel" through these networks, because the Gospel, like electricity, follows the path of least resistance.

Jesus was aware of these natural networks and had the ability to reach not just individuals, but networks as well. In Matthew 9:9-10 Jesus called Matthew and was soon at Matthew's house with the whole network of tax collectors gathered. After Jesus met Andrew the fisherman, there suddenly was a whole group of fishermen following Jesus (Jn 1:40-41). Jesus sat at the well with the Samaritan woman and afterward, she brought her entire village to see Jesus (Jn 4:28-30). When Jesus shared the Gospel with one person he often asked that person to share the Good News with those in his or her network (Lk 8:38-39). The book of Acts as well is filled with stories of whole families (Ac 11:14; 16:31) and whole villages (Ac 9:35) coming to Christ because of one person's conversion.

Most people do their best witnessing with those they know well. Some Christians, eager to evangelize, want to go "door-to-door" to people they do not know when they have not shared the Gospel with their family, best friends or associates. However, the "natural web" principle should be kept in mind. When people from the same network make a decision to follow Christ, it is more likely that they will continue on into the discipleship leg of the race.

B. Have New Believers Witness Immediately

What kind of people do you consider to be the most effective evangelists? Perhaps some will answer "pastors" or "theologians." There are no wrong answers here. Anyone can be effective as an evangelist when they are following the leading of the Holy Spirit. But we often fail to realize that **new believers are in some ways the most effective evangelists.** Why? Below two reasons are listed.

1. *Their faith is "fresh."*

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

2. *New believers still have non-Christian friends who can see the change.*

The Gospel travels through relationships. It has been said that once the average believer has been a Christian for two years or more, all his or her closest friends will also be Christians. Remember, evangelism is much more difficult between strangers. John 4:29 provides a good example of a brand new believer who is a very effective witness. When the sinful Samaritan woman met Christ, she had a very simple but profound testimony "*Come, see a man who told*

me everything I ever did. Could this be the Christ?" This woman could not answer difficult theological questions, but she knew what had happened to her. And who could argue with her? She told of what happened to her. That was all that she needed to know to draw others to Christ. The men of the city rushed out to meet Jesus. How effective would her witness have been if she had waited a year to start to tell her story?

A new believer is a powerful witness. As a church planter you may want to develop a plan so that each new convert will be able to witness to his family and friends. When it is not possible to use the plan ask new converts to go with you to visit their family and friends and begin to develop a relationship and share Christ with them as well.

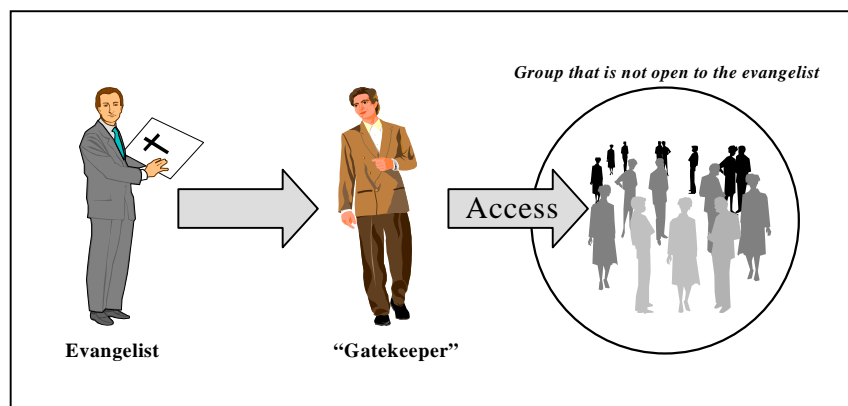
C. Go For "Gatekeepers"

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

Who is a gatekeeper? A person who

- Has a good reputation among his peers
- Is open to a friendship with you.
- Is open to the Lord.

Figure 4.3 Gatekeepers



Paul, the great church planter, understood this reality. He specifically expected to win influential people. Understanding the great influence kings have (Pr 16:15; 19:12), he boldly targeted them! (Ac 9:15). He proclaimed the Gospel before Governor Felix, Festus and King Agrippa (Ac 23-26).

Paul's normal church planting strategy was to teach in the synagogue and then in the home of a "gatekeeper." For example, at Philippi the gatekeeper was Lydia (Ac 16:11-15), at Thessalonica it was Jason (Ac 17:1-9), and at Corinth it was Titus Justus (Ac 18:7). When Paul led someone to Christ others often followed.

Other examples of "gatekeepers"

- **The Philippian Jailer:** "Then they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all the others in his house. At that hour of the night the jailer took them and washed their wounds; then immediately he and all his family were baptized. The jailer brought them into his house and set a meal before them; he was filled with joy because he had come to believe in God - he and his whole family" (Ac 16:32-34).
- **Crispus:** "Crispus, the synagogue ruler, and his entire household believed in the Lord; and many of the Corinthians who heard him believed and were baptized" (Ac 18:8).

- **Stephanas:** "You know that the household of Stephanas were the first converts in Achaia, and they had devoted themselves to the service of the saints. I urge you brothers, to submit to such as these and to everyone who joins in the work..." (1Co 16:15-16).
- Though not quite as clear, see also: (2Ti 1:16, 4:19), **Nympha** (Col 4:15), **Cornelius** (Ac 10:7, 24), **Aquila and Priscilla** (1Co 16:19, Ro 16:3-5), **Gaius** (1Co 1:14; Ro 16:23).

In most cultures "gatekeepers" are male heads of households. If they come to Christ, it is likely that their family will follow. In any case, "gatekeepers" once won will bring others with them.

Sometimes "gatekeepers" will be like *big fish*. The big fish are normally in deep water, far from the shore. It may take more effort to go after these big fish, and they can be very resistant. They may fight the Gospel the whole way, but catching these big fish can be worth the effort!

D. Consider Cultural Barriers

People rarely cross cultural barriers to attend church. People may make a personal decision for Christ but be hesitant to attend church—to cross the second bridge—because of cultural or social barriers. People are social beings who, for whatever reason, tend to congregate with those like themselves.

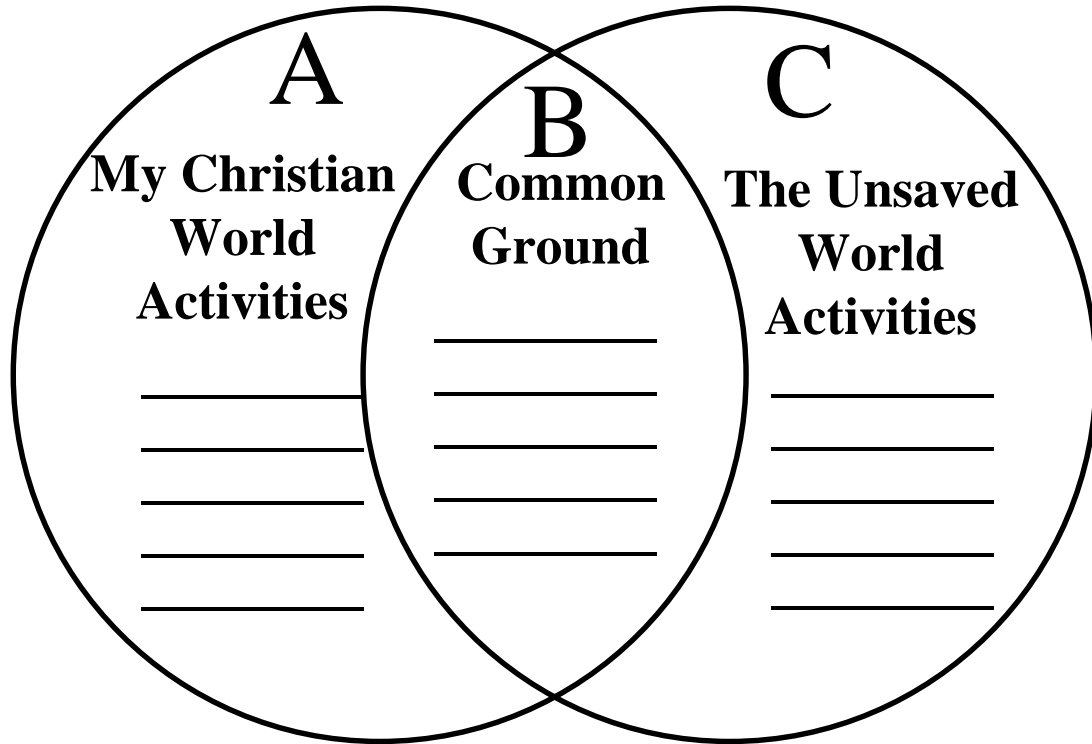
New converts are more likely to be integrated into the church if by doing so, they will not have to change cultures too much. Consider ways to set up your church so that it will reflect the social and cultural uniqueness of the people you are trying to win, without compromising theological truth. Paul clearly used this strategy: "*To the Jews, I became like a Jew, to win the Jews. To those under the law I became like one under the law... To the weak, I became weak, to win the weak*" (1Co 9:20-23). Paul was willing to adjust *his* culture in order to decrease the barriers between himself and *unbelievers*. Often, we do the opposite. When we require the lost to "become like us" we hinder the development of good discipling relationships with them. We become stumbling blocks in their paths rather than helping them run the race victoriously.

E. Look For 'Common Ground'

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

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

Figure 4.4 Common Ground



QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION, REVIEW AND APPLICATION

- Think about two people you know who have made a decision to follow Christ, but who do not attend church. Why haven't they gotten involved in a body of believers? List the reasons as specifically as possible.
- Describe someone who would qualify as a "gatekeeper" in your target group. How can you reach him/her?
- What culturally appropriate forms might help attract people to your church?
- In what ways can you use the common ground you have identified as a means to communicate the Gospel?

ACTION PLAN

Take several minutes to read the Evangelism Strategies described in Evangelism Appendix 4A. Evaluate these strategies based on the evangelistic principles in this lesson. Will these strategies successfully lead to new churches? How can each of these strategies be modified to ensure a healthy church plant?

SOURCES

- Zunkel, C. Wayne. *Strategies for Growing Your Church*. Elgin, IL: David C. Cook Publishing Co., 1986.
- Jenson, Ron, and Jim Stevens. *Dynamics of Church Growth*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1981.
- Lausanne Committee. "The Moscow Lausanne Congress: God Broke Walls." *World Evangelization*. No.78. May, 1997.



Evaluating Evangelism Strategies

Take several minutes to read the following evangelistic strategies. Evaluate these strategies based on the evangelistic principles in this lesson. After reading each strategy, circle a number from 1 (low) to 5 (high) that you think best describes how it fulfills the criteria listed in the boxes. Will these strategies successfully lead to new churches? How can each of these strategies be modified to ensure a healthy church plant?

I. EVANGELISM STRATEGY 1—EVANGELISTIC BIBLE STUDIES

Sasha and Tanya live in a city of 100,000 with no evangelical church. With a desire to plant a church, they start an evangelistic Bible study in their home. After one year, 15 people are faithfully attending and as far as they can tell 9 of them are believers. They realize that with 15 people the group is getting too big to feel intimate, so they start another group that meets on another night in the home of another couple. Sasha hopes that when they have enough people in these groups, they will rent a hall and begin to worship each Sunday as a church.

Amount of personal contact:	1	2	3	4	5
Meets felt needs of the lost:	1	2	3	4	5
Uses natural relationship webs:	1	2	3	4	5
Focuses on the receptive:	1	2	3	4	5
Focuses on the "gatekeepers:	1	2	3	4	5
Provides for follow-up discipleship:	1	2	3	4	5

II. EVANGELISM STRATEGY 2—EVANGELISTIC CRUSADE

Alexander has big plans to plant a church in a large city. Alexander is a recent graduate of a Bible college. While in Bible college Alexander made contact with an aggressive American mission group who has offered to guide him in the project. Together, Alexander and the Americans plan to launch things in June when 20 American college students will come to assist in evangelism. The plan is for the week with the Americans to be very busy. A hall will be rented and a crusade with music, testimonies, and a Gospel presentation will be held every evening. During the day the Americans will pair up with Russians and interpreters to cover the city, handing out fliers and going door to door to advertise the evening crusades. Alexander expects that as a result of this week of evangelism enough people will be saved to open his church immediately.

Amount of personal contact:	1	2	3	4	5
Meets felt needs of the lost:	1	2	3	4	5
Uses natural relationship webs:	1	2	3	4	5
Focuses on the receptive:	1	2	3	4	5
Focuses on the "gatekeepers:	1	2	3	4	5
Provides for follow-up discipleship:	1	2	3	4	5

III. EVANGELISM STRATEGY 3—CHRISTIAN BOOK TABLE

Andre and Luba have been Christians for a long time. With a desire to start a new church that will reach a new group of people they develop the following strategy. Noticing how many people in their region like to read, they collect as many Christian books as they can find and begin a book table with only Christian books in a nearby market area. Every day Andre and Luba set up their table with Christian books for sale at modest prices. Some free Gospel tracts are offered to anyone who stops to browse. They also have some Bible study worksheets which people take home and work on. It is set up so that people discuss the worksheets with Andre or Luba upon the completion of each one and before the next one is received. These worksheets are evangelistic and Andre and Luba pray that people will find Christ as a result of these lessons and they will eventually start a church.

Amount of personal contact:	1	2	3	4	5
Meets felt needs of the lost:	1	2	3	4	5
Uses natural relationship webs:	1	2	3	4	5
Focuses on the receptive:	1	2	3	4	5
Focuses on the "gatekeepers:	1	2	3	4	5
Provides for follow-up discipleship:	1	2	3	4	5

IV. EVANGELISM STRATEGY 4—CHRISTIAN VIDEOS

Vladimir is trying to plant a church in the capital city. In order to evangelize, Vladimir uses Christian videos. He invites people in his neighborhood and at the factory where he works to see these videos. Now, a group of young curious non-believers gather in his apartment every Tuesday evening. The meetings normally last an hour and a half. For 30 to 45 minutes the participants view a video followed by a discussion led by Vladimir using a discussion guide that goes with the video. By using this method, Vladimir hopes that enough people will come to Christ that he will be able to start a church.

Amount of personal contact:	1	2	3	4	5
Meets felt needs of the lost:	1	2	3	4	5
Uses natural relationship webs:	1	2	3	4	5
Focuses on the receptive:	1	2	3	4	5
Focuses on the "gatekeepers:	1	2	3	4	5
Provides for follow-up discipleship:	1	2	3	4	5

EVANGELISM

5

LESSON

Barriers to Effective Evangelism

BRIDGES INSTEAD OF BARRIERS

☞ Lesson Purpose

The purpose of this lesson is to discuss common personal and spiritual barriers to evangelism and how to overcome them.

☞ Main Points

- External barriers to evangelism may be cultural, linguistic, religious, or spiritual.
- Internal barriers to evangelism include tradition, prejudice, fear or personal values.

☞ Desired Outcomes

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

- Implement a plan to overcome external and internal barriers to evangelism.

☞ Appendices

5A "A Church in Every People: Plain Talk about A Difficult Subject"

5B Answering Common Objectives: Use Scripture as Your Authority

☞ Suggestions to Trainers

Allow people time to break into small groups to discuss the questions for consideration, review and application.

Rather than just reviewing the lesson notes, consider taking time to look at Jesus' conversation with the Samaritan woman at the well in John 4 as an example of overcoming barriers in communicating the Gospel. If this is not done as part of the lesson itself, it can be assigned as an action plan to be done between manuals.

Ask trainees to read and be prepared to discuss the article in Appendix 5A before the session.

I. THE PROBLEM OF BARRIERS AND THE NEED FOR BRIDGES

For several decades, most believers living in this region were legally denied the privilege of openly sharing their faith in their communities. Churches encouraged religious ghettos—almost religious fortresses—to develop around them, and a sense of alienation, isolation, and distrust of those in the "secular" world was pervasive. Often the only legal place to share Christ was in the church building. These decades left an enduring mark on the mindset and traditions of those who love Christ. Barriers have been erected. These barriers must be identified and torn down.

Often, for example, the Church has misunderstood the place of the unsaved in the spiritual conflict. Knowing that the Devil could use the unsaved to corrupt believers, believers were warned to disassociate from their unsaved friends and neighbors. However, the lost are not the enemy. They are the hostages in a spiritual war. They are the targets of our spiritual efforts. They are just like we were without Christ—spiritually blind, spiritually dead, and spiritually bankrupt. They are not an enemy to be defeated. Rather, they are hostages to be liberated. They are doomed unless intentional, heroic efforts are undertaken by the church to bring them to faith.

In order to accomplish this task of liberation and reclamation, believers must build bridges to the non-Christian world around us. Often our Christian counter-cultures are so foreign and strange that the

unbelievers will not make an effort to join with us. If they are to be reached, we must reach out to them by building bridges of sincerity, mercy, compassion, truth, and love.

Let us understand this. We *will* be misunderstood. We will suffer for our efforts. We will become tired physically, emotionally, and spiritually. We must renew our resources by living balanced lives. But effort must be made to reach this generation and each generation with the Gospel. It is our task, our mandate, and our particular challenge. The next generation of believers cannot reach ours and we will not be here to reach theirs. It is time to tear down the barriers.

II. UNDERSTANDING THE BARRIERS THAT HINDER EVANGELISM

The well-known American missiologist Ralph Winter has made some important observations about evangelism. Using Acts 1:8 as a foundation, he proposes that Jesus' words in the Great Commission not only give us reason to divide the world geographically (my city, my region, my country, and the world) but also to divide the world with regard to cultural groupings of people. In the passage Jesus refers to Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria and the ends of the world. Naturally for the disciples, it would be easiest for them to do evangelism in Jerusalem and Judea, where everyone spoke the same language and grew up in the same culture. For Peter or John, to preach and teach in Samaria would be more difficult. Not only were there some cultural differences, but there were huge prejudices having to do with the laws of worship that would have to be overcome. Finally, for a missionary or evangelist to go "to the ends of the earth" would require a great amount of preparation (language learning, etc.). This we understand easily. However, Ralph Winter also points out that if we look at the world from the point of view of cultural differences, *then "the ends of the earth" are not always hundreds of miles away, but in fact, may be in your very town or city.* There are whole groups of people in your city who live in a different culture or subculture. In fact, often Christians become so immersed in the lives of their congregations that they become a subculture and are no longer able to understand or relate to their own childhood friends, family members or neighbors.

Special kinds of ministry and evangelism may be needed in order to cross cultural barriers and effectively share the Gospel. Notice how Jesus spoke to the woman at the well in John 4. Also, notice the differences in preaching style and content which Paul used when speaking to Jews (Ac 9:20-22) as compared to when he was preaching to non-Jews (Ac 17:16-31). Both Jesus and Paul had to overcome cultural barriers in order to minister effectively to these people.

Take some time to read the article "*A Church in Every People: Plain Talk About A Difficult Subject*" by Donald McGavran (Appendix 5A). As you read, consider the extent to which McGavran is convinced that culture differences will hinder evangelism. Consider the context in which you are working. Determine in your own mind how well you know the culture of the people among whom you are trying to plant a church.

The most effective evangelism takes place when there are very few "barriers" to tear down. Evangelism is most effective when you are speaking with someone who is like you, who thinks like you, who likes to do the same things you do, who can relate to your joys, who can understand your troubles, and so forth.

But there are many cultures and subcultures of people in which there are few or no believers. These people need to hear the Gospel. We must be prepared to make extra effort to overcome the "barriers" that exist. Consider the barriers listed in the remainder of the lesson in light of your current area of ministry. Remember that even different age groups, occupations, and intellectual abilities can be the basis for the creation of a subculture. Regardless of the situation, we must overcome these barriers so that the Gospel can clearly be heard.

III. EXTERNAL BARRIERS TO EFFECTIVE EVANGELISM

A. Cultural Barriers

Christian workers from other countries, continents, or even other regions of one large country often must learn to understand and adapt to cultural differences in order to minimize the gap between themselves and those they would reach with the Gospel. Paul wrote "I have become all things to all men so that by all possible means I might save some" (1Co 9:22). He was willing to put aside cultural distinctives that he might have preferred for the higher purpose of winning others to Christ. However, the cultural problem is not merely a missionary problem.

In each culture, the Church has established traditions that may have been noble and effective when they were originally implemented, but which over time have become archaic and cumbersome. These church cultural traditions may be evident in our music, our dress, and our architecture, to name just a few. If we are serious about reaching the lost with the Gospel, these traditions need to be re-examined and re-considered.



B. Linguistic Barriers

For those coming from a second culture, the most obvious barrier to effective presentation of the Gospel is an inability to speak the language. However, communication can also be a problem between Christians and non-Christians who speak the same language. A very peculiar vocabulary is often used in our fellowships. Many times we aren't even aware of it.

I recall an evangelistic outreach among Yugoslav peoples. When leaving one another, it was common practice in the church to say, "Gospod s tobom", which has the sense of "Go with the Lord." I used the phrase with a man who had been faithfully attending our meetings. His response was "No, I'm going with Milan!" He had no idea of my message or its intent. He knew the words, but they were empty, and both of us were a bit confused and embarrassed.

Our special greetings and spiritual vocabulary can trouble the uninitiated unbelievers among us. We need to find fresh ways of declaring that which is most important—the message that God loves lost humanity and has come to redeem men, women, and children.



C. Religious Barriers

We approach people of differing backgrounds. They may be nominally Catholic, Orthodox, agnostic or atheistic. They may have gotten involved with a cult or sect of some kind. They may place a whole different meaning on the words and practices we have come to take for granted. Words like "salvation," "faith," and "belief" may require explanations so that people can understand their meaning. It may be profitable for us to ask those we are communicating with to clarify their own understanding of the terms we are using with them.

Our practices, gestures, and even our posture may intimidate others as well. Some find it difficult to discuss spiritual things in a home. Some find it difficult to believe that a former storefront building can serve God's purposes for a small congregation. They may expect awesome buildings with icons and other artistic expressions of religious faith. They may be troubled by the simplicity of our forms of worship and our familiarity with God. It is our task to win the unsaved. We must find ways to build bridges to them.



D. Some Barriers Are Spiritual in Nature

This final barrier is qualitatively different from those previously mentioned. This critical barrier to effective evangelism is the one that separates those who are spiritually alive from the spiritually

dead. Only the Spirit of God can give life through the Gospel we bear. Only He can regenerate and redeem the lost. Ultimately, the weapons of prayer, God’s Word, and our own testimonies are those that the Lord will use to defeat Satan and release the captives. We must recognize opposition we face as coming ultimately from Satan and stand against him for the sake of the Lord, and His church and the lost we long to win.

EXTERNAL BARRIERS			
Cultural	Linguistic	Religious	Spiritual

IV. INTERNAL BARRIERS TO EFFECTIVE EVANGELISM

A. The Barrier of Our Own Traditions

"It's never been done that way before." Perhaps it is time to do things in a new way, not because our old ways are wrong, but because they may no longer be effective. The old forms may no longer accomplish their intended function. The problem of wineskins, old and new, is one that must be addressed. We will not change our essential Gospel, we must not compromise our integrity, but we may change the way the Gospel is packaged to attract greater interest and to win a hearing.

Traditions	
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B. The Barrier of Our Own Prejudices

There are groups of people in each culture that are dismissed as insignificant or unworthy of consideration. Christians, too, must overcome prejudice. Our prejudices may be ethnic in nature (remember the Samaritan woman), or moral, or criminal (remember Zacchaeus). They may be special from birth or due to accident (remember the man born blind). We may spend our time and efforts with attractive and wealthy people and ignore the needy who would be more responsive to the Gospel of Christ. Recall the rebuke of Paul to the Corinthians (1Co 1:18-31) and the stern words of James (Jas 2:1-13). Ask the Lord to cleanse your hearts and to open your hearts and eyes to all who need the Savior.

Traditions	Prejudices	
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C. The Barrier of Our Own Fears

The ministry of evangelism is a ministry of faith. It requires courage to risk ourselves and our reputations for the sake of those who may not respond to our Gospel. We may feel inadequate for ministry, thinking that we don't know enough or are not skilled enough. Training can help, but ultimately, we must each choose to follow the Lord in faith and obedience to accomplish the task He has given us. He has given us the weapons of His Spirit, prayer and the Scriptures. More than that, He has promised His own presence with us. Even the Apostle Paul, who wrote, "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me," (Php 4:13) also wrote in 2 Corinthians 4:7 that our powerful Gospel message comes packaged in "jars of clay." It is obvious that the power is not in us but from God. Our faithfulness in the face of fear brings glory to God and people into His kingdom.

Traditions	Prejudices	Fears	
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D. The Barrier of Our Own Conflicting Values

We all have limitations in terms of our resources—energy, time, money, ability and gifts. We must each determine before God how to invest these resources as individuals and congregations to accomplish all that He calls us to do. But it must be increasingly clear that if new people are not coming into our fellowships through intentional outreach, church growth is not and will not take place. Each of us must determine prayerfully and in full accordance with our understanding of the Scriptures the place of purposeful evangelism in our lives, schedules and budgets. There will never be enough resources to accomplish all that we wish, so we must decisively choose to win the lost.

INTERNAL BARRIERS			
Traditions	Prejudices	Fears	Values

V. A STRATEGY TO OVERCOME THE BARRIERS

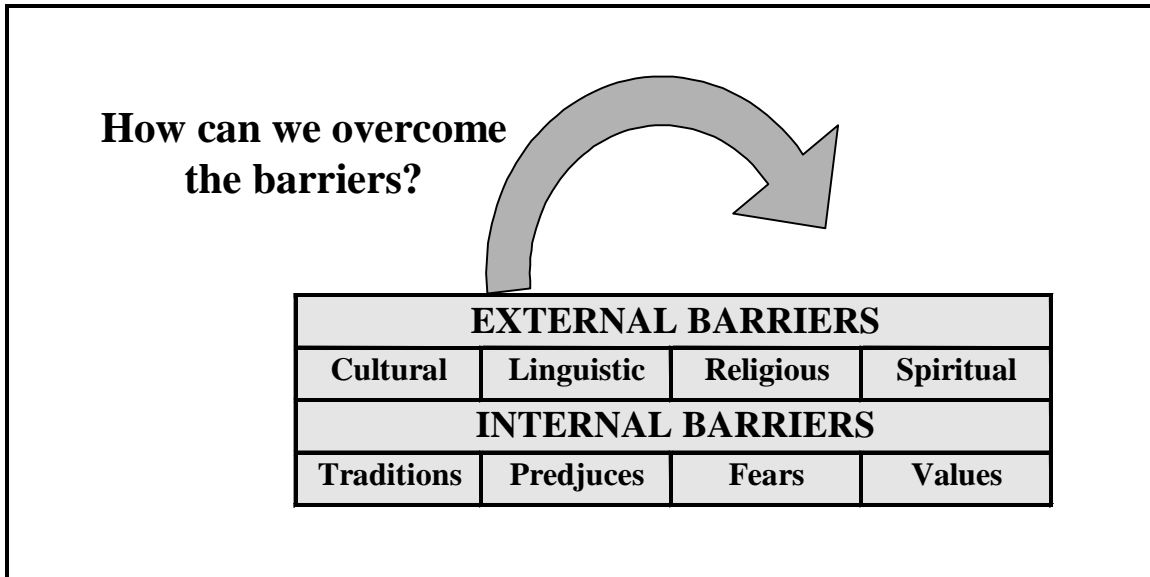
To overcome these external and internal barriers intentional effort will be required. The external barriers will require significant consideration and creativity to overcome. With regard to cultural and religious barriers, we will have to invest time in learning to recognize and understand the diverse backgrounds of our audiences. We must use this understanding as we learn to overcome linguistic barriers in order to communicate effectively with unbelievers. With regard to spiritual barriers, we must focus on prayer, asking the Spirit of God to unlock the hearts of those we would win for Christ. In some cases we will find ourselves "swimming against our own strong denominational currents" for the sake of the Gospel. Prayer and a bold stance may be required to correct long-standing barriers.

Internal barriers must also be confronted. In Romans 12:2, we read that we are not to be conformed to this world but we are to be transformed by the renewal of our minds. If we are to see our world changed, we must see our churches changed. If we would see our churches changed, we must see our hearts changed. If we would see our hearts changed, we must transform our minds by immersing ourselves in the cleansing Word of God.

The Spirit of God will use the Word of God to illumine our minds so that we may see things God's way. He will rebuke the values and prejudices that are not pleasing to Him. He will give us courage to make the changes necessary to accomplish His purposes in regard to evangelism. He will give us faith to overcome our fears as we focus on obedience to His written Word.

In Appendixes 5A and 5B, you will find Scriptures especially selected to aid in this process of preparing our hearts and minds to effectively reach people with Christ's Gospel.

Figure 5.1 Overcoming the Barriers



QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION, REVIEW AND APPLICATION

- What can we do to reduce the frustration and confusion unbelievers feel when they visit our fellowships or our homes?
- What kinds of things make you feel uncomfortable or uneasy in unfamiliar situations?
- What barriers have you personally experienced as you considered reaching out with the Gospel? Have you overcome them? If yes, in what way have you overcome them?

- What groups are historically the victims of prejudice in your culture? What would the Lord have you do to address this prejudice?
- What practical changes could you make in coming weeks to overcome barriers and increase your intentional evangelism?

ACTION PLAN

- Do an inductive Bible study of John, chapter 4. Identify the barriers that Jesus overcame to reveal Himself to the woman at the well.
- Read the article in Appendix 5A, "*A Church in Every People: Plain Talk About A Difficult Subject*", by Donald McGavran. Write a one-page response to the article. Do you agree/disagree with Donald McGavran? How does this article affect your thinking concerning evangelism and church planting strategies? Be prepared to discuss your response with your trainer or mentor.



"A Church In Every People: Plain Talk About A Difficult Subject"

BY DONALD A. MCGAVRAN

INTRODUCTION BY RALPH D. WINTER

In many ways this is the most remarkable "letter" written by the most remarkable mission strategist of the Twentieth Century. It is extremely doubtful that any other person in history has tramped more places, inquired about the hard facts of the real growth of the Christian movement in more out of the way places-and thought it through more profoundly-than Donald A. McGavran. A third generation missionary to India, that is only where he began, although even in his nineties he touched base again in that vast sub-continent that was so dear to his heart.

But that is only where he did most of his work. His burning, wide-ranging concerns took him everywhere else and relentless, inevitably pushed his thinking into global prominence. This particular, brief document is about like a cautioning letter to the younger people who are coming after him, warning them against oversimplification. In this brief epistle, then, almost off the cuff, he throws out seven principles which embody more solid understanding of the essential factors in Christian mission than most missionaries could accumulate in a lifetime.

Donald McGavran's letter:

In the last eighteen years of the twentieth century, the goal of Christian mission should be to preach the Gospel and, by God's grace, to plant in every unchurched segment of mankind-what shall we say-"a church" or "a cluster of growing churches"? By the phrase, "segment of mankind" I mean an urbanization, development, caste, tribe, valley, plain, or minority population. I shall explain that the steadily maintained long-range goal should never be the first, but should always be second. The goal is not one small sealed-off conglomerate congregation in every people. Rather, the long-range goal (to be held consistently in view in the years or decades when it is not yet achieved) should be a cluster of growing congregations in every segment.

THE ONE-BY-ONE METHOD

As we consider the phrase above, we should remember that it is usually easy to start one single congregation in a new unchurched people group. The missionary arrives. He and his family worship on Sunday. They are the first members of the congregation, He learns the language and preaches the Gospel. He lives like a Christian. He tells people about Christ and helps them in their troubles. He sells tracts or Gospels, or gives them away. Across the years, a few individual converts are won from that. Sometimes they come for very sound and spiritual reasons; sometimes from mixed motives. But here and there a woman, a man, a boy, a girl do decide to follow Jesus. A few employees of the mission become Christian. These may be masons hired to erect the buildings, helpers in the home, rescued persons or orphans. The history of mission in Africa is replete with churches started by buying slaves, freeing them and employing such of them as could not return to their kindred. Such as chose to could accept the Lord. A hundred and fifty years ago this was a common way of starting a church. With the outlawing of slavery, of course, it ceased to be used.

One single congregation arising in the way just described is almost always a conglomerate church-made up of members of several different segments of society. Some old, some young, orphans, rescued persons, helpers and ardent seekers. All seekers are carefully screened to make sure they really intend to receive Christ. In due time a church building is erected and, lo, "a church in that people." It is a conglomerate church. It is sealed off from all the people groups of that region. No segment of the population says, "That group of worshipers is us." They are quite right. It is not. It is ethnically quite a different social unit.

This very common way of beginning the process of evangelization is a slow way to disciple the peoples of the earth-note the plural, "the peoples of the earth." Let us observe closely what really happens as this congregation is gathered. Each convert, as he becomes a Christian, is seen by kin as one who leaves "us" and joins "them." He leaves "our gods" to worship "their gods." Consequently, his own relatives force him out. Sometimes he is severely ostracized, thrown out of the house and home; his wife is threatened. Hundreds of converts have been poisoned or killed. Sometimes, the ostracism is mild and consists merely in severe disapproval. His peoples consider him a traitor. A church which results from this process looks to the peoples of the region like an assemblage of traitors. It is a conglomerate congregation. It is made up of individuals who, one by one, have come out of several different societies, castes or tribes.

Now if anyone, in becoming a Christian, is forced out of, or comes out of a highly-structured segment of society, the Christian cause wins the individual but loses the family. The family, his people, his neighbors of that tribe are fiercely angry at him or her. They are the very men and women to whom he cannot talk. "You are not of us," they say to him. "You have abandoned us, you like them more than you like us. You now worship their gods not our gods." As a result, conglomerate congregations, made up of converts won in this fashion, grow very slowly. Indeed, one might truly affirm that, where congregations grow in this fashion, the conversion of the ethnic units (people groups) from which they come is made doubly difficult. "The Christians misled one of our people," the rest of the group will say. "We're going to make quite sure that they do not mislead any more of us."

One by one, is relatively easy to accomplish. Perhaps 90 out of 100 missionaries who intend church planting get only conglomerate congregations. I want to emphasize that. Perhaps 90 out of every 100 missionaries who intend church planting get only conglomerate congregations. Such missionaries preach the Gospel, tell of Jesus, sell tracts and Gospels and evangelize in many other ways. They welcome inquirers, but whom do they get? They get a man here, a woman there, a boy here, a girl there, who for various reasons are willing to become Christians and patiently to endure the mild or severe disapproval of their people.

If we understand how churches grow and do not grow on new ground, in untouched and unreached peoples, we must note that the process I have just described seems unreal to most missionaries. "What," they will exclaim, "could be a better way of entry into all the unreached peoples of that region than to win a few individuals from among them? Instead of resulting in the sealed-off church you describe, the process really gives us points of entry into every society from which a convert has come. That seems to us to be the real situation."

Those who reason in this fashion have known church growth in a largely Christian land, where men and women who follow Christ are not ostracized, are not regarded as traitors, but rather as those who have done the right thing. In that kind of society every convert usually can become a channel through which the Christian Faith flows to his relatives and friends. On that point there can be no debate. It was the point I emphasized when I titled my book, *The Bridges of God*.

But in tightly-structured societies, where Christianity is looked on as an invading religion, and individuals are excluded for serious fault, there to win converts from several different segments of society, far from building bridges to each of these, erects barriers difficult to cross.

THE PEOPLE-MOVEMENT APPROACH

Seven Principles

Now let us contrast the other way in which God is discipling the peoples of Planet Earth. My account is not theory but a sober recital of easily observable facts. As you look around the world you see that, while most missionaries succeed in planting only conglomerate churches by the "one by one out of the social group" method, here and there clusters of growing churches arise by the people-movement method. They arise by tribe-wise or caste-wise movements to Christ. This is in many ways a better system. In order to use it effectively, missionaries should operate on seven principles.

The First Principle

First, they should be clear about the goal. The goal is not one single conglomerate church in a city or a region. They may get only that, but that must never be their goal. That must be a cluster of growing,

indigenous congregations, every member of which remains in close contact with his kindred. This cluster grows best if it is in one people, one caste, one tribe, one segment of society. For example, If you were evangelizing the taxi drivers of Taipei, then your goal would be to win not some taxi drivers, some university professors, some farmers and some fisherman, but to establish churches made up largely of taxi drivers, their wives and children and mechanics. As you win converts of that particular community, the congregation has a natural, built-in social cohesion. Everybody feels at home. Yes, the goal must be clear.

The Second Principle

The second principle is that the national leader, or the missionary and his helpers, should concentrate on one people. If you are going to establish a cluster of growing congregations amongst, let us say, the Nair people of Kerala, which is the southwest tip of India, then you would need to place most of your missionaries and their helpers so that they can work among the Nairs. They should proclaim the Gospel to Nairs and say quite openly to them, "We are hoping that, within your caste, there soon will be thousands of followers of Jesus Christ, who will remain solidly in the Nair community." They will, of course, not worship the old gods; but then plenty of Nairs don't worship their old gods-plenty of Nairs are communist, and ridicule their old gods.

Nairs whom God calls, who choose to believe in Christ, are going to love their neighbors more than they did before, and walk in the light. They will be saved and beautiful people. They will remain Nairs while, at the same time they have become Christians. To repeat, concentrate on one people group. If you have three missionaries, don't have one evangelizing this group, another that, and a third 200 miles away evangelizing still another. That is a sure way to guarantee that any church started will be small, non-growing, one-by-one churches. The social dynamics of those sections of society will work solidly against the eruption of any great growing people movement to Christ.

The Third Principle

The third principle is to encourage converts to remain thoroughly one with their own people in most matters. They should continue to eat what their people eat. They should not say, "My people are vegetarians but, now that I have become a Christian, I am going to eat meat." After they become Christians they should be more rigidly vegetarian than they were before. In the matter of clothing, they should continue to look precisely like their kinfolk. In the matter of marriage, most people are endogamous, they insist that "our people marry only our people." They look with great disfavor on our marrying other people. And yet when Christians come in one-by-one, they cannot marry their own people. None of them have become Christian. When only a few of a given people become Christians, when it comes time for them or their children to marry, they have to take husbands or wives from other segments of the population. So their own kin look at them and say, "Yes, become a Christian and mongrelize your children. You have left us and have joined them."

All converts should be encouraged to bear cheerfully the exclusion, the oppression, and the persecution that they are likely to encounter from their people. When anyone becomes a follower of a new way of life, he is likely to meet with some disfavor from his loved ones. Maybe it's mild; maybe it's severe. He should bear such disfavor patiently. He should say on all occasions:

"I am a better son than I was before; I am a better father than I was before; I am a better husband than I was before; and I love you more than I used to do. You can hate me, but I will not hate you. You can exclude me, but I will include you. You can force me out of our ancestral house; but I will live on its verandah. Or I will get a house just across the street. I am still one of you, I am more one of you than I ever was before."

Encourage converts to remain thoroughly one with their people in most matters. Please note that word "most." They cannot remain one with their people in idolatry, or drunkenness or obvious sin. If they belong to a segment of society that earns its living stealing, they must "steal no more." But, in most matters (how they talk, how they dress, how they eat, where they go, what kind of houses they live in), they can look very much like their people, and ought to make very effort to do so.

The Fourth Principle

The fourth principle is to try to get group decisions for Christ. If only one person decides to follow Jesus, do not baptize him immediately. Say to him, "You and I will work together to lead another five or ten or, God willing, fifty of your people to accept Jesus Christ as Savior so that when you are baptized, you are baptized with them." Ostracism is very effective against one lone person. But ostracism is weak indeed when exercised against a group of a dozen. And when exercised against two hundred it has practically no force at all.

The Fifth Principle

The fifth principle is this: Aim for scores of groups of people to become Christians in an even-flowing stream across the years. One of the common mistakes made by missionaries, eastern as well as western, all around the world is that when a few become Christians—perhaps 100, 200 or even 1,000—the missionaries spend all their time teaching them. They want to make them good Christians, and they say to themselves, "If these people become good Christians, then the Gospel will spread." So for years they concentrate on a few congregations. By the time, ten or twenty years later, that they begin evangelizing outside that group, the rest of the people no longer want to become Christian. That has happened again and again. This principle requires that, from the very beginning, the missionary keeps on reaching out to new groups. "But," you say, "is not this a sure way to get poor Christians who don't know the Bible? If we follow that principle we shall soon have a lot of 'raw' Christians. Soon we shall have a community of perhaps five thousand people who are very sketchily Christian."

Yes, that is certainly a danger. At this point, we must lean heavily upon the New Testament, remembering the brief weeks or months of instruction Paul gave to his new churches. We must trust the Holy Spirit, and believe that God has called those people out of darkness into His wonderful light. As between two evils, giving them too little Christian teaching and allowing them to become a sealed-off community that cannot reach its own people, the latter is much the greater danger. We must not allow new converts to become sealed off. We must continue to make sure that a constant stream of new converts comes into the ever-growing cluster of congregations.

The Sixth Principle

Now the sixth point is this: The converts, five or five thousand, ought to say or at least feel:

"We Christians are the advance guard of our people, of our segment of society. We are showing our relatives and neighbors a better way of life. The way we are pioneering is good for us who have become Christians and will be very good for you thousands who have yet to believe. Please look on us not as traitors in any sense. We are better sons, brothers, and wives, better tribesmen and caste fellows, better members of our labor union, than we ever were before. We are showing ways in which, while remaining thoroughly of our own segment of society, we all can have a better life. Please look on us as the pioneers of our own people entering a wonderful Promised Land."

The Seventh Principle

The last principle I stress is this: Constantly emphasize brotherhood. In Christ there is no Jew, no Greek, no bond, no free, no Barbarian, no Scythian. We are all one in Christ Jesus, but, at the same time, let us remember that Paul did not attack all imperfect social institutions. For example, he did not do away with slavery. Paul said to the slave, "Be a better slave," He said to the slave owner, "Be a better master."

Paul also said in that famous passage emphasizing unity, "There is no male or female." Nevertheless Christians, in their boarding schools and orphanages, continue to sleep boys and girls in separate dormitories!! In Christ, there is no sex distinctions. Boys and girls are equally precious in God's sight. Men from this tribe, and men from that are equally precious in God's sight. We are all equally sinners saved by grace. These things are true but, at the same time, there are certain social niceties which Christians at this time may observe.

As we continue to stress brotherhood, let us be sure that the most effective way to achieve brotherhood is to lead ever increasing numbers of men and women from every ethnos, every tribe, every segment of society into an obedient relationship to Christ. As we multiply Christians in every segment of society, the

possibility of genuine brotherhood, justice, goodness and righteousness will be enormously increased. Indeed, the best way to get justice, possibly the only way to get justice, is to have very large numbers in every segment of society become committed Christians.

CONCLUSION

As we work for Christward movements in every people, let us not make the mistake of believing that "one-by-one out of the society into the church" is a bad way. One precious soul willing to endure severe ostracism in order to become a follower of Jesus-one precious soul coming all by himself-is a way that God has blessed and is blessing to the salvation of mankind. But it is a slow way. And it is a way which frequently seals off the convert's own people from any further hearing of the Gospel.

Sometimes one-by-one is the only possible method. When it is, let us praise God for it, and live with its limitations. Let us urge all those wonderful Christians who come bearing persecution and oppression, to pray for their own dear ones and to work constantly that more of their own people may believe and be saved.

One-by-one is one way that God is blessing to the increase of His Church. The people movement is another way. The great advances of the Church on new ground out of non-Christian religions have always come by people movements, never one-by-one. It is equally true that one-by-one-out-of-the-people is a very common beginning way. In the book, *Bridges of God*, which God used to launch the Church Growth Movement, I have used a simile, I say there that missions start proclaiming Christ on a desert- like plain. There life is hard, the number of Christians remains small. A large missionary presence is required. But, here and there, the missionaries or the converts find ways to break out of that arid plain and proceed up into the verdant mountains. There large numbers of people live, there real churches can be founded; there the Church grows strong; that is people-movement land.

I commend that simile to you. Let us accept what God gives. If it is one-by-one, let us accept that and lead those who believe in Jesus to trust in Him completely. But let us always pray that, after that beginning, we may proceed to higher ground, to more verdant pasture, to more fertile lands where great groups of men and women, all of the same segment of society, become Christians and thus open the way for Christward movements in each people on earth. Our goal should be Christward movements within each segment. There the dynamics of social cohesion will advance the Gospel and lead multitudes out of darkness into His wonderful life. Let us be sure that we do it by the most effective methods.

EVANGELISM
APPENDIX

5B

Answering Common Objections

USE SCRIPTURE AS YOUR AUTHORITY

The people we meet come from lots of different backgrounds. The sincere questions they ask do have answers. You can help them to discover the answers in the Scriptures by growing in your own familiarity with what the Bible says about these often-asked questions.

"If God is so powerful and loving, why does He allow all the evil in the world? Why doesn't He stop it?"

The Bible says that God created the world perfect, and evil is the result of Satan's and man's disobedience and rebellion against Him. Sin, not God, causes evil and suffering. In fact, God has done everything necessary to overcome the problem of evil by sending Jesus Christ to suffer and die for our sins. But God respects our freedom of choice. We may choose to receive Christ and the new life He offers or to continue our rebellious way that produces evil.

Memorize Romans 1:28

"Aren't Christians presumptuous to claim that Jesus Christ is the only way to heaven? What about sincere followers of other faiths?"

The issue is not one of sincerity, but of truth. Teachings opposed to each other cannot both be right. No amount of sincerity can cause an untruth to become true. A person can be sincerely wrong. Neither is a Christian's opinion important. What is important is what Jesus Christ claimed.

Memorize John 14:6

"What about those who've never heard of Christ? Will they be condemned to hell?"

Jesus made it clear that no one would get to heaven except through Him. But Romans 2:12-15 says that no one will be condemned for the mere lack of knowledge about Him. He will be judged according to what he knew and did in regard to right and wrong. The fact is that no one in the world has perfectly kept his own moral standards, to say nothing of God's standards, of which he may or may not be aware.

Memorize Romans 1:19,20

"Isn't the Bible just a collection of religious myths written by men? Isn't it full of errors?"

Those who study the Bible know these accusations are false and flimsy, indicating a lack of personal investigation of the Scriptures. The writers of the Bible claim divine inspiration in receiving revelations from God and direction by the Holy Spirit in recording events that were significant to God's message to men. Dozens of predictions, made hundreds of years in advance, have been fulfilled in minute detail. Other prophecies await fulfillment. Such predictions could originate only with God.

Memorize 2 Peter 1:16

"If Jesus Christ is really the answer, why are so many Christians hypocrites? Why don't they practice what they preach?"

Not everyone who claims to be a Christian is one. Only those who have personally received Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord are born again. Every group or organization has some insincere members. We don't throw away all the change in our pockets just because one coin happens to be counterfeit. Even a true Christian does not claim to be perfect. He recognizes his need of constant help from Christ. If the doubter is looking for perfection he will find it only in Christ. If he is looking for reality he will find it in thousands of sincere Christians who are walking with Christ.

Memorize Romans 14:12

"Why do so many educated people reject the claims of Christ? Doesn't this prove that belief in Christ is incompatible with higher learning?"

Faith in Jesus Christ and education are not incompatible. Many of the greatest scientists, past and present, were and are sincere believers in Jesus Christ. The issue Christ presents is moral, not intellectual. Therefore, the educated person rejects the Gospel for the same reason the uneducated man does. A common reason is unwillingness to submit to Christ's authority.

Memorize 1 Corinthians 1:21

SOURCE:

Navigators. *Personal Evangelism Scripture Memory Course*, Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, n.d.

EVANGELISM

LESSON 6,7

The Process Of Conversion

HELPING PEOPLE MOVE TOWARD FAITH IN CHRIST

☛ Lesson Purpose

The Purpose of this lesson is to discuss conversion as a process which we should anticipate and in which we cooperate.

☛ Main Points

- We must begin to share Christ not where we are most comfortable, but where our audience is most comfortable.
- There is only one Gospel, but we may use many methods to share it.

☛ Desired Outcomes

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

- Be familiar with Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs.
- Be familiar with the process of a person's movement toward faith in and commitment to Christ.
- Become familiar with four phases of evangelism and begin to identify people to whom we are ministering within these phases.
- Understand that we must begin to share Christ, not where we are most comfortable, but where our audience is most comfortable, in moving people toward faith.

☛ Appendices

6A Profile Of Persons You Wish To Evangelize

6B Three Principles For Strategic Evangelism

6C Examining Jesus' Approach To Individuals

☛ Suggestions to Trainers

This is a two-hour lesson. Before you begin your instruction, have trainees review some of the lessons they learned in their study of the parables of the soils, Matthew 13:3-9,18-23.

This lesson refers to concepts presented in Cell Group lesson 4, "Cell Group Evangelism." If the trainees have not yet gone through this lesson, it is recommended that the trainer review the first section of this lesson, "Two Types of Unbelievers", prior to teaching this lesson.

INTRODUCTION

In our study of the sower in Matthew 13, we saw that the condition of the ground on which the Good Seed fell determined the outcome of the harvest. The seed which brought forth a good harvest was sown on good ground. Specifically, Jesus said, "The one who received the seed that fell on good soil is the man who hears the word and understands it" (v.23). Before beginning our evangelism we need to carefully examine the kind of ground on which the seed is to be sown. That is, we need to look carefully at the people we want to evangelize to try to determine what we can do to help them clearly understand the Gospel. (Notice in the parable that the people had hard hearts because they did not understand the message.) In this session we want to look at some tools for assessing peoples' needs and evaluating their attitude toward God as a first step in helping them understand and receive the Good News.

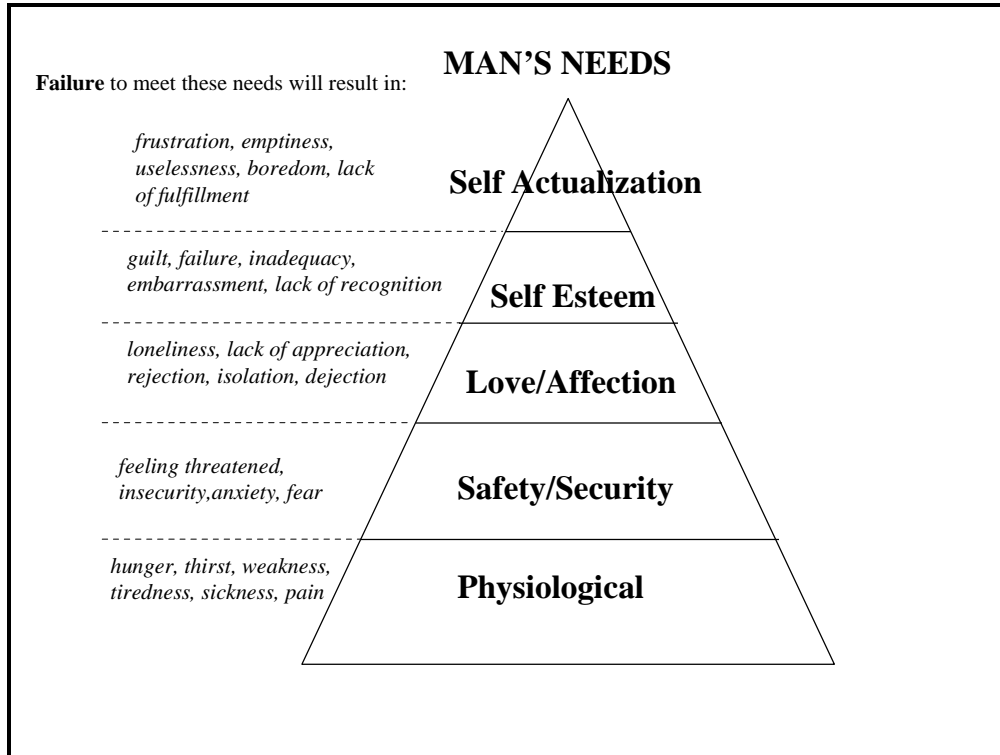
You may ask, "Why do we need to know *all* of people's needs when we already know that their *main* need is for God's saving grace?" The answer is simple. It helps us "meet them where they are." When we

understand people's most basic needs, we are better able to show God's love for them by helping to meet these needs.

I. ASSESSING PEOPLE'S NEEDS

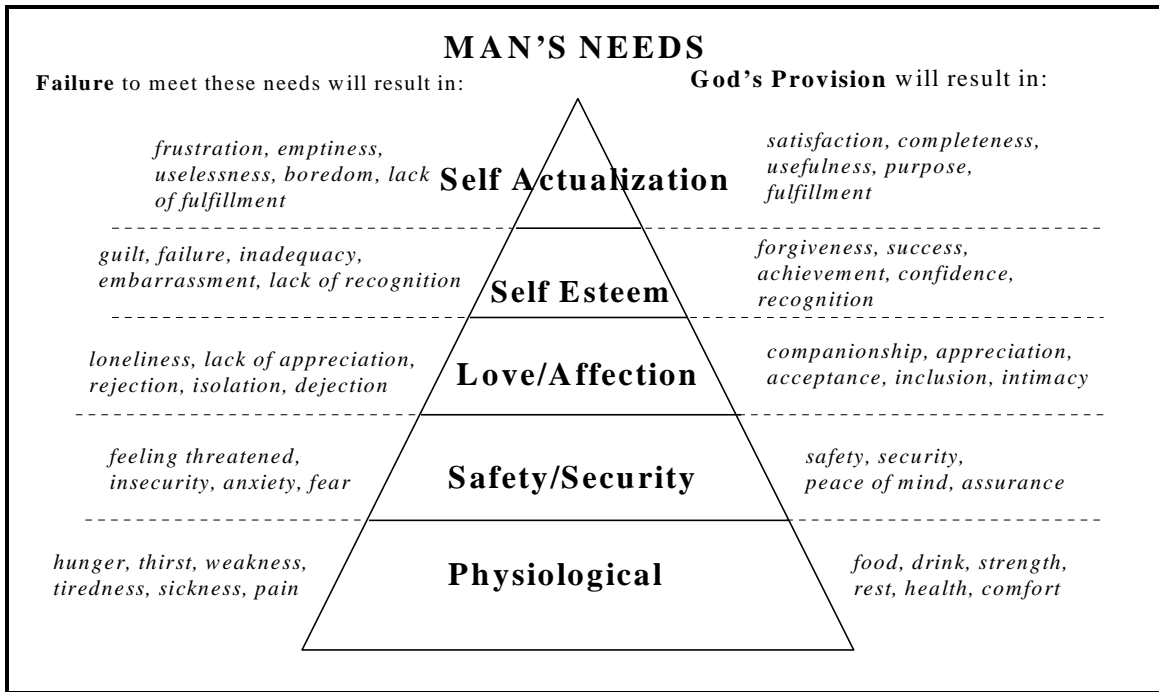
Psychologist Abraham Maslow developed an indicator of needs common to all mankind. His conclusion was that a person will not be motivated to attain a higher level of need until lower level needs have been met. For example, if a person is hungry, his primary concern will be for getting food, not for gaining recognition, which is a higher need. Figure 6.1 is a summary of Maslow's Hierarchy of Human Need, which shows the various needs along with the problems resulting from failure to meet those needs.

Figure 6.1 Man's Needs: Adapted From Maslow's Hierarchy of Human Need



After carefully considering man's needs and the results from failing to meet those needs (Figure 6.1), look at Figure 6.2 and see the ways in which God has made provision for all of man's needs.

Figure 6.2 God's Provision For Man's Needs



Jesus Christ is the answer to everyone's needs. But the way he provides for those needs to be met is through His Body, the CHURCH. If we do not understand a person's need, we will not know how to help meet that need. Where on this chart would you place the people whom you are evangelizing?

II. EVALUATING WHERE PEOPLE ARE IN THEIR UNDERSTANDING OF THE GOSPEL

Understanding a person's needs is only the first step. In order for our evangelism to be effective, we must also know where the person is in his understanding of God: is he an atheist who does not even believe there is a god? Is he searching for God? Is he angry at God, etc.?

Cell Group lesson 4, "Cell Group Evangelism", discusses two types of unbelievers: "Type A" and "Type B." Type A unbelievers are interested to some degree in God, the Bible, and are open to God's direction for their lives. Type B unbelievers are those who are not interested in the Bible, who will not go to church, perhaps don't even believe in God, and may be openly opposed or even hostile to the Gospel message.

Figure 6.3 shows some steps that people take in their movement toward God. Study this figure carefully. Some Type B unbelievers may not even be on this chart yet, while others would only be at one of the levels in the "cultivation" step. Type A unbelievers, however, could be at any one of the levels in the steps prior to "harvesting."

This chart can be very useful to help you determine a person's spiritual condition, whether they are a Type A or Type B unbeliever. Think about the people that you are praying about, spending time with, and witnessing to. Where would you put them on this chart?

Figure 6.3. Steps Toward Faith

RESPONSE STEPS	
CULTIVATION	-12 GOING HIS OR HER OWN WAY -11 AWARENESS OF THE PRESENCE OF THE MESSENGER -10 POSITIVE ATTITUDE TOWARD THE MESSENGER -9 AWARENESS OF DIFFERENCE IN THE MESSENGER'S LIFE -8 INITIAL AWARENESS OF THE BIBLE'S RELEVANCE FOR LIFE
SOWING	-7 POSITIVE ATTITUDE TOWARD THE BIBLE -6 AWARENESS OF THE BASICS OF THE GOSPEL -5 UNDERSTANDS THE GOSPEL'S MEANING AND IMPLICATIONS -4 POSITIVE ATTITUDE TOWARD THE GOSPEL
HARVESTING	-3 RECOGNITION OF PERSONAL NEED -2 DECISION TO ACT -1 REPENTANCE AND FAITH 0 NEW CREATURE IN CHRIST!
GATHERING	+1 FAITH CONFIRMATION AND GROUNDING +2 ASSIMILATION INTO A CARING CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY +3 GROWING! MATURING IN CHRIST-LIKENESS +4 GOING! MOBILIZATION TO BE "LIVING PROOF" TO OTHERS

As you become familiar with this diagram, ask yourself the following questions:

- Where do the people I'm working with fit into this diagram?
- At what stage can existing materials and tools for evangelism best be used?
- At which stages is there a critical lack of materials for use with the people with whom I'm working?

III. UNDERSTANDING FOUR PHASES OF ACTIVITY RELATED TO WINNING PEOPLE TO CHRIST

We saw in the Parable of the Sower in Matthew 13 that Jesus used the figure of the sower to illustrate truth about the harvest, particularly about the sowing and harvesting stage. Although Jesus here did not specifically address the other activities involved in the whole process, the idea of farming is used frequently throughout Scripture (Mt 9:37; Lk 10:2; Jn 4:35; 1Co 3:5-9; Gal 6:9;). As we think about all that is involved in seeing a person come to Christ, it might be helpful to divided the evangelism task into four phases as shown in Figure 6.4.

Figure 6.4 Four Phases Of Activity Related To Winning People To Christ

Activity	Cultivating	Sowing	Harvesting	Gathering
Explanation	Speaks to the heart through caring relationships	Speaks to the mind through reasoning and communication	Speaks to the will, requesting a faith response in conversion	Speaks to the whole man concerning personal growth in Christ
Emphasis	Presence of the messenger	Proclamation of the Gospel truth	Persuasion to a decision	Participation and incorporation into a local fellowship
Biblical Examples	John 3 & John 4	John 4 and Acts 8	John 4 and Acts 16	Acts 2:40-47 and Acts 8
Steps toward faith	-12 to -8	-7 to -4	-3 to 0	+1 to +4

IV. DETERMINING EVANGELISTIC STRATEGY

Following is an illustration of how you might determine your evangelistic strategy based on the information you learned above. The Worksheet in Appendix 6A is a helpful guide which you can use to develop profiles of the people you which to evangelize.

A. Basic Needs

Maria is a young woman from a divorced family. An only child, she was rejected by her father. Her mother was so busy providing for the family that she had little time to spend with her. She and her mother lived in a city far from her extended family. Now as an adult she feels unloved. You assess her need to be for love/affection. (See Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Figure 6.1).

B. Receptivity To The Gospel

In her steps toward faith (See Figure 6.3), Maria is at -12. Maria has had no religious upbringing, no contact with Christians. She does have a vague idea that the Church claims to be relevant to her, although she knows nothing about the claims of Jesus Christ.

C. Evaluation Of Your Evangelistic Strategy

Maria is not yet ready for the sowing of the seed. For you to give her a tract or a Bible would probably not be effective. What she needs is to be shown the love of Christ in a warm, accepting atmosphere, the cultivation stage in the chart in figure 6.4. You decide to invite her to a small group where there is a lot of caring for each other . Then you might include her in an evangelistic Bible study.

As you determine your strategy for reaching those people God has already placed on your heart, you might also begin to pray about reaching people who, if reached with the Gospel, would be strategic in reaching your target area with the Gospel (See Appendix 6B).

QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION, REVIEW AND APPLICATION

Do you tend to approach each person using the same evangelistic method or tool? How can you increase your versatility?

ACTION PLAN

- Work through Worksheet in Appendix 6C to aid your understanding from Scripture that people have differing needs and must be approached in different ways. This worksheet looks at different instances in the New Testament where Jesus was revealing Himself to different kinds of people.
- Using Worksheet in Appendix 6A as a guide, work with the other two people in your prayer triplet. List the names of each of the people you are praying for, assess where they are in the scale of needs, evaluate where they are in moving toward Christ (Steps Toward Faith). Determine what you should do to effectively reach them with the Gospel.
- Study Appendix 6B, Three Principles For Strategic Evangelism. Who are the influential "Gatekeepers" in your target area? What can you do to reach these people with the Gospel?



Profile of Persons You Wish To Evangelize

WORKSHEET

The important information that we learned in the case study about Mary can be summarized with the help of the table below. Look closely at this example, and then use the blank samples on the next page to determine the needs and responsiveness of those for whom you are praying with your "Prayer Triplet" partners.

NAME	BASIC NEEDS (DESCRIBE) (FIGURE 6.1)	RESPONSIVENESS TO FAITH IN CHRIST (FIGURE 6.4)
<i>Mary</i>	<i>Love/Affection</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - an only child - from a divorced family - rejected by father - mother too busy to show her affection 	-12 <i>Mary is going about her own way. Living in an Orthodox country, she knows that the traditional church exists but has no idea it has anything to say to her. She has never personally had contact with Christians and has no idea about the claims of Christ.</i>

EVALUATION: *At the "cultivation" stage. Needs a caring relationship before the sowing can be effective.*

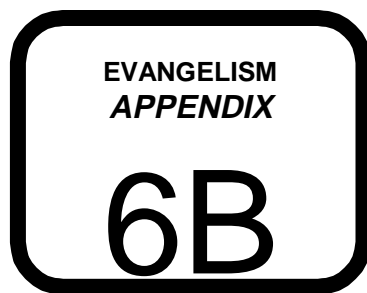
SAMPLE PROFILE SHEET TO USE FOR ACTION PLAN ASSIGNMENT

NAME	BASIC NEEDS (DESCRIBE) (FIGURE 6.1)	RESPONSIVENESS TO FAITH IN CHRIST (FIGURE 6.4)

EVALUATION: _____

NAME	BASIC NEEDS (DESCRIBE) (FIGURE 6.1)	RESPONSIVENESS TO FAITH IN CHRIST (FIGURE 6.4)

EVALUATION: _____



Three Principles for Strategic Evangelism

Following are three strategic principles that will help us in reaching those with varying receptivity to the Gospel.

I. STRATEGIC SOWING

Every church planter must deal with the question of priorities in ministry. Among these questions is the issue of where to concentrate our evangelistic efforts. Do we focus on those who appear receptive, or on those who are resistant. Although these groups may seem mutually exclusive, the apostles seemed to try to give balanced attention to both kinds of people.

A. Those with greater understanding of truth may move toward Christ more quickly

As you read through the book of Acts, ask yourself questions like: Where did the apostle Paul go when he entered a city? Whom did he first approach? Why did he go to these people first? Paul's normal pattern was clearly to go to the Jews first. Why did Paul most often begin with the Jews?

I believe that Paul was convinced that these people had been prepared to receive the Gospel and could be brought into the church and mobilized for ministry at the earliest possible moment. The Jews already know the Old Testament, and knew many things about God. We must understand that Paul wanted to reach the greatest number with the Gospel message as soon as possible. The apostle understood that some are more responsive than others, more ready to hear and receive spiritual truth. The fact that he was not always received warmly by them doesn't mean that his strategy was incorrect. However, when the Jews in a particular city rejected the message and the Gentiles proved more receptive, Paul went to the Gentiles. We see this pattern of Jew-Gentile repeated consistently in most of the cities he visited.

Let's not forget that we are aiming at saturation church planting. The more people we can involve in this task, the better. And once people are no longer a harvest field, they become part of the harvest force. Share the good news with all who will hear, but target people who can quickly become part of God's ministry team.

B. Those with greater influence, "the gate-keepers", may move toward Christ slowly, but their long-term impact for the Gospel may be greater

The best example is Paul himself. He had all the credentials to make a great impact for God. He had all the zeal. But it took time for him to realize—finally only through a direct encounter with the living Christ—that he needed to turn to Christ. Paul himself then desired to go to Rome and testify before Caesar—the most influential person in the world—even if it meant going as a prisoner in chains (Acts 25:11; 27:24). If God has given you a heart to reach an influential person in your community, persevere in that relationship. "Water it" liberally. You have something that person needs! Pray! Ask God to open doors of opportunity and then seek them out. Remember that Saul, the church's persecutor, became Paul, the apostle to the Gentiles.

II. STRATEGIC LIVING—MEET PEOPLE WHERE THEY ARE; NOT WHERE WE ARE COMFORTABLE

A. Individual Consideration John 3, 4, 9

As the Lord conversed with three specific individuals in these chapters, we find that he helped each discover his need in differing ways. With the well-taught Pharisee, Jesus helped him understand that he didn't understand the spiritual realm at all. With the Samaritan woman at the well, Jesus made her feel comfortable and reawakened her spiritual thirst for God. With the man born blind, Jesus met a physical need, creating a hunger for a personal relationship. One principle we can clearly see in these interactions is that Jesus didn't treat people as merely "souls with ears." He saw real people with real needs and offered a genuine relationship.

B. Incarnational Evangelism 1 Corinthians 9:19-23

The wise fisherman observes the fish he wants to catch, learning the types of food he eats and the times he feeds, where and how deep he swims. He selects a lure or bait that is most similar to the fish's natural habitat and uses it to attract the fish. A wise fisherman doesn't put Hungarian goulash on the hook just because he likes it! As evangelists, we must understand the way the unbeliever thinks, learn the things he values, and bridge the gap between his needs as he understands them and his spiritual needs as the Spirit and the Word of God reveal them.

III. STRATEGIC UNDERSTANDING—SATISFIED PEOPLE DON'T GENERALLY SEEK CHANGE

A. 1 Corinthians 1:18-31

Those who are satisfied that they already know all the answers are difficult to win to Christ. This group includes the intellectuals, the wealthy, and those with worldly status. It is a fact that it often takes a personal crisis of some sort to cause them to listen to the message of the Gospel. We need to be aware of the opportunity for evangelism that such crises present. We also need to build a rapport with these people so that we know when they are facing troubles, and so that we will be able to respond with hope in a timely fashion.

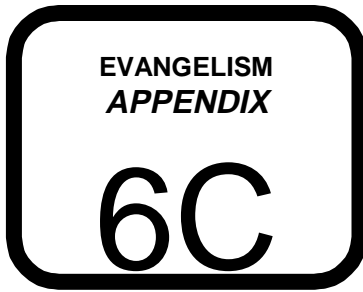
B. Matthew 9:12

The wise fisherman goes fishing when the fish are hungry, not when they've just fed. As evangelists, our task is to help people discover needs that need to be met and to create a sense of hunger for Christ. We must recognize that those who most easily recognize their needs will be most ready to consider Christ's solution, if they truly desire a solution. If people aren't hungry for the Gospel, ask God's Spirit to create that hunger in them.

Summary

Remember that successful evangelism involves...

- taking the initiative, in the power and love of the Holy Spirit, to help a person move one step closer in the process of mini-decisions for Christ,
- being there to encourage and guide them in knowing how to make that decision,
- praying for them to come to the place of full repentance and faith in Christ and to experience the salvation in Christ by faith alone, and
- bringing them fully into the fellowship and ministry of the local church.



Examining Jesus' Approach To Individuals

COMPARISON WORKSHEET

The Gospels are full of interesting conversations between Jesus and other individuals. We want to examine a few of them to see some differences and similarities in Jesus' approach. Work through each Scripture passage listed in the table and answer the questions.

Scripture:	John 3: 1-21	John 4:5-26	John 9:5-7,35-39	Mark 10:17-22
With whom is Jesus speaking?				
What do we know of this person from the passage?				
How does the conversation begin?				
At what verse does the direction of the conversation change?				
What does Jesus require?				
What does Christ offer?				
How does the individual respond?				