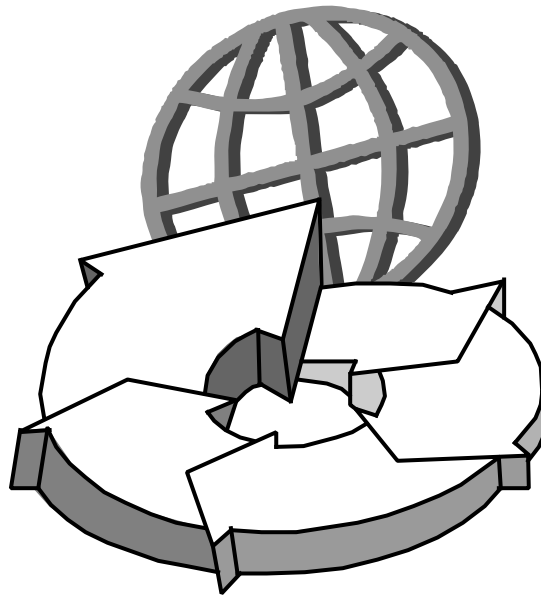


Omega Course:

Finishing the Great Commission through
“Saturation Church Planting”
Practical Church Planter Training



Manual One

English Companion to the Chinese Translation

By

The Alliance for Saturation Church Planting



August 2008

**Omega Course:
Practical Church Planter Training
Manual One
English Companion to the Chinese Translation**

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Translations and adaptations for your context are also encouraged. Again, please contact *UWM* so that we can encourage and inform others who may also be interested in your language or intended use.



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MANUAL ONE

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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.

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 three 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, discipleship, Church, evangelism, inductive Bible study, leadership, prayer, spiritual character and more.

The curriculum was divided into three 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.

USING THE MATERIAL

Advice for using this Material in Mentoring Groups

Be aware that real learning takes place when you work with others to apply the concepts presented in these lessons. Most lessons include an action plan at the end. These action plans are designed to help apply the ideas in the lesson and should be completed as you are studying the material. It can be extremely helpful to have a mentor lead the small group to encourage and advise the group as they work through the process of planting churches. This type of group can also provide mutual accountability to the concepts being learned in life and ministry. It is strongly suggested that you work through the material in this manual in such a group context.

Mentoring groups

The goal of these mentoring groups is to train Church Planters to plant churches, not necessarily train leaders for pastoring existing churches.

It is important that the mentor is prepared beforehand for each part of the meeting. Praying for the Spirit's leading in each area is important because He knows the specific challenges and problems that each person is facing. It is a good idea for the mentor to keep a journal of the meetings for future reference. The focus of the mentor is on training cp'ers. It is important that the mentor be familiar with the model.

The mentor does not necessarily need a theology degree, but only a desire to help facilitate others through the process of planting churches. It is, however, suggested that the mentor have been involved in planting a church.

Model for a Mentoring Group

Style – The style of the mentoring groups is two-fold:

- Discussion Based - New ideas and concepts will be learned better through discussing the key concepts together in the group setting.
- Mutual care and accountability – Using personal growth type questions participants can share their needs and difficulties. In this way they can deepen their relationship, care for and help each other grow in Christ.

Size – The group should be four to eight people including mentor. The more people the longer the time needed for discussion.

Frequency – Once a week is best. Every two weeks if members are also mentoring leaders under them. Once a month for two day sessions if the group members live far away.

Length of time (dependent on frequency) – Two to three hour sessions are necessary for everyone to be able to participate in the discussion.

Location – It is best to meet in an informal situation, not in a classroom, so discussion and sharing will be more open.

Participants– Choose people who have a basic foundation in their faith. It is important that both the mentor and participant will come prepared having completed the homework assigned. (Suggestion for choosing participants, or the goal of training. A church planter is someone who is a competent evangelist, can lead a small group, and skilled in discipling new believers.)

Steps for Mentoring Group Meeting

The goal of these mentoring groups is to train church planters to plant churches, not necessarily train leaders for pastoring existing churches.

It is important that the mentor is prepared beforehand for each part of the meeting. Praying for the Spirit's leading in each area is important because He knows the specific challenges and problems that each person is facing. It is a good idea for the mentor to keep a journal of the meetings for future reference. The focus of the mentor is on training cp'ers. If a mentor is involved in the training then it is important that he is shadowed in his group meeting with other cp'ers until he is familiar with the model.

It will be important for the mentor to journal what happens and how each cp'er is growing so changes can be made into any future revisions and to understand each individual more specifically for intercession and counsel.

Meeting agenda:

It is essential that both the mentor and participant will come prepared having completed the homework assigned and answered the questions for review and application.

Meeting Starter

Before the opening prayer, the meeting should be started with either a scripture or a chorus dealing to bring focus onto the purpose of the meeting. Then, specifically pray the content of the scripture or chorus back to God. This should take 5 – 10 minutes.

Personal Growth (Openness and trust)

Prepare a question that will help the personal growth of the group members. The mentor should set the example in the beginning for openness and trust by sharing first. After a few meetings others may be willing to share first. Remember to be brief, but allow for the Spirit to have freedom if there is a specific problem that needs to be talked about and prayed for.

Pray for what was talked about. Different people can lead out but make sure everyone understands that this prayer time is asking for specific help in individual's lives. If there are no specific needs then different ones can pray generally for God's help in regards to this area of their lives. This may take 20-30 minutes.

Review and discuss homework questions (focus on application)

This is an important part of the mentoring time because application of the material is what will bring change and growth to life and ministry. Choose one or two points from the application portion from the previous meeting that each person can share their answers and experience. This portion should not be rushed and further discussion can be encouraged. There may be some meetings where discussing the homework will take the rest of the meeting time.

Discussion of Lesson (Participative and challenging)

There are several different ways that this section can be facilitated. The mentor will need to pray and understand what the Lord wants to emphasize in this section for study. You may choose to discuss or read a portion of the text, or ask the group members to summarize what they feel are the main points, look up some or all the scriptures dealing with a particular topic, answer questions that arose while reading the material etc. Be Creative!

The mentor can guide this discussion so that it is lively and informative. Asking the right kind of questions is important to draw out the main points of the material. What, how, why, are good ways to get discussion going. Be specific in your questions but stay away from yes or no questions, unless followed by asking "why?". Allow people time to share their ideas but don't let one person talk too long.

The mentor needs to allow people to discuss but also keep the discussion focused on topic and focused on the important issues the mentor will also need to share principles that he has learned or correct non-biblical ideas or challenge traditional ideas and methods from time to time.

Assign homework

Homework assignments will consist of reading the next chapter as well as answering questions. Encourage them to complete the homework assignments as it will greatly impact the next discussion time. Some chapters will include an action point to be assigned after discussion of the material.

Pray for ministry (Mutual encouragement)

Each person can share a brief request for prayer in their area of ministry, then pray one for another. You could be creative in this area, for example: starting a prayer journal with answers to prayers; assigning prayer partners for a specific period of time; creating a prayer chain; or doing prayer walks together, etc.

Evaluation

The mentor should periodically take time to evaluate the process. Think about each individual and as well as the group as it relates to their specific ministry situations. Find ways to encourage participants to keep on track with goals. A base line of how many trainees and churches are represented will need to be recorded in the beginning so a true picture of growth can be attained during evaluation.

The Omega project should show proportional growth in both mentoring groups and new churches.

Advice for Using this Material in Seminars

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.'

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 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

For further assistance in spreading the vision of saturation church planting or practically equipping church planters, contact chineseomega@alliancescp.org

SUGGESTED SCRIPTURES FOR MEETING STARTER

Habakkuk 2: 14,2-3 For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea. Then the LORD replied: "Write down the revelation and make it plain on tablets so that a herald may run with it. For the revelation awaits an appointed time; it speaks of the end and will not prove false. Though it lingers, wait for it; it will certainly come and will not delay.

Psalm 67

Psalm 72:19 Praise be to his glorious name forever; may the whole earth be filled with his glory. Amen and Amen.

Psalm 96:1-3 Sing to the LORD a new song; sing to the LORD, all the earth. Sing to the LORD, praise his name; proclaim his salvation day after day. Declare his glory among the nations, his marvelous deeds among all peoples.

Isaiah 6:1-3 In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord seated on a throne, high and exalted, and the train of his robe filled the temple. Above him were seraphs, each with six wings: With two wings they covered their faces, with two they covered their feet, and with two they were flying. And they were calling to one another: "Holy, holy, holy is the LORD Almighty; the whole earth is full of his glory."

Isaiah 11:9 They will neither harm nor destroy on all my holy mountain, for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea.

Matthew 13:31-32 He told them another parable: "The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed, which a man took and planted in his field. Though it is the smallest of all your seeds, yet when it grows, it is the largest of garden plants and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and perch in its branches."

Matthew 28:18-20 Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

Mark 16:15 He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation.

Luke 24:46-47 He told them, "This is what is written: The Christ will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, and repentance and forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.

Luke 24:46-47 He told them, "This is what is written: The Christ will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, and repentance and forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.

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

Acts 4:23-31

Acts 8:1-4

Acts 16:31-34

Acts 19:9-11

Romans 15:20-21 It has always been my ambition to preach the gospel where Christ was not known, so that I would not be building on someone else's foundation. Rather, as it is written: "Those who were not told about him will see, and those who have not heard will understand."

Romans 16:25-27 Now to him who is able to establish you by my gospel and the proclamation of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery hidden for long ages past, but now revealed and made known through the prophetic writings by the command of the eternal God, so that all nations might believe and obey him— to the only wise God be glory forever through Jesus Christ! Amen.

Ephesians 4:11-13 It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.

1 Thessalonians 1:7-8 And so you became a model to all the believers in Macedonia and Achaia. The Lord's message rang out from you not only in Macedonia and Achaia—your faith in God has become known everywhere. Therefore we do not need to say anything about it,

1 Timothy 2:3-4 This is good, and pleases God our Savior, who wants all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth.

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

2 Peter 3:9 The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.

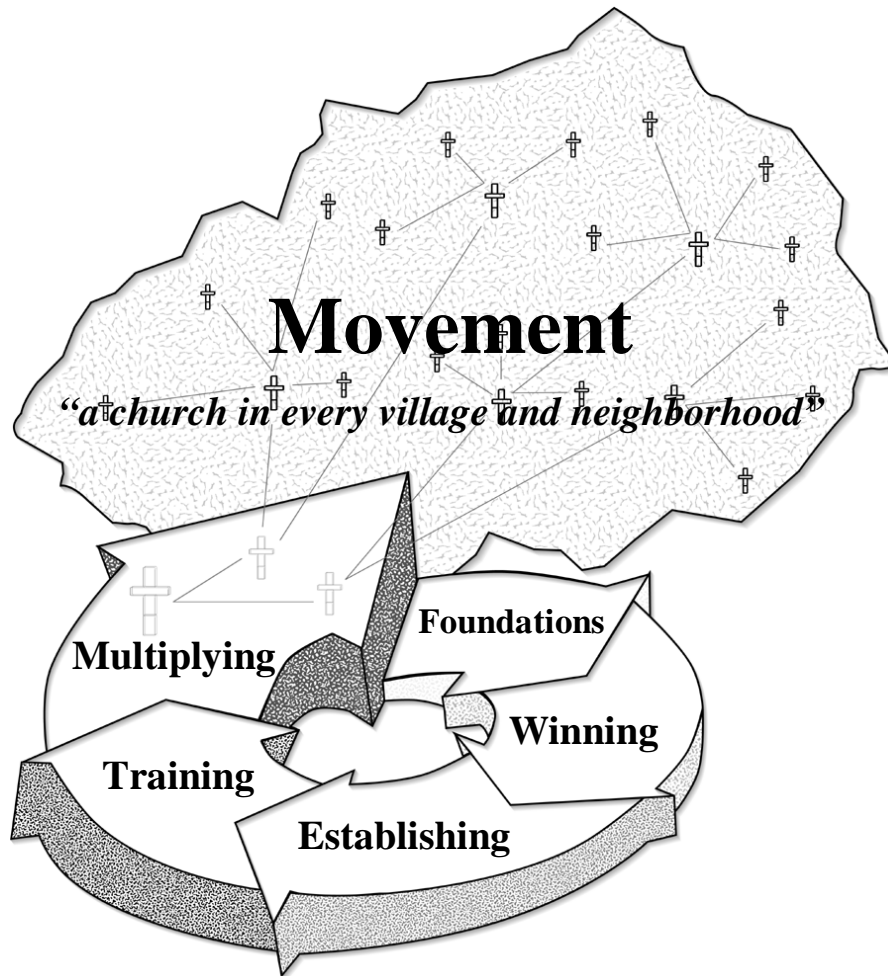
Revelation 5:9 And they sang a new song: "You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals, because you were slain, and with your blood you purchased men for God from every tribe and language and people and nation.

SUGGESTED QUESTIONS FOR PERSONAL GROWTH (OPENNESS AND TRUST)

1. What are your desires and hopes for your life?
2. What is keeping you from reaching your dreams?
3. What does God want from you and your church?
4. How has your prayer life been this week?
5. If you could change one thing in your spiritual life, what would it be?
6. What have you been studying in the Bible this week?
7. Does your home reflect the joy and worship of a Christian life?
8. How does the Lordship of Christ affect your daily life?
9. What gives you the most satisfaction in ministry?
10. What are some of the opportunities God has given you to serve him this week? Did you miss any?
11. What Bible character do you most identify with and why?
12. What challenges or struggles are you dealing with?
13. Are you taking time to relax?
14. What is your favorite Bible verse and why?
15. If God could give you one thing you really wanted what would it be?
16. How much time have you spent with your family this week?
17. How have you demonstrated a servant's heart to those around you?
18. In what ways has God blessed you this week?
19. How have you grown spiritually in the last 6 mo?
20. Are you sensing spiritual attacks from the enemy right now?
21. How are you financially right now? (things under control?)
22. What are you afraid of?
23. Describe your relationships with people in the Church.
24. Who are you most praying for to come to know Christ and why?
25. Describe how non-Christians perceive the church.
26. What do you perceive to be your greatest spiritual gift?
27. What has given you the most joy this week?

Look in Manual 1/Multiplying Churches/Chapter 3 Appendix/Conversation Ice Breakers for more questions.

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.

SCP VISION

SCP VISION
1
LESSON

"Z" Thinking

WHAT DOES GOD WANT?

☞ Lesson Purpose

The purpose of this lesson is to emphasize the role that vision plays in the church planting cycle.

☞ Main Points and Desired Outcomes

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

- Start your church planting efforts with "Z" thinking, or end-result vision, a vision for reaching the world, their nation, their region, city, village and neighborhood with the Gospel.
- Consider what God wants for your region.
- Know that it is God's will that every man, woman, and child hear and understand the Gospel and have the opportunity to accept Jesus Christ as their personal Lord and Savior.

☞ Suggestions to Trainers

"Z" Thinking communicates the idea of a vision for what God *ultimately* wants for a nation, region, city, village, or neighborhood; that is, that every man, woman, and child hear and understand the Gospel and have the opportunity to accept Jesus Christ as their personal Lord and Savior. Consider how to most clearly communicate the idea of end-result vision in your cultural context.

☞ Suggestions for Mentoring Time

1. Read Habakkuk 2:2-3,14 and use it as a basis for your opening prayer time.

Personal Growth Question: What are your dreams (personal and/or for the church)?

Suggestions for discussion time:

Discuss the questions in the text and at the end of the chapter.

Homework: Complete the Action Plan, Read the assigned Chapter(s) for the next meeting time..

Pray for ministry needs.

INTRODUCTION

If Christian leaders were to ask themselves the question, "What is the ultimate end toward which God is working in history?" or "What does God want for the people in the place where I serve Him?"... how would it affect the way they minister there? The answers to these questions should describe the vision and define the tasks of their ministries.

I. WHAT IS "Z" THINKING?

What is the ultimate end toward which God is working? The answer can be called "Z"—the end result of what God ultimately wants for a nation, region, city, village, or neighborhood. To work towards that end means knowing clearly what "Z" is. The Bible makes it clear that God's love is for the whole world (Jn 3:16). In writing to Timothy, Paul emphasized the need to pray for all men because "This is good and pleases God our Savior, Who wants all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth" (1Ti 2:3-4). Peter also writes concerning this, "He [the Lord] is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance" (2Pe 3:9).

If God wants all people to come to repentance, shouldn't this be our desire as well? Can we possibly be used by God to mobilize others toward this end? What would happen if all the Christians in a country, region, city, village or even a neighborhood were completely convinced that God wanted everyone there to know Him and see Christians living like Jesus in their midst? (1Pe 2:12).

The balance of Scripture indicates that not all will be saved. Our sovereign God alone knows who will be saved. The task of the Church is to make sure that everyone has the opportunity to hear the Gospel.

Discuss: What is "Z" thinking?

Discuss: What does God want for _____? (my nation, region, city, village, or neighborhood).

Discuss: How does my answer above affect my ministry? Does what I am currently doing reflect what I believe God wants?

It is easy to see how "Z" thinking can effectively describe the vision and define the tasks for any ministry.

II. SATURATION CHURCH PLANTING

In order to see "Z," saturation must happen. By "saturation" we mean that it is the church's ministry to reach out to "every person," "anyone," "and everyone" as stated in 1 Timothy and 2 Peter. These passages make it clear that God wants every man, woman, and child to hear and understand the Gospel and have the opportunity to believe in and fully obey Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior. An important part of the Christian life is being a part of a local church where God's Word is believed and taught.

Saturation church planting (SCP) is thoroughly biblical. It is completing the Great Commission through church planting in such a way that every man, woman and child has a chance to accept or reject the Gospel through the witness of a local church. SCP is the vision, strategy, and ministry of filling nations, regions, cities, villages, and neighborhoods with churches that will take the Gospel to every person in their language and through their culture.

Saturation church planting is completing the Great Commission through church planting in such a way that every man, woman and child has a chance to accept or reject the Gospel through the witness of a local church.

Discuss: Define Saturation Church Planting in your own words:

1. Is It Realistic to Expect "Z" from God?

Besides the fact that God wants "Z" more than we do, it is exciting that Scripture clearly promises that "Z" will happen. The promise that God will saturate the world with knowledge of Himself and His glory is stated in Isaiah 11:9, "For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the sea."

In the book of Revelation, the apostle John saw visions of heaven from which we learn about the ultimate result of all God's work in the world, the "Z" towards which all history is moving. John reports seeing multitudes of people from every nation, tribe, people and language worshipping the Lord (Rev 7:9)! Yes, it is realistic to expect "Z" from God.

2. What Does God Say about "Z"?

In one of his most intimate moments with the Father, Jesus prayed that there would be unity among those who believe in Him, ". . . to let the **world know** that You sent Me and have loved them even as You have loved Me" (Jn 17:23b). Jesus desired that the world would know who He was! This is the "Z"! He repeated this request twice (Jn 17:21-23). Imagine! God the Son in conversation with God the Father discussing "Z"! "Z" is clearly important to God.

3. Jesus Taught the Disciples about "Z"

Jesus taught the disciples "Z" thinking, promising that ". . . the Gospel must first be preached to all nations" before His return (Mk 13:10). He also promised that the Gospel would saturate the nations in Matthew 24:14 and Luke 24:45-47.

III. SOME ESSENTIAL STEPS TO GET TO "Z"

"A" through "Y" are the things we do in ministry so that "Z" may happen. Scripture gives us some essentials for the "A" through "Y" stage that must take place before "Z" can effectively happen. Notice that these all deal with the elements of "Z." Having "Z" always in mind allows us to make strategic choices as we do "A" through "Y."

1. Prayer

In numerous ways, prayer is clearly an essential part of seeing God's desires fulfilled on earth. Notice the following references:

- 2Ch 7:14 If God's people pray the way they should, "Z" will happen.
- Mt 9:38 God's people are commanded to pray so that workers may participate towards "Z."
- 1Ti 2:1-4 God's people are to pray so that conditions for "Z" may exist. Paul told Timothy that churches should pray for society's leaders to create favorable conditions for spreading the Gospel.
- Rev 5:8-10 "Z" is the result of "the prayers of the saints."

2. Love and Unity

When Jesus said, "By this all men will know," He referred to love among Christians (Jn 13:35). He made it clear that "Z" requires quality relationships. Only when believers love one another will people know that we belong to Christ. Growing in numbers only causes the world to see us as another religious movement if we lack love.

"That the world may know that you are My disciples" requires that believers be united as Jesus and the Father are united. As Jesus talks about His unity with the Father, He always points to a love relationship and an inseparable connection. He prays that our unity would be a model of that unity between Jesus and the Father, and that we should maintain an inseparable connection with Him (Jn 17:21,23).

3. Vision

As the verses below show, "Z" is a global task and includes all people of all nationalities from all places. "Z" thinking for any one area requires seeing the whole world as God does.

- Because God loves all people, He sent His Son so that ". . . whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life" (Jn 3:16).
- Jesus is the atoning sacrifice ". . . for the sins of the whole world" (1Jn 2:2).
- The Holy Spirit ". . . convict[s] the world of guilt" (Jn 16:7-11).
- The Holy Spirit gives Christians power to witness ". . . to the ends of the earth" (Ac 1:8).
- Jesus commands his followers to ". . . go and make disciples of all nations" (Mt 28:18-20).
- Jesus promised that many are ready to receive Him "The harvest is plentiful..." (Mt 9:37).

4. Evangelism

For 'Z' to be realized, the church must send evangelists where there are few or no believers. "Z" requires that people go to those who have not heard the Gospel and deliver the message of salvation. As Paul writes, ". . . how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them?" (Ro 10:14-15).

Christians must continue to discover where the Gospel has not been preached, and who has not yet heard, in every village, city, region, and country. As believers spread the Gospel and plant churches in and among those places and people, "Those who were not told about Him will see and those who have not heard will understand" (Ro 15:21).

5. Church Planting

For "Z" to happen, the church has to be everywhere, on display to everyone. Through the church, both the invisible (the spiritual realm) and the visible world will know the manifold wisdom of God (Eph 3:8-11). As the body of Christ, the church is the literal presence of Jesus Christ on earth. As Jesus Christ takes first place in the life of the church, the world will know that He is "head over everything" (Eph 1:22-23).

By "the blood of the cross," people are reconciled to God. In His Church, Jesus Christ brings people together who would otherwise be separated by a "dividing wall of hostility." Among people who formerly lived in hate, "His purpose was to create in Himself one new man out of the two, thus making peace . . ." (Eph 2:13-16).

For "Z" to happen, the church has to be everywhere, on display to everyone.

In the same way that the love and faithfulness of a husband and wife can be witnessed by others in the community in which they live, the relationship between Jesus and His church is on display (Eph 5:22-23).

In the church, as in a body, members are joined to serve "as each part does his work." The work of the body is always for the purpose of making Jesus known. When this happens, the church "grows and builds itself up" (Eph 4:11-13). The full-grown body is one that has members from every nation (Rev 5:9-10).

Discuss: Without Church planting, can we accomplish God's "Z"?

IV. "Z" THINKING RESULTS IN "Z" ACTION

1. "Z" Giving

"Z" thinking requires "Z" giving. Paul quotes Jesus' words when he exhorts the Ephesian elders at Miletus, "It is more blessed to give than to receive" (Ac 20:35). Giving is an important ministry of the church. As Paul, speaking with apostolic authority, commanded the church in Corinth, ". . . see that you also excel in this grace of giving" (2Co 8:7).

The giving church not only heaps credit for itself in a heavenly account, but God provides the church's present needs "according to His glorious riches." By blessing the act of giving in heaven and on earth, God releases the "Z" thinking church to provide the finances for the task (Php 4:15-19).

2. "Z" Strategy

The great revival leader, John Wesley said, "In every act reflect on the end." Applying "Z" thinking ministry has a tremendous impact. Unfortunately, many servants of God go about their ministry without ever considering the effect of their efforts toward God's "Z." When this happens, it is easy to get into a 'rut' and miss God's blessing. However, the ultimate question "What does God want for the place where we serve Him?" can have an inspiring effect on God's servants. When it is answered, it inspires faith and leads to increased ministry for God.

An Example of "Z" Thinking in Romania.

Nelu Sofrac, a church planter in Romania, saw that God wanted more for his county, called Alba Iulia, than the four churches he had planted. He could have been occupied and secure in accomplishing the remarkable feat of planting, leading, and pastoring these four churches but "Z" thinking spurred him on.

He realized that it was impossible for him to reach his county alone, but he knew God wanted to fill Alba Iulia County with churches that preach the Gospel and teach the Scriptures. To accomplish this effectively, 500 churches needed to be planted in Alba Iulia. Nelu began training fifteen young people from his home church and the new churches he planted. His wife Dorina began a prayer group with three women. He shared his vision with other pastors who were reluctant to accept his message at first. With persistence, and believing that because God wants "Z" for Alba Iulia, He would be with Nelu to work for this end, Dorina now leads fifteen small groups of women who are praying for new churches, and Nelu leads a multi-church interdenominational outreach called EVANGALBA. This outreach is growing and planting new churches in the county of Alba Iulia by mobilizing existing churches to get involved. Their main activities are prayer, training and evangelizing, and church planting.

The congregations of Alba Iulia are praying, uniting in vision, growing in love, sending evangelists and planting churches in their county. The issue of giving is beginning to take its place and though they see themselves as very poor, some are committed to giving as well.

Nelu's "Z" thinking has given him a nationwide platform. He trains church planters and infuses Christian leaders in other counties of Romania with vision for saturation church planting. He also hopes to be sent out as a cross-cultural missionary outside of Romania.

Discuss: Why is it essential to consider God's "Z" when you serve him?

CONCLUSION

Saturation church planting is the focus of "Z" thinking because only through the church can the other tasks of praying, lovingly uniting, vision, evangelizing, and giving happen all over the world. Because the church must reach everyone, saturation church planting must drive "Z" thinking. God wants "Z," and when the church works in accordance with God's will, the work of saturation church planting will accelerate. The saturation or filling of nations with churches works toward the goal of all people hearing the Gospel.

QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION, REVIEW AND APPLICATION

- What do you think about this statement "The Local Church is the only hope for _____."?
- What is the difference between a "Z" thinking church planter and other church planters?
- Do you pray for whole nations? Regions? Cities? Villages and neighborhoods?
- Do you pray for more workers for God's harvest? If Jesus commanded us to pray for this, will He be faithful to answer if we are faithful to pray? Why are there too few workers?
- Are you willing to work with and love brothers of different denominations and opinions in non-essentials toward "Z"? Will Jesus' prayer for unity be answered or did He pray in vain? Will you be a part of the answer to His prayer?
- Do people on the outside see your church as just another denomination or religion, or as people who love?
- Is your vision to plant one church or to be part of a movement that will fill the world with Gospel-preaching churches?
- Do you excel at financial giving? Does your church excel at giving? Do you teach on giving? If not, since giving is taught in Scripture, why do you not you teach it?
- Is the goal of your evangelism only to make your church bigger, or is it also to plant new churches?

ACTION PLAN

- Think about your neighborhood, village, city, region, or country. Consider your answer to the question, "What does God want for _____?" List three things that you will do to help see "Z" happen in your area.
- Write down the person (persons) you will share the content of this lesson with this week.

SCP VISION

2

LESSON

The Great Commission and Church Planting

SATURATION DISCIPLE MAKING

Lesson Purpose

The purpose of this lesson is to communicate the vision for the mobilization of saturation church planting movements, in obedience to the Great Commission.

Main Points and Desired Outcomes

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

- Know why Matthew 28:18-20 is known as the Great Commission.
- Understand how the church will go and make disciples of all nations as it multiplies.
- Understand how church planting fulfills the Great Commission.
- Develop a vision for a saturation church planting movement in his or her nation.

Suggestions for Mentoring Time

1. Read Habakkuk 2:2-3,14 and use it as a basis for your opening prayer time.
Personal Growth Question: Describe your relationships with people in your church.
Suggestions for discussion time:
Answer questions from previous lessons or homework.
Discuss the questions in the text and at the end of the chapter.
Homework: Complete the Action Plan, Read the assigned Chapter(s) for the next meeting time.
Pray for ministry needs.

INTRODUCTION

In Matthew 28:18-20, we learn that there is an ambitious task facing us. The Great Commission is a command that is to be obeyed by every generation of Christians. With this command, Jesus promises His presence until the task is completed. This command is called the *Great Commission* because of the magnitude of the task Jesus commissions His followers to fulfill.

I. UNDERSTANDING THE GREAT COMMISSION

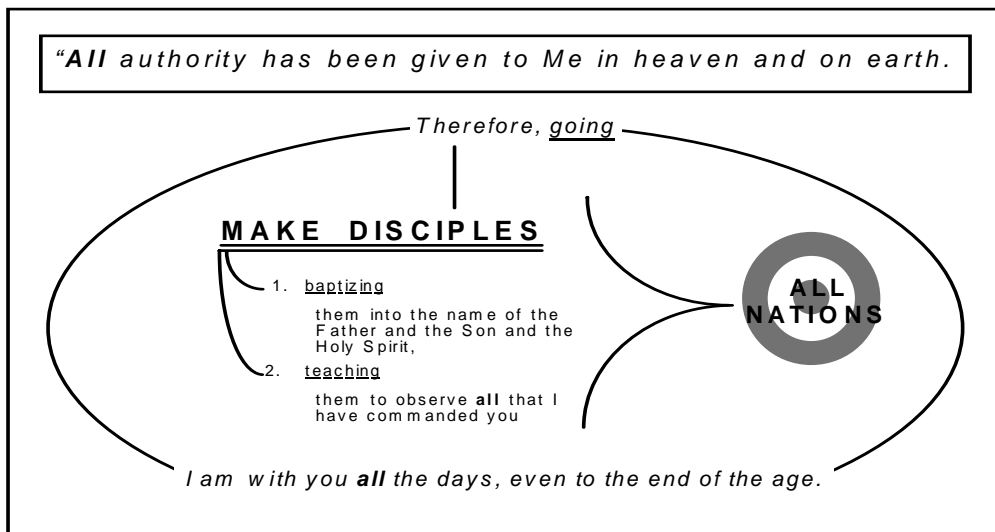
The Great Commission clearly shows Jesus' purpose for His Church until His return. The words are very important and deserve careful reflection. Below is a literal translation of Matthew 28:18-20 from the Greek:

In the Great Commission, Jesus makes clear His purpose for His Church until His return.

*"All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Therefore, going, make disciples of **all** nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe **all** that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you **all** the days, even to the end of the age" (a literal translation of Matthew 28:18-20).*

Central and most important in the Great Commission is "make disciples." As the only imperative verb in the Great Commission, it carries to the greatest extent Jesus' desire for his followers. Making disciples then is the heart of the Great Commission. Two other verbs, both participles, "baptizing" and "teaching," with their complete phrases, expand and explain the main action "make disciples." The act of making disciples through baptizing and teaching has an object expressed in the phrase "all the nations." The command assumes that the one making disciples is "going." Furthermore, the promise that Jesus is with those who are doing these things "and I am with you all the days, even to the end of the age" surrounds the entire command.

Figure 2.1 The Great Commission



Discuss: What are the three commands God gives us in the Great commission?.

1. The Assignment: Make Disciples

The main emphasis of the Great Commission is on the central command to "make disciples." The main task of the Church then, is to make disciples, not just converts. Two subordinate participles reveal important aspects of the disciple making process.

(1) *Baptizing - 'turning to Christ'*

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

The Great Commission indicates that baptism is 'into' the Trinity. From this we learn something of the nature of the disciple's new identity. One of the amazing qualities of the Trinity is the community the Father, Son and Spirit share. In a similar way, a believer is baptized into the church community; the community which Jesus desires to have the same kind of unity (Jn 17) as the Trinity.

(2) *Teaching - 'becoming like Christ'*

Upon conversion, new disciples must be trained concerning whom they have determined to follow. Conversion involves a relationship with a personal God. We are commanded to train converts to be "followers," or "learners" of Jesus, by teaching them to obey His commandments.

It is the task of the church to teach obedience to Christ. Note carefully that the verse does not say the goal is to teach commandments, rather, the goal is to **teach obedience** to all that Jesus commanded. This means churches must teach obedience to the whole will of Christ, leaving nothing out. Partial obedience, which can so easily become the norm, is not sufficient. Rather, we must constantly search the Scriptures, asking ourselves, "Have we obeyed everything that is written here?" And "How can we obey each command more faithfully?" The teaching of full obedience is an ongoing process. Note that it is not a temporary act that *precedes* baptism, but in the text, it *follows* baptism and *continues* throughout the life of the believer.

Discuss: How is a disciple different from a convert? Which are we commanded to make?

2. The Scope: ALL

The Great Commission was not a temporary plan only for those who originally heard it. The reoccurrence of the word "All" indicates its far-reaching application.

(1) *The basis for the command is Christ's authority.*

Jesus declared His supreme rank in the universe before commissioning His disciples. When someone in authority declares his rank when giving an order, it emphasizes the importance of the command. Therefore, all those who acknowledge Jesus Christ's authority must obey the Great Commission.

Jesus Christ is the head of the Church (Eph 1:22-23). Those people who acknowledge His headship comprise His body, the Church. The task of discipling the nations is not only the task of the evangelist; it is the task of all who submit to the sovereign authority of Jesus. The Great Commission gives believers a great sense of purpose.

(2) *The posture of the command is "going."*

The original Greek for the 'going' could easily be translated 'as you are going' or 'having gone.' It assumes that those who obey the Great Commission are "going." In contrast to "coming" to the Jerusalem temple to see God's glory, we go with God's glory within us (2Co 3:18). Jesus did not make disciples in the sterile isolation of a classroom, but in the context of going about life. The ministry of the church ought also to be active—going into the world instead of the world coming to it.

Jesus made it clear that He intended the good news to reach all nations (Mt 24:14). In parallel Great Commission passages (Lk 24:47 and Acts 1:8) we read that the spreading of the Church would begin at Jerusalem. However, since the apostles whom Jesus commissioned remained in Jerusalem, it seems the early church had very little missionary vision until Acts 8. The early church, it appears, only understood the words, "beginning at Jerusalem" and not the words "to all the nations."

- All Authority
- All Nations
- All Things
- All The Days

Going due to persecution

Jesus will use His sovereign authority to cause the church to go to the nations if necessary. After a time of persecution and the martyrdom of Stephen, the Church began to take the Gospel further out. Acts 8:1 records, "On that day a great persecution broke out against the church at Jerusalem, and all except the apostles were scattered throughout Judea and Samaria." Acts 11:19-20 says, "Now those who had been scattered by the persecution in connection with Stephen traveled as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus, and Antioch, telling the message. . ." Jesus allowed persecution to cause Christians to do, in response to a crisis, what they should have done on His command.

Going due to obedience

In Acts 13:1-3, the church in Syrian Antioch was obedient to the Great Commission. As instructed by the Holy Spirit, they sent Paul and Barnabas to Cyprus, where "they proclaimed the word of God in the Jewish synagogues" (Ac 13:4-5). From Cyprus, Paul and his companions traveled extensively before returning to Antioch (Ac 13:6ff).

God has given the Church the responsibility of proclaiming the Good News. As Paul writes to the Church in Corinth, "All this is from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: that God was reconciling the world to Himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them. And He has committed to us the message of reconciliation" (2Co 5:18-19). Like the church in Syrian Antioch, the Church should reach out to the nations in obedience, but if the Church is not obedient, Jesus has used crises to accomplish His work.

(3) *The target of the command is "all the nations."*

The phrase "all the nations" stands in direct contrast to the last record of Jesus sending out His disciples, at which time the target was the lost sheep of Israel (Mt 10:5,6). Here we are called to take the Gospel to all the nations since Jesus purchased with His blood men "from every tribe and language and people and nation" (Rev 5:9). The apostle John had the privilege of seeing this command fulfilled in his vision of heaven that included people from every nation worshipping the Lord (Rev. 7:9).

An ethnic group is a people group united by their language, culture, and customs. A country may contain several ethnic groups within its borders. In order for a saturation church planting movement to be successful, often several nations (*ethnos*) must be reached within a single country. Every ethnic group must be reached in its own language and according to its own culture and customs if we are to obey the Great Commission by taking the Gospel to 'all the nations.'

(4) *The duration of the command is “to the end of the age.”*

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

Discuss: What is something new you have learned about the Great Commission in this section?

3. The Promise

Making disciples of all nations may seem overwhelming. However, as we go to make disciples, we can go with confidence. We are assured of our ultimate success because Christ now has **all authority** and has promised to be with us in **all the days** to the end of the age. Christ Himself is the guarantee of success, as we abide in Him, depending on His authority and presence (Jn 15:4-17). Jesus gives His Church both her main assignment until He returns and the promise upon which her success is guaranteed!

Jesus gives His Church both her main assignment until He returns and the promise upon which her success is guaranteed!
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In the remainder of the New Testament, we see how the early church lived out its obedience to this command. The Apostle Paul, sitting in jail, wrote with assurance to the Philippian church (Php 1:6) “I am confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will bring it to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.” Because He recognized that God was at work and that God’s Spirit was resident in believers and the believing fellowship, he knew his work was not in vain. That’s good news for us as we consider how to fulfill the Great Commission.

Discuss: In fulfilling the great commission, what fears do you have? How does the promise address that fear?

II. THE GREAT COMMISSION AND SATURATION CHURCH PLANTING

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

1. The Great Commission and The Purpose of The Church

Fulfilling the Great Commission is the task of the CHURCH. The Church does not exist to serve itself, or perpetuate its own programs but to take the Gospel to “all the nations.” The outreach of the church is not just one of many ministries; it is its reason for being. The Church should grow through evangelism and multiply itself through church planting so that more and more people will become disciples of Jesus. Programs and ministries of the Church should be evaluated and developed according to how well they serve this purpose. Do they result in the kind of disciple making that Jesus intended when He gave the Great Commission?

Church leaders should empower members to fulfill the Great Commission by training them to share their faith with the lost, by exposing them to missions realities, and by giving them a vision to pray and to give financially toward the harvest. Church leaders often become so preoccupied with carrying out a ministry themselves that they neglect to train others to do it. However, through training, the ministry can be being carried out by many rather than by only one. Remember that Jesus entrusted His message and His ministry to His disciples, and in doing so, multiplied the impact of His work.

Discuss: Whose task is fulfilling the great commission?

2. The Great Commission and Church Planting

If the heart of the Great Commission is making disciples of the nations, then we must continually search for the best methods to accomplish this. After all, many have devoted their lives to the fulfillment of the Great Commission. It is prudent to compare several ministry methods to fulfill the Great Commission. Do they each reflect the principles demanded by the Great Commission? Do they honor all of the intentions of the Great Commission? Which methods best make disciples according to the Great Commission? To help answer this question, we will look at three methods of ministry to see how they compare in the accomplishment of the Great Commission.

The first method for comparison will be the established church. For purposes of this lesson, an “established” church will be defined as one that is more than 10 years old. The second method is called “non-church outreach.” Non-church outreach is a term used to describe any non-church oriented evangelistic effort such as traditional crusades, radio evangelism, etc. The key idea is that it is a type of evangelistic outreach that does not originate in the church and is not oriented (necessarily) towards a local church. The third method we will explore will be a new church plant. By church planting, we mean making contacts, leading people to repentance, instructing converts, baptizing them, and beginning worship services resulting in congregations that fulfill the New Testament functions for followers of Jesus.

Figure 2.2 The Great Commission and Church Planting

GREAT COMMISSION <i>Principles:</i>	EVANGELISM <i>“Baptism” Turning to Christ</i>	TEACHING <i>“Teaching Obedience” Becoming like Christ</i>	Result: <i>“MAKING DISCIPLES”</i>
Established Church	NOT ALWAYS	YES	MAYBE...
Non-church Evangelism	YES	NOT ALWAYS	MAYBE...
Church Planting	YES	YES	YES!!

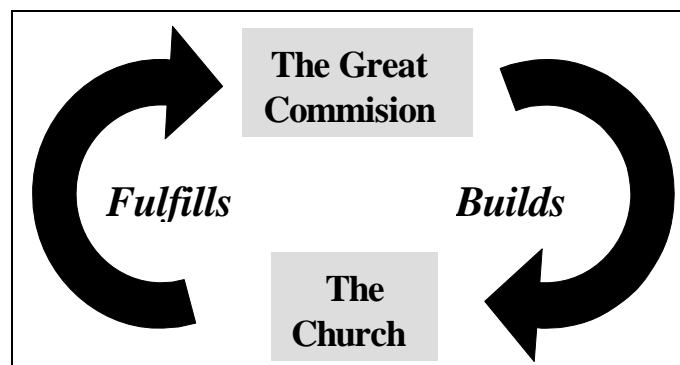
Disciss: What are the problems of evangelizing without planting new churches?

As seen on figure 2.2, comparing these three methods reveals that church planting best fulfills the Great Commission. Established churches often emphasize discipleship without effectively making new converts, while non-church evangelism produces converts but often without sufficient emphasis on teaching (certainly there are exceptions in both of these cases). Church planting, however, combines both of these elements, making new converts and then providing a natural environment for their discipleship.

Obviously, many methods are used to fulfill the Great Commission, any of which could be compared to church planting. The examples listed above were used simply to highlight the fact that church planting completely fulfills both the principles and intentions of the Great Commission as new disciples are made through evangelism and discipleship. Other methods are available, but church planting deserves ever-increasing priority due to the fact that it best embodies the Great Commission given by our Lord.

Church planting deserves ever-increasing priority due to the fact that it best embodies the Great Commission given by our Lord.

Figure 2.3 The Great Commission and the Church



CONCLUSION

The Great Commission is a command to make disciples as we baptize new converts and teach them obedience to Christ. Our task involves going out into the world to make disciples in all ethnic groups, not waiting for them to come to us. Our authority and assurance is in Christ Himself, who promised to be with us until the task is completed.

The Church exists to make disciples in all nations and thereby fulfill the task that Christ gave. All ministry programs and efforts should in some way contribute towards this goal. The Great Commission will be completed as the Church recognizes the authority of Jesus Christ and is obedient to the task He has given.

A new church plant fulfills the command to “make disciples” through evangelism of new converts, followed by ongoing discipleship and training of the new believers. Churches that understand their purpose and reason for existence will start new churches with this same reason for being, and in doing so will provide the means to reach “all the nations” with the Gospel. Church planters and all who are involved in starting new churches are in a very unique and strategic ministry, since it so completely embodies the principles taught in the Great Commission. To put it simply, church planting is the best method for fulfilling the Great Commission.

Our task involves going out into the world to make disciples in all ethnic groups, not waiting for them to come to us.

QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION, REVIEW AND APPLICATION

- Have you accepted the authority of Christ by carrying out the Great Commission? Does your church understand the authority of Christ’s command to “go and make disciples of all nations?” Are they driven by this purpose?
- How can you help mobilize your church to fulfill the Great Commission?
- Will Jesus still use persecution, economic crisis, and/or obedience to fulfill the Great Commission?
- Have you chosen to “go” out of obedience, or are you waiting for a crisis?
- Are you focusing your church planting work on making followers of Jesus, or growing your denomination?
- Do you and those you train have a vision to reach all the nations?
- Do you train people for practical obedience, or is your teaching mostly theoretical?

ACTION PLAN

- Commit to praying daily for Saturation Church Planting to happen in your area and for this vision to saturate you.

SCP VISION
3
LESSON

Church Planting Cycle

GETTING THE BIG PICTURE

☞ Lesson Purpose

Introduce the “Church Planting Cycle,” emphasizing the critical phases.

☞ Main Points and Desired Outcomes

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

- Understand that church planter training and the church planting process is not haphazard process.
- Be able to identify six critical phases in the reproduction of churches.
- Understand that the goal of saturation church planting is not just one new congregation, but multiple churches and a church planting movement in each country.

☞ Appendix

3A Church Planting Models

☞ Suggestions to Trainers

Make a transparency or poster from figure 3.1 and refer to it at the beginning of each training session to remind church planters where you are currently in your instruction and where you are headed in the church planting process.

Discuss with the trainees the various church planting models described in Appendix 3A. Which of these models have proved successful in their context and which have not? Which ones seem to lead more readily to church planting movements?

☞ Suggestions for Mentoring Time

1. Read Habakkuk 2:2-3,14 and use it as a basis for your opening prayer time.
Personal Growth Question: Who are you most praying for to come to know Christ and why?
Suggestions for discussion time:
Answer questions from previous lessons or homework.
Discuss the questions in the text and at the end of the chapter.
Ask the group where their church is now in the cycle.
Discuss the various types of church planting discussed in the appendix. Which is most suitable for the current church.
Homework: Complete the Action Plan, Read the assigned Chapter(s) for the next meeting time.
Pray for ministry needs.

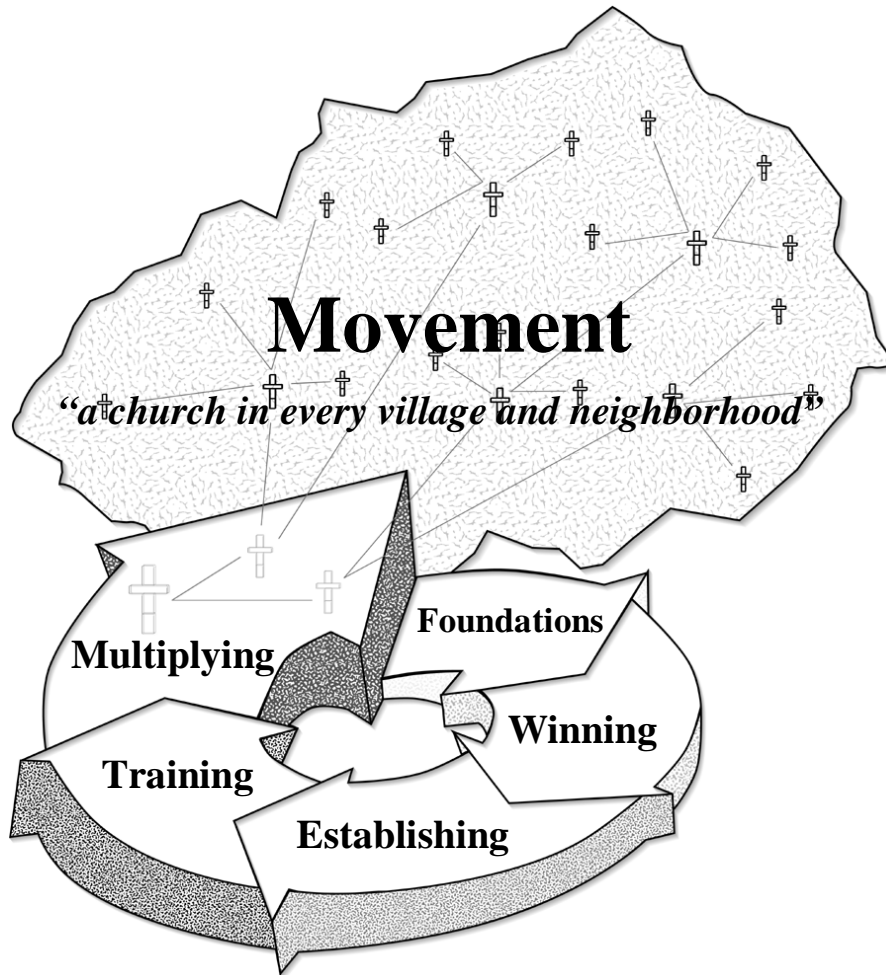
INTRODUCTION

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

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

The “Church Planting Cycle” (Figure 3.1) 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. Appendix 3A contains different models of ways in which this process has been applied to plant churches.

Figure 3.1 Church Planting Cycle



I. PHASE I—FOUNDATIONS

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

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

1 Key Scripture Verse

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

2. Activities and Goal

Activities:

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

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

3. Discuss: Key Issues To Consider In This Phase

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

II. PHASE II—WINNING

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

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

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

1. Key Scripture Verse

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

2. Activities and Goal

Activities:

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

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

3. Discuss: Key Issues To Consider In This Phase

- **What evangelistic methods are most effective for us to reach our goals?**
- **How do we make contacts with key leaders? Who are they? How do we find them?**
- **How do we train new converts to be witnesses to their friends and family?**
- **How do we begin to disciple them and prepare them for ministry? What and how do we teach them?**
- **How do you discover their network of friends and begin evangelizing them?**

III. PHASE III—ESTABLISHING

Though it may take a year or more to get to this phase, many church leaders consider this to be the place where the church is officially and formally 'born.' Establishing the group as a local church has its own set of unique dynamics. By this phase, churches should be growing and multiplying and can begin gathering together for occasional celebration services.

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

1. Key Scripture Verse

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

2. Activities and Goal

Activities:

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

Goal: Gather converts and all participants for church meetings.

3. Discuss: Key Issues To Consider In This Phase

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

IV. PHASE IV—TRAINING

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

Through first trusting in the Lord, the church planters must have enough confidence in others to prepare them to lead ministries of the church. God has gifted every believer, and all have a responsibility to serve. If the church planter does not take the time to delegate responsibility, provide training and release others into ministry, then the church will not grow beyond the capacity of one to pastor and minister to others. He is stretched beyond his limits, and new Christians simply cannot find a home in the new church. People in the church can grow disillusioned too, without significant responsibility for ministry to motivate them to stay involved. They become spectators. Poor models in the culture allow for this in Eastern Europe.

If the church planter does not take the time to delegate responsibility, provide training and release others into ministry, then the church will not grow beyond the capacity of one to pastor and minister to others.

1. Key Scripture Verse

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

2. Activities and Goal

Activities:

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

Goal: Train leaders and church workers to train others.

3. Discuss: Key Issues To Consider In This Phase

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

V. PHASE V—MULTIPLYING

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

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

These leaders need to realize that there is a limit to growth. In nature, all living things sooner or later plateau, and even die, while their fruit or offspring live on. The principles are similar in church ministry. In a sense, the true ‘fruit’ of a church is not a new convert, but a new church. The most effective way for a church to have a wider impact is through reproducing itself, planting daughter churches. The best leaders for the daughter churches come from within the church itself, rather than from a distant place such as a seminary or Bible school. Leaders need to encourage vision for multiplication so that more churches can be established in the city and region.

1. Key Scripture Verse

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

2. Activities and Goal

Activities:

- Coach leaders to form church planting teams.
- Train workers for several levels and various ministries.
- Research new regions where you feel led to start ministry.
- Plan and conduct strategic evangelistic efforts.
- Establish and appoint leaders for the organizational part of the ministry.

Goal: Establish a base of leaders to form church planting teams.

3. Discuss: Key Issues To Consider In This Phase

- **What research needs to be done? Who will do it? Are there ethnic populations nearby that are still unreached with the Gospel? Are there potential leaders among them that can be trained?**
- **What goals need to be set and published? Who is heading up the prayer effort to support this ministry?**
- **Who assigns and oversees all new ministries? Who will train them in continuing education?**
- **Are there other ministries that could be included in this effort? Who should invite them to join forces? What special contribution will they make to the overall mission effort?**
- **Do we need any higher education ministries to train different levels of leadership for this movement? Who will do the training? How will it be financed?**

VI. PHASE VI—MOVEMENT

The goal of church planting is not just one new congregation, but multiplying churches in each and every region. A church planting movement can be described as the planting and growing of churches in a particular region in an unusually rapid fashion under the direction of the Holy Spirit. Church planting movements are characterized by the unity, training and mobilization of the whole body of Christ, and common vision and goals.

Paul, the Apostle and church planter was used by the Holy Spirit to lead a church planting movement in Asia. Having planted a church in Ephesus, he spent two years there training disciples in the hall of Tyrannus. He worked in such a way that *"all the Jews and Greeks in Asia heard the word of the Lord"* (Ac 19:10). The Churches that were planted in Asia (Ephesus, Colossae, Laodicea, Myra, Hierapolis, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyratira, Sardis, Philadelphia, etc.) give evidence to this church planting movement and were the basis for Paul's statement that all of Asia heard the word of the Lord.

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

1. Key Scripture Verse

"...for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea" (Isa 11:9).

2. Activities and Goal

Activities:

- Cover all ethnic pockets of the population.
 - Establish guidelines for the propagation of the movement.
 - Determine cross-cultural mission projects the groups will sponsor.
 - Conduct prayer and praise rallies.
 - Set regional and/or national goals.
 - Establish higher levels of training for key leaders of the movement.
-

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

3. Discuss: Key Issues To Consider In This Phase

- *Is the movement self-propagating, self-supporting, and self-governing? If not, what needs to be done to make sure that it is?*
- *What regions or peoples are still unreached? What mission projects is the Lord leading us to initiate?*
- *What kinds of training are needed for the movement? How will it be supported?*
- *Who are the "apostle type" leaders for the movement? How do we work together with them? How can we encourage and support them? What are their needs?*

QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION, REVIEW AND APPLICATION

- Using the diagram, explain the church planting cycle.
- Where is your church on the church planting cycle, and what do you need to do to move forward?
- What seems like the most difficult phase for you and your church planting situation?
- How does the church planter's role change over the course of the process?
- Why is it important that the church multiply itself?
- How long do you suppose it will take to get to the movement phase in your context?
- Are there ministry efforts in your region (evangelism, discipleship, training) that are not part of the church planting cycle? How could these ministries become part of the church planting cycle?
- Consider the various church planting models described in Appendix 3A, "Church Planting Models." Which of these have been tried in your context? Which ones have been successful and which ones have not?

ACTION PLAN

- Based on your answer to where your church is currently on the church planting cycle, answer all the questions listed for that phase in this chapter, and choose to implement one or two of the activities listed together with your coworkers. Write those activities you will implement below and when you will implement them.

SCP VISION
APPENDIX
3A

Church Planting Models

There are many ways to plant churches; context usually determines what works best. Below are several models. Undoubtedly, your church planting situation could include elements from several of the models described here.

I. THE DAUGHTER CHURCH MODEL

This daughter model is probably the most widely used and is usually the one that comes to mind when the subject of church planting is raised. This model offers the greatest likelihood of a healthy, growing church plant since the mother church provides resources, support and accountability from the beginning. There are three common situations that stimulate the planting of a daughter church.



1. Members Come From Another Geographic Area

If a number of people participating in a particular church travel from outside the area that the church primarily serves, the church may see that as an opportunity to plant a new church by sending out a group from the mother church.

2. There Is A Need For Different Styles Of Worship

It is possible that the style of worship in the mother church works well for many, but there are others in the church and in the community who would respond better to another style of worship. If the new style cannot be introduced into the church without causing disruption, then a daughter church in the same building or nearby is a good option. The daughter church may attract unchurched people who enjoy the new style of worship.

3. There Is A Desire To Reach Other Socio-Economic Groups

Even when a church is growing and reaching new people in a given area, it still might be failing to reach certain groups of people in the region. Difference of class, race or age can be such that some would not feel comfortable worshipping in a particular church. The needs of these groups may call for a new church that will accommodate their cultural norms and minister to them more successfully.

II. CHURCH PLANTING ON THE 'STRAWBERRY RUNNER' PRINCIPLE

In nature, a strawberry plant will send out stems, or shoots, above the ground a short distance from itself. This stem is called a 'runner.' A new daughter plant often develops at the end of the runner. In time, the daughter plant will send out runners itself to start other plants so that there are several individual plants, but they are all interconnected by runners.

Some mother churches plant new congregations which are not intended to become independent churches, but which have a measure of independence and a degree of continuing relationship. Such congregations are close enough geographically to the mother church so that they can meet together for joint services weekly or monthly. Thus, for example, the various congregations might meet separately for morning worship and have a joint evening celebration.



III. CHURCH PLANTING BY ADOPTION

Sometimes an existing group invites a congregation or denomination to take over their work. The adopted group looks to their chosen mother church to supply vision, direction, leadership and sometimes additional resources of money and/or people so that they can begin to function as a church.

IV. MODELS FOR PLANTING CHURCHES AT A DISTANCE

1. Church Planting by Colonization

The colonization model is where one or a number of couples are sent out to a location some distance from the sending church to begin a new work. In such a situation the distance involved is often so great that the mother church does not send out a large group of members because this model requires the pioneers to have new homes and possibly employment in the area of the new church plant.

2. Planting Using an Evangelistic Mission Team

Some denominations and agencies use mission teams to provide leadership and assistance during the church planting process. A small team of two to five might stay for a year in a particular region to evangelize and launch a church. They may receive backup from short-term teams during this year.

3. Planting a Church by Means of a Special Event

Some groups use crusades or the Jesus film as a means of planting churches. This may start with a small group of strong believers in an area where there is no church. Ideally, a part-time pastor or evangelist may lead the group to develop new contacts. Wherever possible, new converts are made so that a group of at least twenty people is formed before the evangelistic crusade takes place. Volunteers from elsewhere may publicize and help lead the event, which can last from one week to a month. The goal might be, for example, to see at least fifty new converts totaling seventy people with a pastor already in place, in order to create 'an instant church.'

V. PLANTING WITH AN INDIVIDUAL

1. Planting with a pioneer

Some individuals are, by nature, pioneers. They simply have to start churches! It seems that even if they were marooned in the desert with no one around them, somehow they would discover water and cultivate an oasis in order to draw people to them. Such people can often see the potential for a church in places where nobody else even imagined one. Pioneers are all different. Some are able to work with a large denomination or a church planting agency. Others are so active that they find it difficult to fit into organizational structures and so work best on their own. Pioneers may start many churches in their lifetime. Once a congregation is established, it is time for pioneers to move on. To stay would be detrimental to what they started because they do not have the giftedness to maintain things.

2. Planting with a founding pastor

Often, those with pastoral gifts, when moved by compassion and vision, also plant churches. They may not have all of the gifts needed to plant a church. But the gifts that they do not have will be evident in the lives of the members of the broader team. These church planters lead the team over a long period of time so that, once the church has been established, they stay on as the long-term pastor.



SOURCES

Robinson, Martin and David Spriggs. *Church Planting, The Training Manual*. Oxford, England. Lynx Communications, 1995.

SCP VISION
LESSON **4**

Principles of Research

INFORMATION FOR STRATEGIC PURPOSES

☞ Lesson Purpose

The purpose of this lesson is to understand the role of gathering and analyzing information for developing effective church planting strategies.

☞ Main Points and Desired Outcomes

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

- Understand the Biblical basis of and practical use of research.
- Be able to initiate a research project in a church planting target zone.
- Know the need for and potential of research to motivate and prepare people for church planting.

☞ Appendices

- 4A Understanding Your Target Area
- 4B Sample Questionnaires

☞ Suggestions to Trainers

If possible, have a sample survey, a map and a local case study. These visual aids will help to encourage research. Also, students will be required to do the research assignment contained in Appendix 4A. Allow time to discuss this assignment with the participants.

☞ Suggestions for Mentoring Time

1. Read Habakkuk 2:2-3,14 and use it as a basis for your opening prayer time.
Personal Growth Question: Describe your greatest joys in ministry.
Suggestions for discussion time:
Discuss the questions in the text and at the end of the chapter.
Homework: Complete the Action Plan, Read the assigned Chapter(s) for the next meeting time.
Pray for ministry needs.

I. WHAT IS RESEARCH?

1. Research Is a Way of Gathering Information

Research is a tool that helps mobilize churches toward fulfilling the Great Commission. It helps agencies and churches know where churches need to be planted, and which methods of evangelism are successful / unsuccessful among various people groups. Research also helps Christian workers understand the big picture of what God wants to do in their nation or people group, helps them to stay focused on the task of fulfilling the Great Commission, ensures that their strategies remain flexible and effective, and helps them to know when the job is complete.

As the people of God prepare to do a task in an unknown place, information is a bridge from the known to the unknown. Information helps them make the difficult first step of faith.

Before entering into the unknown venture of church planting, Paul and Barnabas went to Cyprus, Barnabas' home, where he knew and understood the situation firsthand (Ac 13:4-5). The more familiar people are with any area, the more confidence they will have working there. Research gives knowledge, which can become a bridge from the known to the unknown. When doing research, it is advisable to practice our research techniques in a familiar place before moving on to study unknown places.

The goal of research is not to determine whether to plant churches, but simply how to plant churches most effectively. Jesus plants His church through those who venture to do church planting. Since He has commanded His church to grow and multiply, His church must obey in the most realistic and responsible manner, working from realistic and clear data.

Research of the **harvest field**, the area where church planting will be done, and the **harvest force**—those who will be active in church planting—leads to a conclusion. This conclusion can be called, the “call to action.” It is the sum of what research has discovered, interpreted from God’s perspective. For example, the “prophetic word” for Joshua was “take possession of the land” (Jos 1:1-11).

Discuss: What is research?

2. Research Has a Biblical Basis

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

- In the book of Numbers, God commanded Israel to fight. Numbers 1:1-46 is an account of available men to fight in the army. God promised Israel victory, but He still demanded that they count the available soldiers to carry on the fight. This allowed Israel to organize their people for possessing the land. For church planting, information obtained from research about those who are available to do the task is a necessary tool for organization.
- God commanded spies to go out and collect firsthand information on the land that Israel was to possess and saturate as recorded in Numbers 13:1-14:38. Through the spies’ observations, Israel was able to see the land that they would possess and determine what kind of strategy to use and what obstacles they would need to overcome as they invaded the land. For church planting, good research of the area where church planting will take place can indicate what type of people the churches will contain, how to approach these people, and what obstacles will need to be overcome.
- Nehemiah researched the condition of Jerusalem before ever beginning the task of rebuilding the walls of the city (Ne 1:3-4; 2:1-6). He wisely evaluated the morale of the people who would do the work as well as the physical condition of the wall. With this information, he could see what practical steps had to take place to accomplish the task, and he was able to prepare himself for the hard work ahead of him. For church planting, these same principles apply.
- Jesus went among the people and saw their needs before sending His disciples out to work among them (Mt 9:35-10:1). As He walked among the people and saw their overwhelming needs firsthand, He felt a deep compassion for them based on personal experience. This observation also motivated Him to mobilize people for prayer and ministry. For church planting, firsthand research generates compassion, mobilized prayer, and ministry.
- In John 4:35, the Lord Jesus commanded His disciples to “look at” or “investigate” (which is the Greek meaning) the harvest of men’s souls. Sometimes we forget how God looks at people. How do we look at people? Do we just overlook them, or do we see them as obstacles? We often get caught up in our own work, solving our own problems. It is easy to forget that God wants us to go out to people and bring them to Him. He uses the analogy of the harvest, the time when the reapers go out into the fields, harvest the ripened fruit, and bring it in to the owner of the land (Jn 4:35-38).
- As the Lord added to their numbers, the early church kept track of the numerical growth of the churches and reported it (Ac 2:41, 47; 4:4; 5:14; 9:31). This kind of information gives a clue as to where and how God is working in the lives of people in any region.

II. WHERE SHOULD RESEARCH BE DONE?

Researching a region where church planting will take place can bring into focus all that God is already doing and help clarify how to minister. The first and most important step toward researching an area is to first define the target region also known as “the circle.”

Find or draw a map of the target area, and find out everything possible about who and what is in the circled zone. Begin with a manageable area for a prototype. Beginning with a smaller area builds confidence to repeat the task in greater portions and numbers. Once you have drawn your circle, the following steps will help you actually do the research:

- Learn as much as you can about the harvest force and the harvest field in the circle.
- Map out the area.
- Mark the important data such as where the churches are located and what types of churches they are, as well as other relevant places (i.e.: religious centers, political centers, markets, historical places, etc.).

Discuss: Where should research be done?

III. WHO SHOULD DO RESEARCH?

Any one can do basic research for their ministry. Though 'research' may sound technical and complex, it does not have to be. Those who do research simply collect information and share it with others.

Those who do research collect information and then share it with others.

1. Those Who do Research Collect Information

People who love gathering facts in a thorough manner make good researchers. They should know how to ask questions that get information. Researchers need to be able to organize and categorize their data in a way that reflects the goals of saturation church planting.

2. Researchers Must Present the Information Collected

Good researchers know how to abbreviate research data and explain it to others so that they will get an accurate picture of the harvest field and harvest force. They present this in such a way that it inspires compassion and builds confidence for what God wants to do. The presenter should be positive and optimistic and avoid being stuck on details. They must find and point out facts that will grab the attention of church planters and encourage their church planting efforts.

Remember Numbers 13. Only Joshua and Caleb were qualified to present the research even though all 12 of the spies made observations. They all spoke from the facts, but 10 of the spies saw from a negative perspective and focused on the obstacles, forgetting God's promises. Caleb and Joshua recognized the challenges and problems but never doubted that God was going to accomplish His will and presented a positive picture of what God would do from the facts.

- Those who present research should look for significant facts that are relevant to church planters.
- The research should address the negative realities to inspire compassion and organize efforts to overcome the barriers.

Discuss: Who should do research?

IV. WHEN SHOULD RESEARCH BE DONE?

There are at least three places in the church planting cycle where research should be conducted (see SCP Vision lesson 3, "Church Planting Cycle").

1. The Foundational Phase: In Preparation for a Specific Church Plant

When planting a church, it is necessary to gather concrete data about people, their history, geography, and current situation, and why they think, believe, and act as they do. Learning about the worldview and felt needs of people living in the 'circle' can help to determine evangelism and church planting strategies. Research at this level can also help to determine available church planting resources that may be mobilized to help with church planting efforts. The research must find the open doors that God has allowed in that zone for people to talk about Jesus.

2. The Establishing Phase: Evaluating Church Effectiveness

Once the church has been planted, it is necessary to evaluate the growth and effectiveness of the ministry. Growth can be measured by charting the number of new small groups and keeping records of attendance. Charting ministry activity will help to discover how people respond to the methods used to reach them.

3. **Multiplying and Movement Phases: Getting the Big Picture**

A regional (or even national) research project can help to mobilize churches within the given region to evangelize the lost and fill that region with churches. This kind of research may be necessary to discover the socio-economic levels, ethnic groups, age groups, and religious backgrounds of those who have accepted the Gospel and how they compare to the population at large. The general picture of the status of Christianity within a nation can be presented at regional conferences. This kind of research challenges national and local leaders with the need for church planting and reaching the lost.

Discuss: When should research be done?

V. **WHY SHOULD CHURCH PLANTERS DO RESEARCH?**

1. **Information Stirs Up Compassion For The People Within The Circle**

Jesus made the region of Galilee His circled zone. When Jesus went among the crowds, He saw their physical and spiritual condition, and He had compassion on them because they were “like sheep without a shepherd” (Mt 9:35-37). Both firsthand information and reporting from personal experience helps mobilize believers in existing churches to plant new churches.

Reports that contain **real life stories** of people’s need for the Gospel help bring about unity based on love for lost people. God has given us feelings which, when touched, motivate us to pray, give or get involved in ministry. Demographic or statistical information does not always produce the same results as real live stories. Stories almost always come from firsthand experience of going among the people.

Discuss: What types of information can motivate compassion in others to reach the lost?

2. **Information Generates Prayer**

When Jesus saw the needs, He asked for prayer before anything else. Information causes people to cry out to God and depend on Him to do His work in the circle. Jesus commanded His followers to “Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into His harvest field” (Mt 9:38).

- Is the command, to pray for more workers, for spiritual giants only, or for all followers of Jesus?
- When your church prays, what do they usually pray for? Does your church ask God to raise up workers for the harvest? If not, why?

3. **Information Inspires Vision to Plant Churches**

Good data mobilizes the people God has called to the harvest force in response to prayer. After Jesus commanded His disciples to pray, He sent them out to reap the harvest that was waiting for the workers (Mt 9:36-10:1). In another mission, He sent out seventy-two of His followers with the same command to pray (Lk 10:1-2).

- Do the people in your churches have a sense of the needs of the people in their area?
- Are they inspired to follow that vision?

4. **Information Equips The Harvest Force To Be More Effective**

A realistic account of the resources, people, and conditions we have available provides the basis to begin working with intelligence. Research helps the harvest force discover what it has available and what it lacks for the field (Lk 14:28-33). It helps us count the cost and make realistic plans, believing that God will supply what is lacking.

- What was the task in John 6:5-14?
- What available resources were revealed as a result of research?
- What did research show to be the number of people in the target population?
- What did Jesus do with the resources for the target population?
- If Jesus already knew what He wanted to do, why was research necessary?

Discuss: Why should Church planters do research?

VI. HOW SHOULD RESEARCH BE DONE?

Research should use all means possible to get information. Different types of information can give different perspectives. Below are several examples of kinds of research.

It is best not to attempt to do research alone. Recruit helpers to work with you. Research done with others is usually more thorough and the analysis is better because you are drawing on more than one point of view. Also, each of us has our own prejudices. Often times, one person will uncover a significant piece of data, which had been overlooked or “not seen” by another person.

1. Observation

Firsthand information and observation has the greatest impact and should be the most accurate. After personally going to the circled zone, researchers can talk to people, count church attendance, see conditions as they are, observe ceremonies, customs, and cultures, and especially ask questions.

A key to good firsthand research is knowing what questions to start with and what follow up questions to ask. Questions that start with who, what, when, where, why, and how (especially how many and much) get clearer answers. Asking for explanations of what you observe may give an even clearer picture. This type of research is also an excellent tool for developing relationships.

2. Interviews

Interviews of others who have firsthand knowledge of the target zone are very helpful. After comparing the results of several interviews, it is possible to get a panoramic picture of how people perceive the situation there. It also helps to pick up some details that an outside observer might miss. This also requires skill in relationships.

When interviewing people, know what information you are looking for and be prepared with questions concerning the harvest field and harvest force. Ask these questions naturally in conversation. This makes people feel that you value their opinion. Reading written questions may cause some people to feel that they are being given an exam or are under investigation. They may also feel intimidated being read to from a list of questions.

3. Surveys and Questionnaires

Written surveys and questionnaires can provide an overall picture of what people think and especially how they believe things are (or would like them to be). However, the data obtained should be verified by firsthand observation. For example, ask ten pastors what their average Sunday attendance is. Then go to their church and actually count the people. How big do you think the difference would be among those you know? Would they tend to report more or less? Sample questions are located in Appendix 4B.

4. Official Demographic Data

Official demographic data depends on the accuracy of the methods used to gather the data. It also depends on what the intention was for collecting the data by the agency that collected it. It is very valuable, however, and provides a general idea of how to compare the situation in your circle with how the data shows the greater population to be.

5. Literature Review

If others have done similar research projects, either from the past and especially recent work, it is a tremendous help. When you find important facts that relate to church planting, it is possible to check them and focus research to be more effective because of what others have discovered. Libraries may have books about the region; encyclopedias and even university research projects can give valuable data.

CONCLUSION

Research is an important part of church planting. It reveals different kinds of people living in a target area, what their needs, hopes, fears, and spiritual beliefs are. This gives insight into practical ways and means of sharing the Gospel. Research will also reveal what other people God has working in your target area, churches, mission groups, service groups and how they might cooperate in seeing the target area filled with living churches. In later phases of the church planting cycle, research can help determine the effectiveness of current ministries and give insight into where new churches need to be planted.

QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION, REVIEW AND APPLICATION

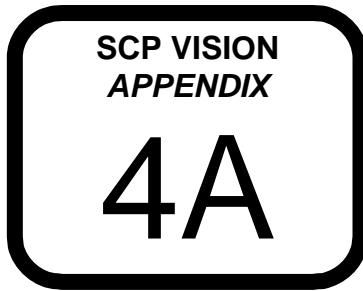
- What do you think your research will discover about your target area?
- What are the advantages of taking time to do research in your target area? How will research make your church planting efforts more effective?
- What are five or six pieces of information you feel you need to know about your target area which will increase your church planting effectiveness?
- Do you know people who would do well at research after you train them?
- Are those in your harvest field ready to hear the Gospel? What are some observations you have made that indicate to you that people are open or resistant to the Gospel?

ACTION PLAN

- Complete a simple research of three essential areas: Research the gifts of everyone in your church and how those gifts could be used for God's "Z". Research other churches in your area. Do they have a plan for accomplishing God's "Z"? Research the major needs, cares and concerns of non believers in your target area.

SOURCES

- Wingerd, Ray A. Jr. *DAWN Research Handbook: Principles of Research for a DAWN Project*. Pasadena, CA: DAWN Ministries, 1992. A copy may be obtained through DAWN Ministries, 7899 Lexington Dr., Suite 200-B, Colorado Springs, CO 80920 USA. Tel. 1-719-548-7465, Fax. 1-719-548-7475
- *Kui Kristlik on Eestimaa?* (How Christian is Estonia?). Research project of the status of Christianity in Estonia. For information, contact Merike Uudam, Kungla 16, Tartu, EE2400, Estonia Tel/Fax: +372-7-428898. Email: merike.u@online.ee
- *Introductory Research On The Slovak Evangelical Churches And Their Progress Towards Evangelizing Slovakia*. Banská Bystrica, Slovakia: New Eastern Europe For Christ, 1997. A copy may be obtained from *The Alliance for Saturation Church Planting*, Budapest, Hungary. E-mail: scpalliance@compuserve.com.



Understanding Your Target Area

RESEARCH ASSIGNMENT

The purpose of this assignment is to give you experience in practical research as a tool for effective church planting. You should attempt to do all components of the assignment. You may find certain activities in the assignment easier than others. Whether easy or difficult, God will have things to teach you about the people and region you are trying to reach, through each activity of this assignment

You do not have to do this assignment by yourself. You can work with others. In fact it is recommended that you work with others if at all possible. Be prepared to share your research findings with your coach, mentor and others. This assignment is due when you receive Manual Two training.

Note to translator: consider making Appendix 4A and 4B into a separate handbook so the participants can put all their research information in one place.

STEP 1: IDENTIFY YOUR TARGET AREA

Obtain or make a map of your city, oblast, or region. Get the most detailed one you can find which has all the population centers, street names, and transportation routes. Draw a circle around your target area. This is your area of ministry, the region in which you believe God wants you to make His name known, and where He wants to plant churches.

STEP 2: GATHER THE HARVEST FORCE DATA

As described in lesson 4--"Principles of Research"--the **harvest force** is all of God's resources already at work in your target area. Determine what resources are available in your circle by studying the following:

1. Existing Local Churches

- (1) Mark every local church in your region on your map. Indicate what denomination they are.
- (2) If possible, list their adult attendance.
- (3) Indicate the year the church was planted or reopened.
- (4) Determine the people group each church is reaching (e.g. gypsies, youth, children, homeless, elderly, internationals, etc.) How successful have they been in their efforts?
- (5) What relationships exist between the churches in the circle? Are they unified or divided?
- (6) Are people meeting together to pray for the lost in their community or for missions outreach?

2. Mission and parachurch groups.

- (1) List all mission and parachurch groups in the target region.
- (2) Briefly describe the ministry each has (literature, prison, Muslim ministry, youth, etc.)
- (3) Are they interested in cooperating with you or others in evangelism and church planting efforts?

3. History of Christianity.

- (1) When did Christianity first come to the area and how was it brought? Was it forced upon the people or did they receive the Gospel voluntarily?
- (2) Describe the history of each denomination's entry into the area.
- (3) What other major religions have had an impact in your target area? What other religions/cults are existing in your area today and how successful are they in winning followers?
- (4) How does this history affect your church planting strategy?

STEP 3: GATHER DATA ABOUT THE HARVEST FIELD

The **harvest field** is the people group among whom you will work and the place where you will plant your church. The following activities will help you to learn about the harvest field in your target area.

1. Demographic information.

- (1) Total population
- (2) Number and percentage of population who are men, women, youth, children
- (3) Number of working adults... include occupation information and income level
- (4) Number of retired and elderly, and disabled/handicapped
- (5) Percentage and location of ethnic minorities. What languages do they speak?

2. Geographic information

Geographic markers can have a significant impact on church planting strategies. They play a role in how and where people live and relate to others. For example, railroad tracks run through the neighborhood of a city. On one side of the tracks, the people are much wealthier than the other side. People do not readily cross the railroad tracks. Therefore, the tracks are an invisible barrier and people on one side of the railroad tracks are not likely to attend church on the other side of these tracks. Another example may be that because a city is surrounded by beautiful mountains, people usually go out of the city on Sundays and so may be less likely to attend a Sunday morning church service.

- What elements divide the region (rivers, railroads, roads, etc.)? How do these divides impact travel patterns, wealth, etc.?
- Is the city surrounded by mountains? Are there lakes, beaches, parks or other places for outdoor recreation?
- If your target area is a city or town, note on your map the location of industrial and residential areas. Are there special shopping districts? Do people live near work or have to commute a long distance? Also note major modes of transportation. Do most people travel by car, bus, metro?
- Where do people go for leisure and recreation? Do they stay in the city and go to parks? Do they spend most weekends at a garden home or dacha?

3. Sociological and cultural information

By learning about people's worldview and their felt needs, we can gain insight into ways in which they can be meaningfully shown the love of Jesus Christ. The best way to learn about people is to ask them questions and observe their behavior. Go out into your target area and talk with at least 15-20 people. Try and learn the following:

- Views about God
Do people believe in God? What do they believe about God? Have they heard of Jesus? What do they know of Him? Do they believe in heaven or hell? Do they believe in angels or demons or Satan? When they are sick, where do they turn for help? Do they believe in luck? Do they believe they can control their future or make their lives better for their children? What do they believe sin is? Do they attend church regularly? If yes, how often? If no, why do they not attend church?
- What are major celebrations or holidays in this area? How do people celebrate them?
- What do they like best about their life? What one thing would they change?
- What do they see as one or two major social problems in their community? (alcoholism, orphanages, lack of adequate medical care, elderly without care, etc.)
- What are three of their favorite proverbs? Through proverbs it is often possible to discover ideals and values they hold as well as their outlook on life.
- Who are recognized leaders in the community? Why are they seen as leaders?
- Who are considered heroes?
- List five things people value in others? (honesty, cleverness, generosity, etc.?)

STEP 4. DATA ANALYSIS OF THE HARVEST FIELD AND HARVEST FORCE

Once you have gathered all of your information, written your summaries and annotated your map, take time to review and reflect on this data. Ask God to give you His compassion for the people in your target area. Ask God to give you creative ideas in how to share His love with these people. As part of this process, analyze your data answering the following questions:

How many churches are needed so every man, woman and child in this target will be able to see, hear and understand the Gospel in a culturally relevant way?

- How many churches are needed to fulfill the Great Commission in your target area? How many churches are needed so that every man, woman and child in this target will be able to see, hear and understand the Gospel message in a culturally relevant way? Begin praying and asking God to lead you in doing what He wants done.
- Determine your share: How many churches does God want you to believe Him for in your ministry?
- Select your starting location: Where will you begin? Where are the people most responsive? Paul usually found the most receptive people in the synagogue. Then he worked out through networks of relationships.
- Select your methods: What were one or two of the people's greatest needs in the community? What methods will you use to meet these needs? What methods have good results in other churches in the area? What resources are available to you for these methods? What are you gifted and able to do?
- Determine your resources: What resources are available and share the same vision? Are there others you can share this vision with and cooperate in the goal? What labor, finances, and gifted individuals are available to you? Do the churches in the area have a desire for evangelism and church planting? Are they open to working together or with you in your efforts? Are they open to pray for evangelism and church planting efforts and for God to make Himself known in the lives of people in their communities?
- Do people have an understanding or belief in God or Jesus Christ? At what point will you have to begin your sharing of the Gospel message? (e.g. Can you start with Jesus Christ or do you have to begin with the existence of a supreme, creator God?)

STEP 5. LESSONS LEARNED FROM THE RESEARCH PROCESS

Evaluate your experience in this research assignment. What did God teach you through the assignment about yourself, your desire to be involved in church planting? What struggles did you have? How did you overcome them? What was easy? If you were to repeat this assignment, what would you do differently?

STEP 6: SHARING RESEARCH RESULTS

At the next training session, be prepared to give a report of your research results. Your report should be approximately 10-15 minutes in length and contain the following information:

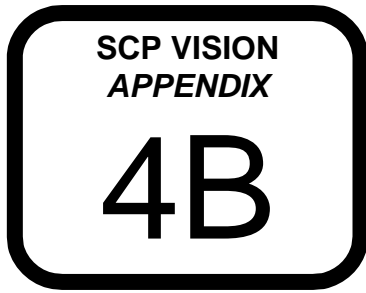
1. Part One—Basic Data Gathered (5-7 minutes)

- Describe your target area.
- How did you gather your information (surveys, informal interviews, observation/mapping, library, etc.)?
- What problems/difficulties did you face? Were they overcome? What would you change next time?

2. Part Two—Analysis of Research Data (5-8 minutes)

The remainder of the presentation should be focused on results of your research. The presentation should answer the following key questions:

- 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, specifically, did you learn that will help you form a strategy for church planting in your target area?
- What one important fact for church planting did you confirm that you already knew?
- What new discovery 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 should they be overcome?
- What further research do you need to develop a comprehensive evangelism and church planting strategy?



Sample Questionnaires

TARGET AREA OR "CIRCLE" SURVEY

A. WHO?

1. Are there any special groups of people in the church's "circle of influence?"

2. Is there any one class of society that predominates in the "circle?" Yes___ No___

3. If "yes", which one?

B. WHAT?

- What are the outstanding characteristics of the church's "circle?"

- What special events, local holidays or celebrations do the people in the "circle" practice?

What are the most pressing needs of the people within the "circle"?

Economic___ Spiritual___ Moral___ Social___ Educational___ Cultural___ Family___
Religious___

- What types of religious groups are present within the church's "circle"?

- Is the church trying to address the needs of the people? Yes___ No___

If so, what specifically is the church doing to minister to the needs of their "circle?"

- Does the purpose statement of the church indicate a desire to address the needs of their "circle?"
Yes___ No___

- Does the church's ministry plan show a concern for ministering holistically to their "circle?" Yes___
No___

C. HOW?

1. Does the church identify with its "circle?" Yes___ No___

2. If "yes," how?

3. If "no," what can the church do to begin identifying with its "circle?"

4. Are the church's activities designed to reach out to its "circle?" Yes___ No___

5. How does the church relate to other evangelical Protestant churches within its "circle?"

Relates well with all_____

Relates well with some, but not very well with others_____

Does not relate well with any_____

D. RESOURCES

• What kinds of resources are available to the church in its "circle?"

TV/Radio___ Literature___ Publishing houses___ Official permission for "helps" ministries___
Other evangelical Protestant Christian groups to partner with in ministry (other local churches___
foreign mission agencies/organizations___ clubs___ centers___ associations___ educational
institutions___)

• What groups does the church presently partner with in special ministry projects?

_____H

Have efforts been made by the church to talk with other churches within the "circle" about reaching
the unsaved within the "circle" for Christ? Yes___ No___

• Would the church leadership be willing to work with the other churches and organizations to reach
everyone within the "circle" for Christ? Yes___No___

• If "yes," when will they try to gather the "circle resources" to talk about fulfilling the Great Commission
within their "circle?"

_____If

"no," why not?

THE CHURCH

THE CHURCH

1

LESSON

Biblical Foundations For The Church

THE CHURCH IN GOD'S PLAN FOR THE AGES

Lesson Purpose

The purpose of this lesson is to show how the biblical foundations for the Church relate to God's Kingdom and redemptive purposes.

Main Points and Desired Outcomes

When the contents of this lesson have been mastered, each participant should:

- Understand the place of the Church in the light of God's Kingdom and redemption program, and consider foundational concepts regarding the Church.
- Understand that the Church is God's only instrument for spreading the gospel to everyone. The local church is the only hope for the world and your area.
- Consider the role his church planting work has in the bigger picture of God's purposes.

Suggestions for Mentoring Time

1. Read Matthew 28:18-20 and use it as a basis for your opening prayer time.
Personal Growth Question: Describe how non-Christians perceive the church.
Suggestions for discussion time:
Discuss the results of the Research assignment.
Discuss the questions in the text and at the end of the chapter.
Homework: Complete the Action Plan, Read the assigned Chapter(s) for the next meeting time.
Pray for ministry needs.

I. GOD'S PLAN FOR THE AGES

1. God's Eternal Kingdom (Ps 10:16; 103:19)

The Bible describes God as the Eternal King, sovereign over all creation. God's Kingdom can be described as the realm over which He rules, exercising sovereign and kingly authority. The display of His glory in His rule was the supreme good (Ps 29:10; Da 2:20-21; 4:34-35; 5:21).

2. The Cosmic Rebellion

All of God's creation was good, but at some point, sin entered into creation. When and how this happened is not clearly stated in the Bible, but certain passages seem to allude to this fact (Isa 14:3-21, Eze 28:11-17).

The prophet Isaiah, in addressing the king of Babylon, seems to be making an analogy between the pride of the king of Babylon and that of a fallen 'morning star' (Isa 14:3-21). This morning star tried to make himself like the Most High. Many biblical scholars see this as a reference to the fall of Satan, a created angelic being who wanted to be like God.

A related passage is found in Ezekiel 28:11-17 where the King of Tyre is being addressed. The description seems to go beyond him to address a guardian cherub who was on the mount of God and was blameless in all his ways. Because of his pride, he was cast down.

3. The Earthly Rebellion

When God created the earth, authority to rule over it was delegated to Man (male and female) (Ge 1:26). Man, created in God's image to have fellowship with Him, had freedom of choice (Ge 1:28; 2:7). Because true fellowship involves moral choice, the man and woman were tested by being forbidden to eat a certain fruit in the garden. Tempted by Satan to be like God, they chose deliberate disobedience over compliance. By this deliberate act, Man declared his independence from and opposition to the will of God. Results of Man's sin were:

- Fellowship with God was broken.
- The image of God in the man and woman was marred.
- Man experienced physical and spiritual death.
- The woman would experience suffering in childbirth.
- The man would experience painful toil.
- The ground (nature) was cursed (Ro 8:21-22).
- Fellowship between the man and the woman was broken.
- Rule over the earth was usurped by Satan who became 'the god of this world.'

4. God's Redemptive Plan

Since the fall of man, God has been working throughout history to restore fellowship between God and man. He chose a man (Abraham), who gave birth to a nation (Israel) among whom was born a messiah (Jesus) to conquer the work of Satan and restore man's true fellowship with God. God's ultimate redemptive plan includes:

- The redemption of Man, restoring him to the image of Christ (2Co 3:18).
- The restoration of fellowship between God and Man and between men (1Jn 1:3-7).
- The restoration of God's reign over the earth (Rev 11:15) and man's reign with him (Rev 22:5).
- The creation of a new earth (Rev 21:1).

God announced His solution over sin in judging the serpent (Genesis 3:15). God's solution to man's sin is the redemptive work of Jesus Christ (Col 1:20; 2:9). In Jesus, God is reconciling people to Himself, restoring their relationship with Him (Eph 1:9-10). This ministry of reconciliation He has given to His church. The establishment of the church is the most recent step in God's redemptive plan (2Co 5:19).

Discuss: *Based on these scriptures what is God's plan for the ages?*

II. THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE CHURCH

1. The Background For The Church: Israel

The Church is not mentioned in the Old Testament. Paul refers to it as a 'mystery' (something previously unrevealed—see Eph 3:9-10; Ro 16:25-26; Col 1:25-26). Much discussion has centered on the relationship between the Church and Israel. Some emphasize their similarity, viewing them as one people of God in different times. In this sense, Israel is a 'spiritual' people, and the Church is the New Israel. Others view Israel and the Church as distinct phases in God's kingdom and redemptive programs, with both being the people of God. Regardless, it is important to understand the difference between Israel and the Church, as it relates to church planting and evangelistic strategy.

(1) *The Nation of Israel*

In Genesis 12:1-3 God promised Abraham that through him He would build a great nation and all nations of the earth would be blessed. The nation He promised was Israel. One of Israel's kings, David, was promised that his kingdom would be eternal (2Sa 7:8-16). The New Testament declared that Jesus was the 'son of David' through whom these promises would be fulfilled.

One of Israel's purposes was to be the bearer of the Messiah (King). Paul summarizes it like this: "... *the people of Israel. Theirs is the adoption as sons; theirs the divine glory, the covenants, the receiving of the law, the temple worship and the promises. Theirs are the patriarchs, and from them is traced the human ancestry of Christ, who is God over all, forever praised!*" (Ro 9:4-5).



(2) *The Church*

The period of time between the first and second coming of Christ has been called ‘the Church Age,’ or the time when God is at work to accomplish His Kingdom and Redemptive purposes through His Church. The Church is not a plan ‘B’ after Israel’s ‘failure’ to accomplish a plan ‘A,’ or an afterthought in the mind of God. He *planned* for it in eternity, provided for it by the death and resurrection of His Son, Jesus (Eph 1:19-23). Christ *prepared* for its formation and development by instructing His followers as to their mission (Jn 16:5-15; Mt 28:18-20). He *created* it on the Day of Pentecost (Ac 2:1-13) and *empowered* (Ac 1:8) it with His forever indwelling Holy Spirit.

The Church is the instrument of God chosen to bear the good news of the Gospel to the ends of the earth. *‘Through the church the manifold wisdom of God is made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms, according to his eternal purpose which He accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord’* (Eph 3:10-11). The Church is God’s plan to reach the world today, to reveal His progressive victory over Satan, and to enfold those who would be part of the people of God.

(3) *Comparison between The Nation Of Israel And The Church (Figure 1.1)*

Figure 1.1 Israel and the Church

The Nation of Israel	The Church
<p>The orientation of the ‘Nation’ was <i>centripetal</i>. God’s plan placed Israel as a light to the nations, to which the nations would COME to see and hear of His glory. To participate in His glory meant to come to the Nation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Growth by addition (birth, take by force, God-fearers) • Centralized plan ‘come to this House’ • God’s glory temporarily residing in Jerusalem (1Ch 28; 2Ch 6-7) 	<p>The orientation of the Church is <i>centrifugal</i>. God’s plan places the Church as a Light to the nations. The people of the Church are to GO and be salt and light among the nations (Mt 5:13-14; 28:18-20).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Growth by multiplication (conversion, church planting) • Decentralized plan ‘... into all the world’ • Released and empowered by the eternally indwelling Holy Spirit (Ac 1-2); God’s glory residing in the hearts of men (2Co 3)
 <p style="text-align: center;">Growth through attraction (centripetal)</p>	 <p style="text-align: center;">Growth through expansion (centrifugal)</p>

Discuss: Describe the difference between Israel and the Church.

2. The Prediction Of The Church: Matthew 16:18-19

Jesus predicts the establishment of the church in Matthew 16:18-19. The following is a review of Matthew 16:18-19 with applications to church planting.

(1) *The church is built on the rock: “Upon this rock”*

The meaning of “the rock” in Matthew 16:18-19 inspires much discussion. The controversy centers on the interpretation of *petra*¹, the Greek word for ‘rock’ from which the name Peter comes.

Petra = ‘large rock, bedrock’ (Mt 7:24-25; 27:60; Mk 15:46)

*Petros*² (*Peter*) = ‘a detached stone’ that might be easily moved

¹ πέτρα

² Πέτρος

Major interpretations of 'the Rock'

- Jesus the Messiah: *Petra* used of Christ (1Co 10:4; Ro 9:33; 1Pe 2:8)
- The confession of faith by Peter about Christ
- Peter himself

Most evangelical theologians have historically interpreted the rock to be the confession of faith by Peter about Christ. In any case, the metaphor of a rock conveys the importance of a solid foundation, a very important lesson for church planters.

(2) *The Church belongs to Christ: "I will build **My** Church."*

Jesus owns the Church. He created it and it belongs to Him. He gave Himself in death on the cross, that the Church might be born (Eph 5:25; Jn 12:24). He purchased the Church with His own blood (Acts 20:28). He calls His Church out of the world, fits its members together, and sanctifies it in preparation for its final presentation and purpose (Eph 5:26-27). In the future, Jesus will glorify His Church in the presence of the Father and the holy angels (1Th 4:13-18; Rev 4-6).

Paul said he was given authority by Christ to build His Church (2Co 10:8). Though church leaders ought to feel the deepest sense of obligation and participation in their ministry, no pastor or church planter ever owns his ministry. Jesus, not the church planter or pastor, is the head of the church.

(3) *Jesus builds His Church through us: "I will **build** my Church."*

Building the Church is Jesus' major mission on earth today. Jesus uses born again people as His building material (1Pe 2:5). Jesus will fit and build these living stones as God's building (1Co 3:9), a dwelling of God in the Spirit (Eph 2:21-22). Jesus uses gifted leaders to equip His people to build His Church (Eph 4:11-12; 1Co 3:12).

(4) *The Church will be triumphant: "the gates of hell will not prevail against it"*

This important phrase spoken by Jesus is packed with meaning and is the basis for the overcoming faith and hope that church workers should possess. It tells us that Christ is building His Church as a military force to storm the gates of Hell and be victorious over the powers of evil. Even though we struggle now, someday the Church will be completely victorious (Ro 16:20). Until then, we are to put on the armor Christ has provided and depend on His strength for leadership and victory (Eph 6:10-18; 2Co 2:14). The analogy of the soldier is especially appropriate for the church planter (2Ti 2:3-4; Php 2:25). Paul said he fought the good fight (2Ti 4:7) and so should we.

Discuss: Why is it important to know that Jesus will build his church?

3. The Birth Of The Church: Acts 2

The prediction of Jesus came true in Acts 2 when the empowering Holy Spirit was poured out on people from many nations giving birth to the church. The miracle of tongues on the day of Pentecost symbolized that this new event in God's redemptive plan would reach the entire world, uniting men and women of every tongue into the Church. The church then is international from its birth.

III. THE ROLE AND NATURE OF THE CHURCH TODAY

1. The Church—A Called-Out People With Both A Local And A Universal Manifestation

Ever since the fall of mankind, the ultimate purpose of God has been to call out a people unto Himself in what today we call the church (Eph 1:10). The Greek word, *'ekklesia'*³ is commonly used to describe the church in the New Testament. *'Ekklesia'* means *a society or assembly of free citizens called out of their homes or businesses to assemble together and give due consideration to matters of public interest* (Ac 19:39). The idea of a 'called out people' has its roots in the Old Testament (Ru 4:11; Jer 33:7), with Israel as the called people of God. In the New Testament *ekklesia* is never used to denote a building or a denomination (two of the most common ways we use the word "church" today) but always refers to a group of people.

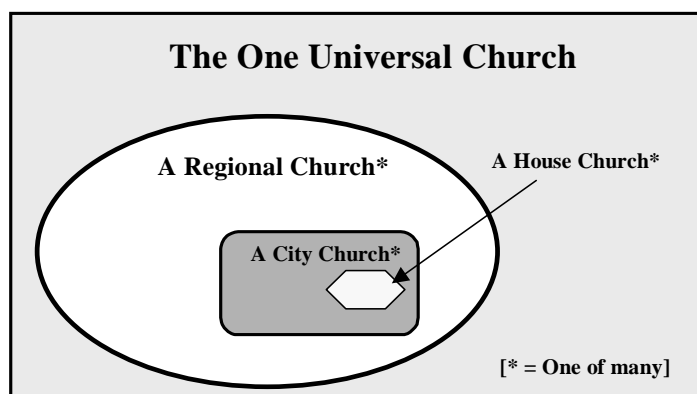
³ εκκλησια

Of the 109 times *ekklesia* refers to the church in the New Testament, it most often denotes a group of believers in a particular place or 'a local church' (at least 63 times). Believers are responsible to gather in local fellowships (Heb 10:25). In fact, it was the normal pattern of the Apostles to win people to Christ and gather them into new churches.

Note that the local church may be defined in different ways:

- A house church: 1 Corinthians 16:19 (Church that meets in house of Aquila and Priscilla) Colossians 4:15 (Church that meets in house of Nympha)
- A city church: 1 Thessalonians 1:1 (Church of the Thessalonians) 1 Corinthians 1:2 (Church of God in Corinth) Acts 13:1 (Church at Antioch)
- Regional churches: Galatians 1:2 (Churches in Galatia) Acts 9:31 (Churches throughout Judea, Galilee and Samaria) 1 Corinthians 16:19 (Churches in the province of Asia)

Figure 1.2 One Church and Many Churches



Ultimately, there can be only one *ekklesia* (1Co 12:13, Eph 4:4-5). Thus, (at least 27 times) we see *ekklesia* denoting the universal Church which is that body of believers in Jesus Christ, living and dead, from every tribe, language, people and nation. Being part of the universal Church and not being involved in a local church is a concept that is not found in the New Testament. On the contrary, the universal Church is made visible through local churches everywhere.

As 'called out people,' the church is not simply a group of people united by religious faith. It is a creation of God through the Holy Spirit.

Discuss: Is it reasonable for a believer to say he is a member of the universal church but not attend any local church meeting? Why?

2. The Church Is The Body Of Christ

The church is described as His body several places in Scripture (Ro 12:4-5; 1Co 12:12-31; Eph 1:22-23; 4:4-16). When Christ works in the world today, he does so through His Body, the church, us! (Eph 1:22-23; 3:10-11). Note the following implications of this metaphor:

(1) The Body Is Interdependent

As the body of Christ, the church has many parts that work together in a very complex and interdependent way. The parts do different things but have the same ultimate purpose, much like the various parts of a human body (Ro 12:3-8, 1Co 12:12-31). The church needs all the parts to function according to their design in order to properly do what God desires.

(2) The Body Has One Head

Christ is the head of the church (Col 1:18). Like a body the church cannot have more than one head. No pastor or church planter is truly the head of the Church he serves. All the parts of the body, including the leaders, are subject to the headship of Christ. The body does not function well otherwise.

Discuss: Christ is the head of the Church. What are the practical implications of this? (Eph 1:23; Col 1:18). How do we let Him be both Lord and Master on a practical level?

3. The Church Is God's Number One Instrument For Spreading The Gospel

The Church is the instrument of God chosen to bear the good news of the Gospel to the ends of the earth. Before the cross the *nations* were separated from the hope of salvation (Eph 2: 11-13). But after the death and resurrection of Christ, the church has the responsibility to take the Gospel to the *nations* (Mt 28:19-20). It is clear from the New Testament that the early Church took this responsibility very seriously, for it is impossible to separate the spread of the Gospel and the expansion of the Church in the book of Acts. It was the mission of the Church to take the Gospel from Jerusalem to Judea and Samaria and to the ends of the earth. Today it is unfortunate that we talk about churches and missions as if they are separate. In the New Testament, the mission was the church and the church was the mission.

Evangelistic strategies that are not connected to the church are misguided from the beginning. Follow-up and long-term growth, for example, are common problems when people are evangelized through non-church initiated efforts. God has established the Church through which the nations are to be discipled. The Scripture declares: *'Through the church the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms according to His eternal purpose which He accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord'* (Eph 3:10-11). The Church is God's plan to reach the world today, to manifest His progressive victory over Satan, and to enfold those who would be part of the 'people of God.'

Discuss: Why are evangelistic strategies that are not connected to church planting misguided?

CONCLUSION

In Jesus Christ, God is reconciling people to Himself, restoring their relationship with Him (Eph 1:9-10). God has given this ministry of reconciliation to His church (2Co 5:18-20). So that the Church is God's plan to reach the world today, to manifest His progressive victory over Satan, and to enfold those who would be part of the people of God.

The establishment of the church with this purpose is the most recent step in God's redemptive plan. Involvement in establishing and strengthening the church is no small task. It is an essential activity for every believer and yields eternal results. Never underestimate your role concerning planting or leading the church!

QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION, REVIEW AND APPLICATION

- What are the implications of the Church as centrifugal?
- How does an Old Testament (centripetal) understanding of the Church affect its vitality? When is such an understanding of the local church appropriate? Why?
- What is the foundation of your church ministry? What happens when Christ is not the foundation of a new church work?
- The Church exists for the world (Eph 3:1-10). What are the implications?
- What does it mean for the church to be indigenous?
- Study some of the metaphors used to describe the church (Eph 2:15, 19, 21; 1Pe 2:9-10). Which of these is most meaningful to you personally?

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THE CHURCH

2

LESSON

The Purpose of the Church

WHY DOES THE CHURCH EXIST?

Lesson Purpose

The purpose of this lesson is to describe how the Church is intended to be a force for the propagation of the Gospel in the world.

Main Points and Desired Outcomes

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

- Be aware of the three biblical purposes for the Church—ultimate, outward, and inward.
- Recognize that the Church's purpose as an agent for reaching the world requires church planting and ministry.

Appendix

2A Great Commission Worksheet

Suggestions to Trainers

Be sure that participants can clearly articulate the inward and outward purposes of the church. It would be good if you can use big visuals to impress upon trainees the various paradigms of church purpose. You could make drawings on poster paper. Or, in your context, perhaps a chalkboard or an overhead projector might be more appropriate.

Suggestions for Mentoring Time

1. Read Acts 1:8 and use it as a basis for your opening prayer time.
Personal Growth Question: What is the biggest struggle in your life at the moment.
Suggestions for discussion time:
Discuss the questions in the text and at the end of the chapter
Work through Worksheet 2A together as a group.
Homework: Read the assigned Chapter(s) for the next meeting time.
Pray for ministry needs.

INTRODUCTION

'Purpose' might be described as *'the end to which our efforts take us.'* Any organization has a purpose. A business exists to make money through the sale of goods or services rendered. The government of a country exists to protect its citizens and rule its people.

The Lord Jesus serves as a great model in the area of purpose. He knew why He came to earth and where He was going. He had a great purpose. 'The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because He has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor' (Lk 4:18-19).

For churches to be truly effective in today's world, they must have a clear sense of purpose. Without it, church leaders and workers can waste energy and resources doing things they have not been called to do. Every church planter should understand the biblical purpose for the Church and think through this purpose in the light of his own church planting work and mission.

A clear understanding of biblical purpose can make a church:

- purposeful and expectant.
- faithful and flexible, innovative yet true to Scripture.
- gracious and relational, emphasizing God's love and forgiveness.
- joyful and celebrative (people are looking for this).
- vital and dynamic, equipping people for real life ministry.
- growing and reproducing, planting new churches.

Discuss: *Why is it essential for the church to have a clear sense of purpose to be effective?*

I. THE PURPOSE OF THE CHURCH

Jesus has established His Church with a purpose in mind. It is a wonderful purpose, fixed in eternity past, destined for a glorious future. We could summarize the purpose of the church by saying *the Church exists to glorify God through edifying the believers and evangelizing the lost*. Figure 2.1 shows this three-fold purpose of the Church.

Table 2.1 The Three-fold Purpose of the Church

ULTIMATE PURPOSE	OUTWARD PURPOSE	INWARD PURPOSE
Exalt the Lord	Evangelize the lost	Edify the laborers
The Church exists for the Lord	The Church exists for the World	The Church exists for itself

Discuss: *Looking at the above three fold purpose of the church, do you think your church could be too complicated?*

1. Exalt the Lord

The Bible teaches that there is an ultimate purpose to which all creation moves; it is God's own glory. God's glory represents all that is true of Himself: His nature, attributes, character and actions. God's own glory is His chief aim for eternity and man's chief purpose for existence. He is working out His eternal purposes toward this end. God's own glory is the final purpose of the Church (Ro 15:6,9; Eph 1:5ff; 2Th 1:12; 1Pe 4:11).

God is glorified (revealed, made known) when we worship Him (Jn 4:23), offer prayer and praise to Him (Ps 50:23) and live a godly life (Jn 15:8). 'Whatever you do, do all to the glory of God' (1Co 10:31). This is true for individual Christians and for His Church.

- What does it mean for you to glorify God?
- How does the Church glorify God?
- How is God glorified in our midst?

2. Evangelize the Lost

The Bible clearly teaches that there is an outward purpose for the Church, to be accomplished in this age. It is a purpose that places the Church's focus and efforts outside itself. It is the reason Jesus came to reach a lost and dying world (Lk 19:10). Jesus said, 'As the Father has sent Me, so I now send you' (Jn 20:21). This outward purpose of the Church is outreach to the lost—evangelism and mission.

Perhaps no portion of Scripture better states the outward purpose of the Church than the 'Great Commission' passage of Matthew 28:18-20 (See Appendix 2A, "Great Commission Worksheet").

3. Edify the Laborers

The Bible teaches that the Church also has an inward purpose. It is the edification or building up of its members. The bulk of the New Testament epistles were written to believers to strengthen them in their Christian life and ministry so that they could accomplish the outward purpose of reaching a lost and dying world.

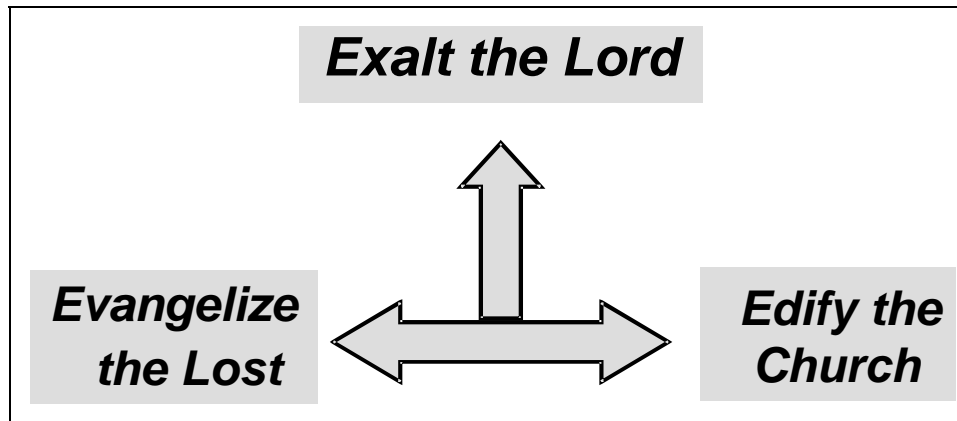
Ephesians 4:11-16 best explains the inward purpose for the Church. The church exists to edify the believers. The training and equipping of God's people as a gathered community (in worship, teaching, fellowship and nurturing functions) leads to the accomplishment of the outward purpose, making disciples.

- Leadership is given (v. 11) to equip the saints for ministry (v. 12), not just to do the work of ministry themselves. What are the implications of this vital truth for your church planting work? How will this affect how you do what you do?
- What observations do you make from this passage about planting a church? Write them now.

The purposes of the church can be simply stated as exaltation, edification and evangelism. The people of God gather for worship and edification, in order to scatter to do the work of evangelism. These are interrelated purposes. None of them should exist apart from the others. The inward purpose (edification) serves the outer purpose (evangelism) and both purposes serve to glorify God (worship). As followers of Jesus gather for the inward purpose of edifying one another (Eph 4:11-16), loving one another (Jn 13:34-35), and practicing the functions of the New Testament church (Ac 2:42-43), they are better equipped for the outward task of outreach and ministry to the lost world.

Discuss: Read Ephesians 4:11-16. Based on this passage, who is supposed to do the work of the church? What are the leader's roles?

Figure 2.2 Three-fold Purpose of the Church



II. PARADIGMS FOR UNDERSTANDING THE PURPOSE OF THE CHURCH

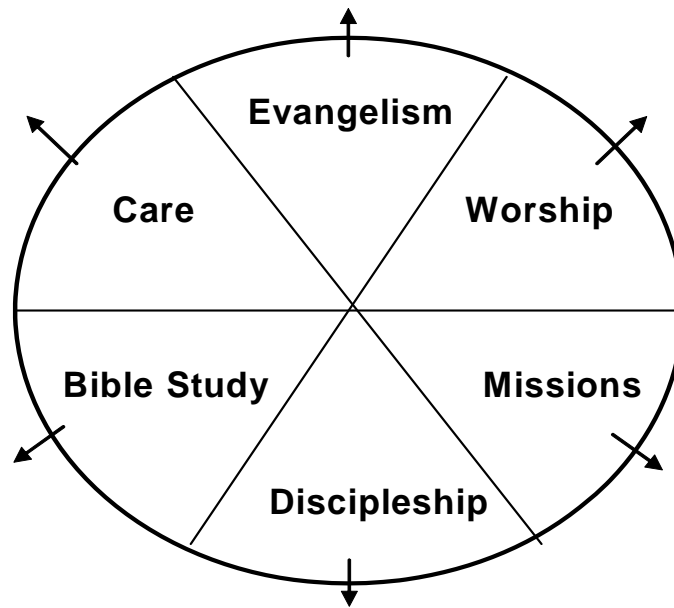
A paradigm is simply a way of looking at something. A paradigm provides rationale and explanation for how a particular system, process or object is and ought to be. The following sets of contrasting paradigms are ways of looking at the church in light of its nature and purpose.

1. The Program-Centered Church Compared To The Great Commission Church

(1) Program-Centered Church

Churches often struggle in practicing their multifaceted purpose. Failing to integrate all that God has called us to do can lead to a program orientation consisting of various components, each component competing for resources and participants (See Figure 2.3). In this program-centered view, the church may resemble a secular training institution or small business in its structure and organization. Over time, the church becomes more concerned about itself and less concerned about the lost, becoming irrelevant to the society in which it exists.

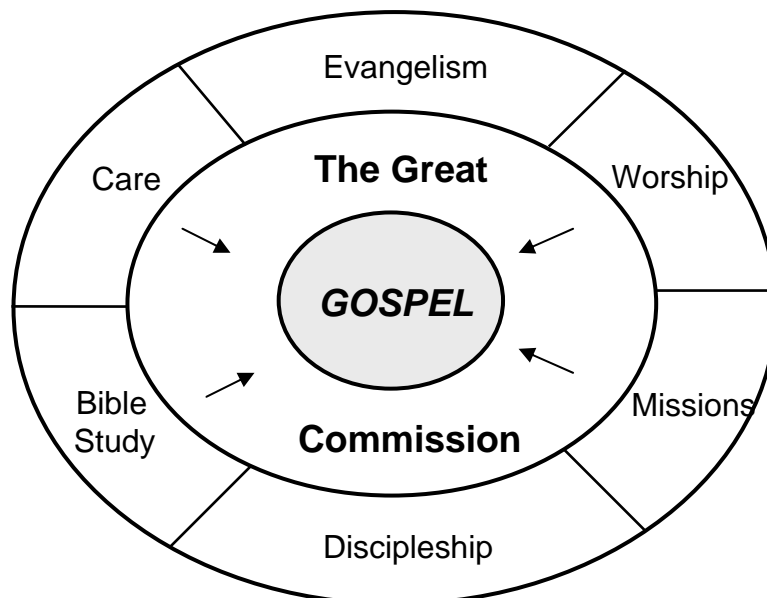
Figure 2.3 The Program-Centered Church



(2) *The Great Commission Church*

The biblical view of the Church, shown in Figure 2.4, places the Great Commission at the heart of the Church's purpose, and from it proceed programs and equipping ministries. In this model the elements and programs of the gathered church community serve to prepare the believer for the outward task or purpose—evangelism and Great Commission work. The needs of the believers are still taken care of but in their proper perspective in light of God's purpose to bring the lost to Himself.

Figure 2.4 The Great Commission Church



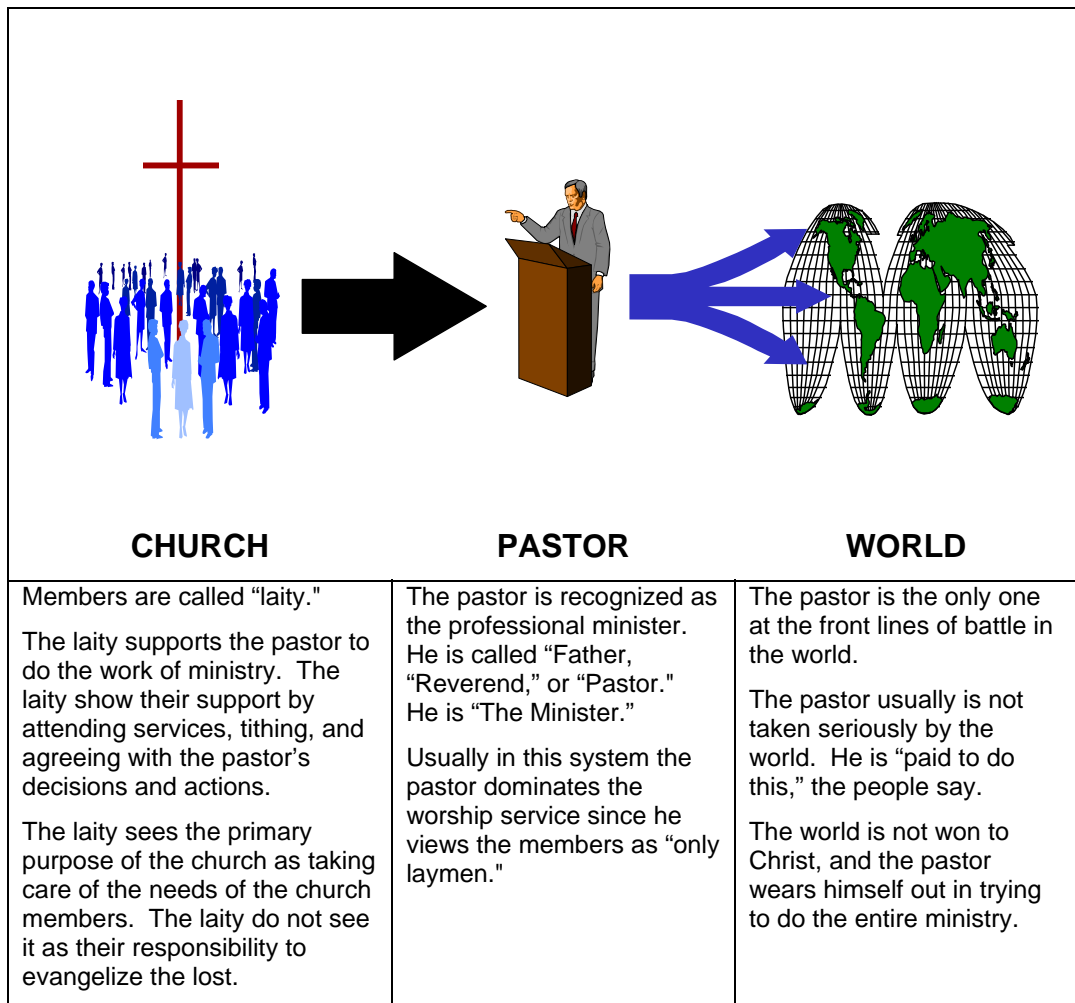
Discuss: *What are the ramifications for these two approaches to church structures? The mobilization of church members for 'church work?' Leadership development? What happens to a church when it recognizes that its 'reason for being' is to spread the Gospel?*

2. The Church as an 'Object of Ministry' Compared to the Church as an 'Agent for Mobilization'

(1) The Church as an Object of Ministry

Some believers think of the church as a gathering place to be with other believers and to be ministered to by the pastor (see figure 2.5). This is perhaps the most common paradigm for viewing the church. This paradigm is partly true. Church is indeed a gathering where we enjoy fellowship as well as receive spiritual nourishment from spiritual leaders. However, this paradigm fails to put the outward purpose of the church in proper perspective and supposes a non-biblical clergy / laity distinction.

Figure 2.5. The Church as an Object of Ministry



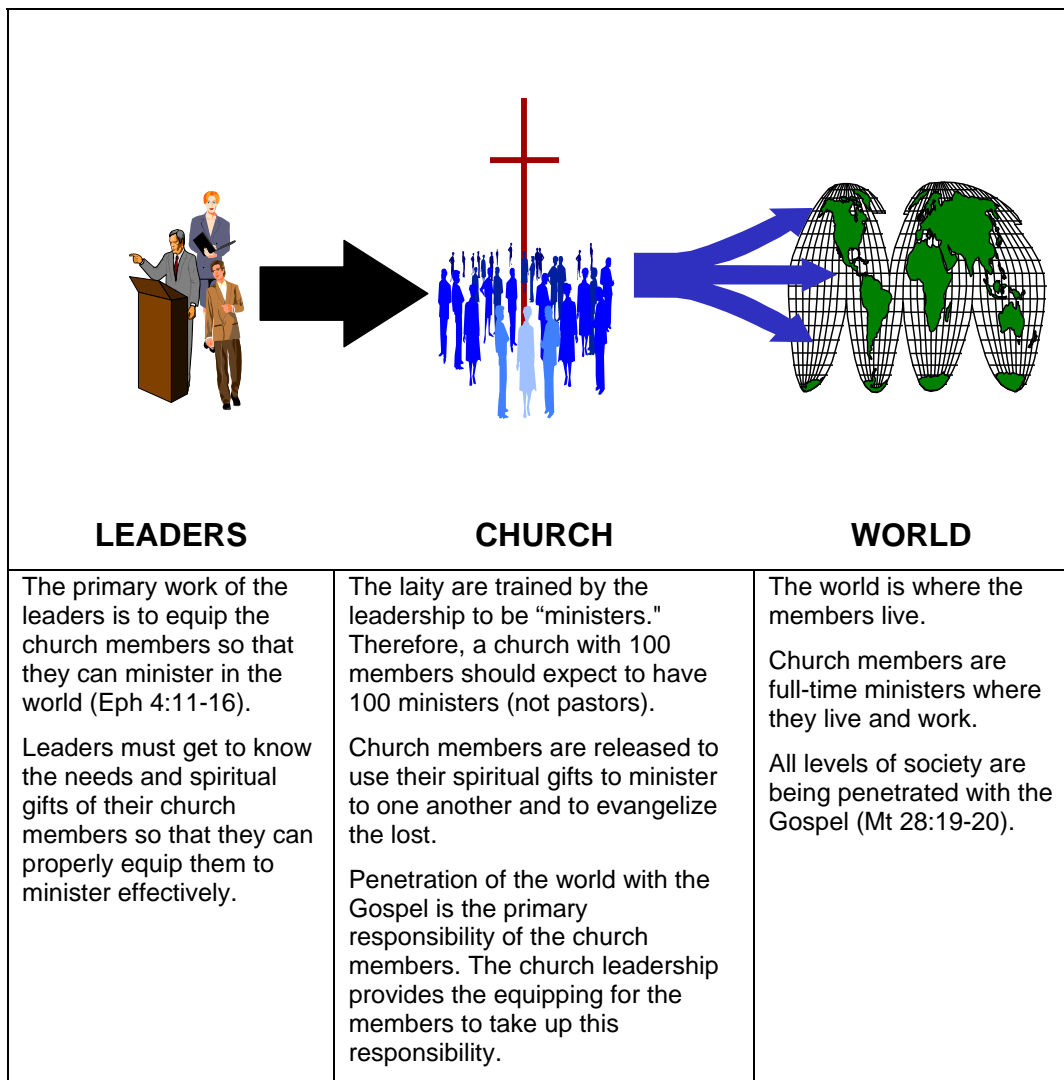
adapted from Brock p. 66,67

Discuss: What are the problems with this kind of church structure. Is it a Biblical method?

(2) *The Church As An Agent For Mobilization*

The church is not an object of ministry, but rather an agent of mobilization for the Gospel into the world. As shown in the figure 2.6, the role of leadership in the church is to equip (to train and to empower) church members for service in the world. This is the edification purpose of the church. Believers gather together to worship the Lord, to grow in their faith, to learn God's Word, to encourage, pray for, and practically help one another. These church members develop the spiritual character and servant skills needed to evangelize the lost (the outward purpose of the church). Fulfilling the Great Commission is not just the pastor's job, or the job of a few individuals in the church, but it is the function of the entire body of Christ (the church).

Figure 2.6. The Church as an Agent for Mobilization



adapted from Brock p66,67

Discuss: Describe the differences in these two church models. What are the leaders roles in each of these modes, and what are the members roles? Read (Eph 4:11-16) .

CONCLUSION

A clear sense of purpose helps the church to be effective. Without understanding its purpose, church leaders and workers can waste energy and resources doing things they have not been called to do. Every church planter should understand the biblical purpose for the Church and think through this purpose in the light of his own church planting work and mission.

QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION, REVIEW AND APPLICATION

- How can you change your preaching, worship and fellowship to better reflect the Biblical models of the church?
- Are the three purposes of the church all present and balanced in your church?
- How can you make the church simpler and easily reproducible?
- Why is it important that the church understand its purpose? What happens when churches do not understand their purpose?
- How would you summarize the purpose of the church?
- Why should the church reach out to the lost? Who is responsible to evangelize?
- How does the Great Commission relate to the purpose of the church? What other passages in the Bible help us understand the purpose of the church?
- Why should the church be a force and not just a field?
- Do the churches in your region have a clear understanding of why they exist as a church?
- What is the role of leadership in a purpose-driven church?

ACTION PLAN

- In order to mobilize people in your church for ministry, list **all** your responsibilities in the church including even simple things like arranging chairs or calling people. This week try to delegate as many of these responsibilities out to other people as possible. Note that some of these may require you to equip someone to handle that responsibility.

- Based on your research you performed on peoples spiritual gifts in chapter 4 of Vision, write down the names of two people you need help them use their gifts in ministry. Also write down what you will do with them to help them use their gifts.

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Great Commission Worksheet

Read and meditate on the following five Great Commission passages. Then, answer the questions given for each passage.

Matthew 28:18-20

1. What comfort is there in the truth that "all authority" has been given to Christ?
2. Since He is the Sovereign Lord, what has He asked us to do?

Mark 16:15-20

1. What warning do you find here for the unbeliever?
2. What will be the evidence that follows believers?
3. How did the Lord reveal Himself after His ascension into heaven?

Luke 24:45-53

1. What things are the disciples to give witness to?
2. What promise was Christ making to them?

John 20:19-23

1. What did Jesus mean when He said, "Peace be with you"?
2. How does this relate to his statement in vv. 22-23?
3. What does it mean to be sent?

Acts 1:1-11

1. What is the natural result when we have the Holy Spirit working through us?
2. How far will the results of the Gospel reach?

QUESTIONS FOR APPLICATION

- What fears do I have that need to be overcome by the realization of the sovereign authority of Christ? How can I best "make disciples?"
- How can the Gospel be proclaimed in "all the nations" in my country?
- Do I minister with the power of God on me? How can I allow His power to grow greater for His glory?
- How concerned am I for the state of the lost? How will this affect how I lead the church I plant? What difference does it make?

GREAT COMMISSION PARALLEL PASSAGES

	PREAMBLE	COMMAND	PROMISE
MATTHEW 28:18-20	All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Me (18).	Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you (19) (20).	And surely, I am with you always, to the very end of the age (20).
MARK 16:15-20	(The testimony of the resurrection) (9).	Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation (15).	Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved; but whoever does not believe will be condemned (16).
LUKE 24:45-53	This is what is written: The Christ will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day (46).	and repentance and forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things (47-48).	I am going to send you what my Father has promised; but stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high (49).
JOHN 20:19-23	"Peace be with you!" After He said this, He showed them His hands and side. The disciples were overjoyed when they saw the Lord (19) (20).	As the Father has sent me, I am sending you (21).	Receive the Holy Spirit (22).
ACTS 1:1-11	After His suffering, He showed Himself to these men and gave many convincing proofs that He was alive (3). "It is not for you to know times or dates the Father has set by his own authority (7).	and you will be My witnesses, in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth (8).	You will be baptized with the Holy Spirit (5)... But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you (8).

THE CHURCH

3

LESSON

Form and Function

A BIBLICAL AND CULTURAL PERSPECTIVE

Lesson Purpose

The lesson's purpose is to explain form and function in the church, from a biblical and cultural perspective.

Main Points and Desired Outcomes

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

- Understand Biblical function—*what must be done*—it was given by God and should not be altered.
- Understand Biblical form—*how we do the function*—it is cultural and should be adjusted as needed.
- Recognize how cultural dynamics and personal experience affect the forms of the local church.
- Be motivated to establish church forms based on biblical function and cultural relevancy.

Suggestions for Mentoring Time

1. Read Acts 19:8-11 and use it as a basis for your opening prayer time.
Personal Growth Question: What do you perceive to be your greatest spiritual gift?
Suggestions for discussion time:
Discuss the questions in the text and at the end of the chapter.
Share any personal experience in dealing with forms vs. functions.
Work through Worksheet 3A together as a group.
Go through the questions at the end of the chapter together.
Homework: Complete the Action Plan, Read the assigned Chapter(s) for the next meeting time.
Pray for ministry needs.

INTRODUCTION

An understanding of form and function is fundamental to church planting. Our experience largely shapes our understanding of, and dedication to, the forms our churches take. We must be challenged to ask why we do what we do to accomplish the mission God has given His Church. This lesson will provide an opportunity to rethink ministry 'forms' and give guidance for establishing more relevant and effective forms.

I. FORM AND FUNCTION ILLUSTRATED

In society, a function is *an activity that needs to be performed*. This activity can range from one as difficult as getting food or raising children, to something as easy as sleeping. These are things that need to be done. A form is *the method chosen to carry out* that function.

An example could be how you get food. In the primitive days, you could hunt or you could grow crops. These are two very different methods, but both fulfill the function of getting food.

The question is: how do you decide which is the best form for you? Some of the factors for the decision come from internal sources, such as abilities and preferences. Do you have a good eye and don't mind being alone for long periods of time? Then you might do better as a hunter. If not, stick with farming. Some of the factors are external, depending on your environment. Do you live on or near good productive land? If so, you might do well to be a farmer. Some of the factors are cultural, depending on the ideas of the society you are in. Are farmers prized because they add to the amount of crops in the village, or are hunters prized for their skill in case of war? Some of the factors may be moral. Is the killing of animals looked upon as immoral? Another factor is tradition. What did your parents and their parents do?

- ◆ **Function** = an activity that needs to be performed
- ◆ **Form** = the method chosen to carry out the function

Forms depend on many factors and can also change with time. Your field may no longer produce, or the game may become sparse. With time, new inventions may change your ability to carry out your profession, or make you choose a new profession that had not been available before, such as a shopkeeper.

Transportation is another example of the principle of form and function in society. Transportation is a function that can be fulfilled through many possible forms such as: bicycle, subway, auto, and horse & cart. The question is:

- What will determine the means of transportation you use? Why?
- What makes one way better than the others?
- Can you come up with an example of form and function in your situation?

Discuss: In your own words, explain the difference between form and function.

II. FORM AND FUNCTION IN THE CHURCH

Form and function can be defined broadly as in the examples above, or it can focus on a particular area. For example, there are also *biblical forms and functions* described in both the Old and New Testaments. However, in order to understand the importance of this concept in church planting, we will focus the definition even more tightly, and look only at *church forms* and *church functions*.

1. Church Functions

The New Testament includes many commands, laws, instructions, precepts, prohibitions, and principles that the church must carry out. These functions are timeless and supra cultural. They do not change and are mandatory for all believers, regardless of race, culture, age, or language.

Examples: Worship, fellowship, the ordinances, prayer, evangelism, discipleship, giving, teaching, communion (Lord's Supper).

A Church Function
is an activity that the Lord has commanded His church to carry out.

2. Forms

Church forms include all the structures, traditions, methods, and procedures that the church chooses in order to carry out the functions in a particular age, culture, or situation. These forms can and do vary greatly among local churches—resulting in many acceptable forms for every church function.

Examples: Offerings for the Jerusalem saints, the Jesus Film, greeters at the front door, paid preachers, Wednesday (e.g. "once-a-week") evening Bible study.

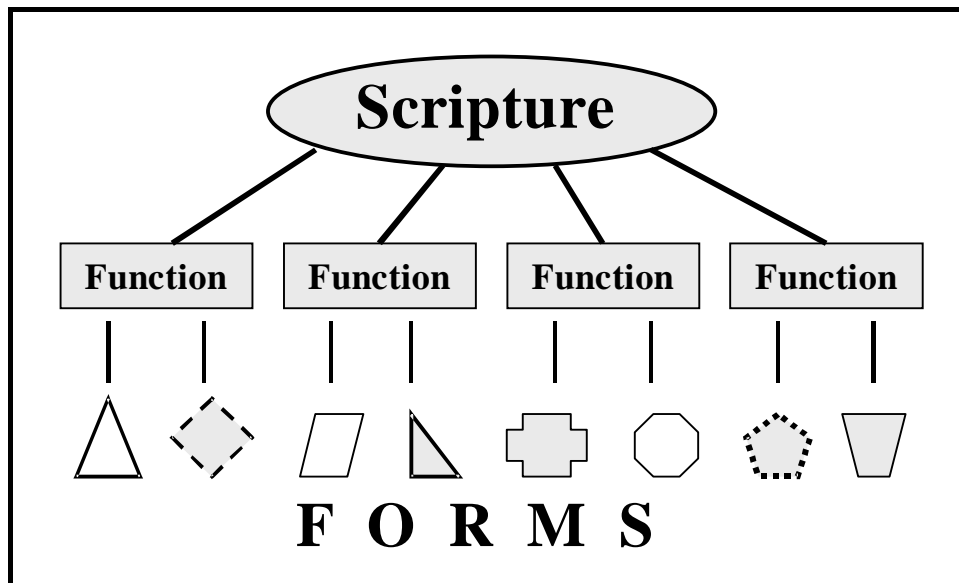
A Church Form is the method the church uses to carry out a church function.

3. Form and Function Together

The life of any local church cannot be taken out of its particular cultural / historical context. Our 'experience' of church is not based solely on biblical teaching. The way we 'do' church is based upon a mix of historical traditions, cultural (and sub-cultural) practices, and biblical convictions. When we speak of biblical functions (such as worship, prayer, fellowship, teaching, sacraments, evangelism and ministry), it is difficult to do so without describing the forms, traditions, methods, structures and organizations in which these functions find expression and life.

The task of the church planter is to forge church forms first from a biblical basis, then in the light of culturally relevant practices. In Figure 3.1, we see that there are a number of church functions that are mandated by the Scriptures. These do not change with time or culture. However, the bottom row of the figure demonstrates that each local church may need to adopt completely different forms to fulfill these functions in their context. The forms need not resemble those of other churches—they must only fulfill the church functions.

Figure 3.1 Form and Function



Discuss: Explain the above diagram.

III. EVALUATING FORM AND FUNCTION IN THE CHURCH

It can be difficult to distinguish between forms and functions in the church unless we take the time to analyze. In the following chart, a number of functions are listed on the left, and some of the many possible forms of each are on the right.

Table 3.2 Forms and Functions

Biblical Function	Possible Forms
Pray	Kneeling or Standing
	Silently or Aloud
	Small Group or Individual
	Before Meal or At Close of Service
	Confession or Supplication
Teach the Word	Sunday School
	Sermon
	Small Group Bible Study
	Family Devotions
Evangelize	Friendship Evangelism
	Seekers group
	Invitation during Service

Please note that the list of forms on the right side of the chart is not exhaustive—there are many, many other possibilities. Is one form better than the others are? No. All of them may be appropriate or inappropriate in a given circumstance and cultural setting. None of these forms are commanded in the Bible as the *only* method. Only the *functions* are commanded. We must choose the form as needed.

In the table below, two sample biblical *functions* are listed. Take a few minutes to fill in possible *forms* on the right side. Then compare your ideas with other trainees.

Table 3.3 Function vs. Form

Biblical Function	Possible Forms
Offering	
Worship	

In the table below, a number of *forms* are listed on the right side. For each *form*, decide what biblical *function* it fulfills and write that in on the left side. Then compare and discuss your responses.

Table 3.4 Forms vs. Functions

Function	Form
	Youth Camp
	Church Prayer Meeting
	Church Choir
	Passing an Offering Plate
	Church Building
	Special Music in Service
	Children's Church
	Order of Church Service
	Reciting Poetry in Church

IV. PRINCIPLES REGARDING FORM AND FUNCTION

1. The Function Is More Important Than the Form

In the Bible, functions are stressed. Jesus was more interested in function than in form. Those who gave Christ the most resistance were those who were addicted to form, rituals and traditions.

- See Matthew 9:14-17. How does Jesus' teaching on clothing and wineskins relate to form and function? What does it mean to start a 'new wineskin' kind of church?
- What do 1 Samuel 15:22-23, Hosea 6:6, and Matthew 12:1-8 contribute to this issue?

Forms are not usually prescribed in the Bible. There is the exception of the temple service, where the design of the tabernacle and its furnishings are spelled out in some detail, but this was done for a different purpose. They were used to teach about God, His work and His attributes. It is not a form that has been carried over into the New Testament Church because the knowledge already exists.

Discuss: Why is the function more important than the form? Are most arguments over form or function?

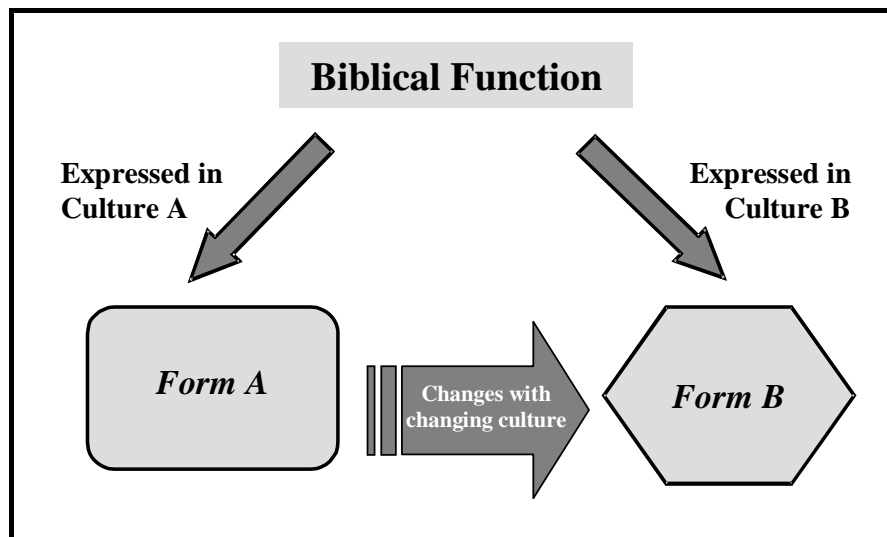
2. Functions Are Absolute and Trans-Cultural; Forms Are Non-Absolute and Variable

When forms are described in the Bible, we see changes being made in them. The Passover was a reminder of God's deliverance of His people from Egypt. Jesus changed this at the Last Supper and used it to highlight the deliverance that God was about to accomplish in the death of Jesus. In the first century church, this again changed and became the Love Feast. But this began to be misused (1Co 11:17-34), so the practice was reduced to the sharing of the cup and bread. But even this takes on many different forms. Some use a common cup and some use individual cups. Some use wine and some use grape juice. The form may be different as long as the function is served.

The forms that are described in certain passages are changed or left out in others. They vary from situation to situation.

- Stewardship (1Co 16:1-2; 2Co 8-9)
- Spiritual gifts (1Co 12-14; Ro 12; Eph 4)
- Discipline of church members (Mt 18; 1Co 5; 2Co 2)
- Baptism (Mt 28; Ro 6; Ac 1)
- Day of Worship (Ex 20:8; Ac 20:7)
- Church government (1Ti 3; Tit 1; 1Pe 5)

Figure 3.5 Changing Forms



Discuss: List some examples of how the forms of church need to change in your culture? Are there western forms that are hindering growth?

In a minority culture near you how would prayer and worship be different?

3. People Often Identify More with the Forms Than with the Function

It is unfortunate, but people tend to get attached to the form and miss the function. They can perpetuate forms that have lost vitality in their respective cultures (e.g. the way a worship service is run). There is an old story told about a newlywed bride who cooked her first roast for her husband. When she served the roast to him, the prime pieces on both ends were cut off. He asked her why. She replied her mother always cooked the roast this way. When the new husband asked the mother-in-law why she did it this way, her reply was, "I don't know. Mom always did it that way." When the husband asked grandma why she cut off the ends of the roast, her response was, "The pan was too small for it." You get the point.

When people believe there are absolutes governing form, they tend to become legalistic in their approach. Often, resistance to the changing form is caused more by insecurity and fear of change than from theological truth. This can be a form of idolatry. An understanding of form and function can help people see that change is not always threatening.

Discuss: Why do people more often identify with form than function?

4. Forms Should Not Be Changed Carelessly

It is not unusual for a young man, just out of seminary, with no real pastoral experience, to pastor a church and think that he knows exactly how everything should be done. He has an idea of what the perfect forms are and is determined to change everything to fit his ideas. He has no idea of what the people are like, nor does he know what they want to do. He may not even know whether the ideas have been tried before and the results. This can lead to a situation where the people begin to feel that their pastor does not value them but sees them as part of an experiment and come to resent him. They also feel the church no longer fits them and either the pastor must go or they will.

Forms should be changed only to highlight the function. One time, in order to highlight worship (a function), a pastor started the service with a hymn and then gave the sermon. The sermon was normally at the end of the service after special music, extended singing, greetings and announcements. This pastor chose to speak about God and His wonderful works, then invited the congregation to worship and thank Him through prayer, singing praise and the Lord's supper. The change was very effective. This does not mean that he did it every Sunday. It was done that one time in order to get people to stop and think about the worship part of the service. They then returned to the usual form.

Discuss: Why should forms not be changed carelessly?

5. When Forms Freeze, Churches Die

The purpose of the church is to glorify God through the edifying of the members and the evangelizing of the lost. This is the eternal, unchanging purpose. The functions are how we accomplish this purpose. They are also given by God, who has told us how He wants us to glorify Him. They are also eternal and unchanging. A form is only one of many acceptable ways to fulfill a particular function. Forms can change because they are an expression of society.

There are times when the importance of forms can grow to be so great that people will not let them be changed. When forms become so important that they cannot be changed, the church will soon die because the society will change and the church will appear irrelevant. If the church cannot change its expression of the eternal functions, then the church will become irrelevant to that society.

There was a church that chose to reach out to a certain ethnic group in its neighborhood. The congregation was very comfortable with the forms that grew up for this group. But the forms became too important. The neighborhood changed and there were fewer and fewer of this ethnic group in the neighborhood. By the time the church realized that they needed to change, it was too late. They were known as a church that had nothing to offer to the people of that neighborhood and the church building was closed and the remaining membership disbanded.

Discuss: Why does the church die with forms freeze?

V. IMPLICATIONS OF FORM AND FUNCTION FOR CHURCH PLANTERS

Church planters must think very carefully about form and function. Many of the forms established at a church's birth can become a part of the life of the church. They may be difficult to change later; and if they are ineffective, they may just have to be tolerated. Furthermore, if church planters do not exercise flexibility concerning form, then the church planting process can become very slow and difficult.

If church planters do not exercise flexibility concerning form then the church planting process can become slow and difficult.
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Church planters tend to go to one of two dangerous extremes in their ministry. They may:

- Use only traditional church forms so that the approach to preaching, style of music, and methods of evangelism are the same as the existing churches in the region. The result may be that the church will reach the same kind of people instead of the target people.
- Adopt only imported forms that are difficult to reproduce in that culture. When church planters assume that certain programs, equipment or styles of music are necessary because they are effective in some other situation, then the church can have a foreign appearance from the beginning. In your region, 'westernization' or a large population of foreign missionaries may contribute to this problem.

The forms you choose will influence what section(s) of your society you will attract. Forms should emerge naturally from the culture so the target people can understand their meaning with little or no explanation. Research should look at who lives in the target area, who is not being reached by churches already present, and find out how to attract them to your church through meaningful forms faithful to biblical functions.

QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW, CONSIDERATION AND APPLICATION

- Why is 'form and function' so important to church planting?
- How have the forms in your church developed? How have they been maintained?
- Do the forms in your church experience serve a purpose / biblical function?
- How could you improve the forms in your church to fit the culture better?
- Which forms are a hindrance to bringing the Gospel to the lost? To bringing a new convert into the life of the church?
- What kind of resistance would you face if you sought to establish a new church with forms different than other churches in your culture?
- In what ways are your forms strange and foreign to new converts?
- How could you develop forms that would be more comfortable to new converts without compromising biblical principles? Describe how these forms are relevant to your target group culture in worship, fellowship, sacraments, tithing, and biblical instruction
- For additional study, read Acts 6:1-5, and see how the early church leaders dealt with a structural problem, and how they were able to adjust form to create a structure to better serve the need.
- When are forms sinful? Why? Give examples and validate with a biblical principle.

ACTION PLAN

- Write down on a piece of paper, the essential functions and the simplest forms of those functions needed in a church? Choose one or two areas that you will change in your existing church.

SOURCES

- Thompson, Paul. *Planting Reproducing Churches; A Basic Course*. Toronto, Canada: World Team Institute of Church Planting, 1992.
- Webster, Robert D. *Growing Churches for God's Glory*. Workbook written for BEE International, 1995.

THE CHURCH

4

LESSON

Defining The Local Church

“WHAT ARE WE PLANTING?”

Lesson Purpose

The purpose of this lesson is to explore the definition of the local church in the light of the church planting task.

Main Points and Desired Outcomes

When the contents of this lesson have been mastered, each participant should:

- Understand the importance of developing a biblical definition of the local church.
- Know the biblical functions of a local church.
- Know how personal understanding of what a local church is can enhance or hinder the church planting process.

Suggestions for Mentoring Time

1. Read Ps. 67 and use it as a basis for your opening prayer time.
Personal Growth Question: What does God want from you and your church?
Suggestions for discussion time:
Discuss the questions in the text and at the end of the chapter
Homework: Complete the Action Plan, Read the assigned Chapter(s) for the next meeting time.
Pray for ministry needs.

INTRODUCTION

No matter what we are doing in church work, whether we are church planting or leading an existing church, we must have a clear conviction about what the church is. This basic question, “What is a local church?” cannot be taken for granted. To be sure we are on track, we must ask it often. How would we define it?

Perhaps the following illustration will demonstrate why this lesson is important. Before World War II, Switzerland made and produced almost 90% of the world’s watches. By 1970, the Swiss still had 60% of the market, but by the early 1980’s, their share dropped to below 10%. What happened? The quartz watch was introduced in the late 1960’s and the Swiss did not utilize this technology while other watchmakers (Seiko and Texas Instruments) did. The Swiss watchmakers rejected the quartz because of their understanding of what a watch was. They could not imagine a watch without gears, springs and wheels. Since the quartz watch did not use these, they rejected it. In summary, we could say they lost sight of the function of watches (to tell time) and instead defined watches by the forms they were familiar with. Thus they missed out on a great marketing opportunity.

Just as the Swiss’ working definition of watches resulted in their missing of a great opportunity, so the definition of the church can affect the success of the church planting process dramatically. The definition of the church reveals what the church planter is expecting to produce and determines strategies and forms he uses. The definition will be the reference point, the measuring stick for his sense of success or failure. If the church planter starts with a poor definition of the church then it may lead to failure.

I. THE DIFFICULTY OF DEFINING THE CHURCH

Churches can be very different from one another. Note the following observations:

- Some churches meet in large buildings. Some churches meet in small buildings. Some churches do not meet in any building. Some churches meet in homes.
- Some churches meet one time a week. Some churches meet two times a week. Some churches meet three times a week. Some churches meet just about every day of the week.
- Some churches have a man who preaches. Some have a man who talks, others a man who teaches.
- Some churches seem to be fun to be in. In some churches no one smiles.

- Some churches have active services, with people moving around and responding verbally to everything that happens. Some churches have very quiet services in which most of the people sit quietly and listen.

With all these variations, how is it possible to describe the core elements that must exist before a group can be called a church? Are there some basic norms that should be true of local churches in any time and in any culture? And if so, what do we consider to be those core elements?

Discuss: Take several minutes and talk in groups of three or four and answer these questions –

1. When is a group of people a church?

2. What are the criteria for deciding whether it is a church or not ?

3. Respond to the following situations. Is each a church? Why or why not?

- Eight believers in Aimesville meet every Tuesday night for Bible study and fellowship. They have no official pastor although one man facilitates the gathering. They have been doing this for years. Some of the participants also attend a church on Sunday.
- In a medium-sized city, there is a beautiful historical church building with a rich history of great preachers and community involvement. On tours of the church which are offered twice a day, one can learn about the unique architecture and history.
- An evangelist has led 10 young people to Christ in the past year. He would like to see these new believers assimilated into an existing church but the nearest one is 50 kilometers away. Instead, they meet in his apartment every Sunday evening for worship and Bible study.
- A man and his immediate family are the only believers in their city. The family takes time every Sunday morning to worship the Lord.

II. EXAMPLES OF CHURCH DEFINITIONS

In groups of 4 or 5, discuss the following definitions and answer the related questions.

1. Example #1

The following definition is an attempt to define the church by using only specific references from Scripture that describe how God's people are to relate to one another. This definition emphasizes the relationships that should exist between believers.

"A church is a group of people who are devoted and give preference to one another (Ro 12:10), accept one another (Ro 15:7), care for one another (1Co 12:25), carry each others burdens (Gal 6:2), forgive one another (Eph 4:32), encourage and build up one another (1Th 5:11) spur each another on to love and good deeds (Heb 10:24), confess their sins to one another (Jas 5:16), pray for one another (Jas 5:16), serve one another (1Pe 4:10), and love one another (1Jn 4:11)."

Discuss: How would this definition enhance or hinder the church planting process?

Discuss: What kind of a church would be produced by people who use this definition?

Discuss: Is this definition adequate? Why or why not?

2. Example #2

"A New Testament local church is an organized assembly of baptized believers, in which the unique presence of Jesus Christ dwells; who gather regularly for worship, instruction, fellowship, the Lord's Supper, and baptizing new believers, under the obedience to the Word of God, supervised by elders who are assisted by deacons putting into action the equipping gifts that God has given its members to build up that local congregation, resulting in a Gospel witness locally and world wide."

Discuss: How would this definition enhance or hinder the church planting process?

Discuss: What kind of a church would be produced by people who subscribed to this definition?

Discuss: Is this definition adequate? Why or why not?

3. Example #3

The following definition is more traditional and may be what you hear from the average non-believer.

"The local church is a building where people gather to receive religious services from professional ministers who have been specifically trained to lead meetings each Sunday morning as well as the other activities for the people such as weddings and funerals."

Discuss: How would this definition enhance or hinder the church planting process?

Discuss: What kind of a church would be produced by people who subscribed to this definition?

Discuss: Is this definition adequate? Why or why not?

D. Example #4

“A local church is an organized body of baptized believers, led by a spiritually qualified shepherd, affirming their relationship to the Lord and to each other by regular observance of the Lord’s Supper, committed to the authority of the Word of God, gathering regularly for worship and the study of the Word, and turned outward to the world in witness.”

Discuss: How would this definition enhance or hinder the church planting process?

Discuss: What kind of a church would be produced by people who subscribed to this definition?

Discuss: Is this definition adequate? Why or why not?

III. GUIDELINES FOR DEFINING THE CHURCH

1. Avoid prescribing forms, structure and programs in the definition of the church

There is a tendency to focus on forms and structure rather than on biblical functions when defining the local church. When church planters do this, they can become like the Pharisees, concentrating on the outward appearance of spirituality and not on the internal spiritual reality that reflects a right heart towards God and right relationships toward others, both in and outside of the church. Forms, then, can become a false reference point for success, suggesting that a local church equals such things as choirs, hymnbooks, a piano, a sound system, a building with pews, a Sunday school program, a constitution, etc. While there is nothing wrong with these things, they do not define the church as a spiritual people.

When forms, structures and programs are part of the definition of the church, it severely limits the church’s ability to be a dynamic force of change, witnessing to a constantly changing society of God’s saving and unchanging love. When biblical functions are key ingredients in the definition of the church, we are on solid ground for designing ways and means for church ministries that are indeed winsome.

2. Stress the biblical functions that the church must perform

The most helpful definitions of the local church focus on the functions of the Church as revealed in Scripture instead of forms. The church is a collection of God’s own children. The relationships of God’s people to God and to one another should be the point of reference out of which church programs flow. Beginning church planting by focusing on programs can result in structures that do not meet relational needs. It is wiser to focus on biblical relationships and let the programs develop accordingly.

For example, a church planter determined that a Wednesday night prayer time was important for every church. Early in the life of the church which he had planted, he initiated a Wednesday night prayer time, but there was little interest since community commitments kept many church members busy at that time. This was very discouraging to the church planter because he interpreted the poor response as a lack of interest in prayer. However, if he had allowed the function of prayer to take a different form, then perhaps there would have been a greater response.

Another church planter was convinced that a beautifully adorned church building was necessary for worship. After one year of church planting ministry, with 15 believers committed to his church, he decided to establish a building. This required permission from the city officials, raising funds, purchasing land, hiring a construction company to build, etc. This project consumed all of the church planter’s time so that he was unable to focus on ministering to the 15 believers in his flock. Furthermore, funds were very difficult to come by and city officials seemed to be doing everything possible to hinder the building process. He wondered if he would ever see the church established.

IV. WRITING YOUR DEFINITION OF THE CHURCH

To prepare to develop your definition of the church, read the following passages looking for principles that explain what the church is. Write the principles in the space provided. Use other biblical references if you believe they are helpful.

Ac 2:42-47 _____

Ac 11:26 _____

Ac 14:23 _____

Ac 20:7 _____

Ac 20:28 _____

1Co 1:2 _____

1Co 12:28 _____

1Co 14:33 _____

Eph 1:22 _____

Eph 4:11-16 _____

Eph 5:27 _____

1Ti 3:15 _____

Heb 10:24-27 _____

Other: _____

Discuss: *In the space below write your definition of the church.*

Discuss: Consider the following questions concerning your definition:

- ***Is your definition understandable?***
- ***Is it compatible with Scripture?***
- ***Is your definition basic enough to describe all churches everywhere and at all times?***
- ***Does your definition allow for a church that is reproducible?***

Share your definition with others and carefully note their reactions.

CONCLUSION

Church planters should realize that they do not plant fully developed churches, but sow seeds which grow into mature churches (1Co 3:6). The first converts to become leaders should have some say in the forms, structures and programs. Why? So that the new church will be appropriate to the culture and needs of those whom it will serve.

If we expect to participate with God in the establishing of a church planting movement in this region, then the definition of the church should resemble a 'seed' and not a fully developed 'tree.' It should grow and adapt in order to best reach the lost around it.

QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION, REVIEW AND APPLICATION

- What unnecessary items are typically added to people's working definition of the church?
- When are buildings necessary for church planting? How can buildings help or hinder the growth of the church?
- Why is it wrong to focus on forms when defining the local church?

ACTION PLAN

- Complete the definition of your church. Write down the names of the people you will share this with this week:

SOURCES

- Petersen, Jim. *Church Without Walls*. Colorado Springs, CO: Navpress, 1992.
- Julien, Tom. *The Essence of the Church*. Evangelical Missions Quarterly. Vol. 34, No. 2, 1998.

SPIRITUAL CHARACTER

SPIRITUAL
CHARACTER

1

LESSON

Justification by Faith

THE FOUNDATION OF OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD

☞ Lesson Purpose

The purpose of this lesson is to teach the student how to be set free from guilt, denial, and a life compelled to maintain his or her reputation, as Christ's righteousness becomes the foundation for Christian living.

☞ Main Points and Desired Outcomes

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

- Know that Justification is an exchange of our nature with the nature of Christ.
- Have appreciation and assurance of God's grace that is rooted in the righteousness of Jesus Christ.

☞ Suggestions for Mentoring Time

1. Read 2 Timothy 2:2 and use it as a basis for your opening prayer time.
Personal Growth Question: "Who in the Bible do you most relate with?"
Suggestions for discussion time:
Discuss the questions in the text and at the end of the chapter.
Homework: Complete the Action Plan, Read the assigned Chapter(s) for the next meeting time.
Pray for ministry needs.

INTRODUCTION

As believers, our relationship with God is the focal point of our lives. Nothing matters more than how we relate to God and how He relates to us. But in this relationship we have many questions:

- How can we know God intimately?
- Does God truly accept us?
- Where does our acceptance before God come from?
- How can we live a life that is pleasing to Him?
- What happens when we sin?

To answer questions like these, we go back to the very beginning—to the Gospel, the foundation of our relationship with God. The New Testament describes salvation as a matter of "justification by faith." In this lesson, we will consider what justification by faith means and how this foundation, built upon the righteousness of Jesus Christ, is the only sure foundation for our relationship with God.

I. JUSTIFICATION IS NOT...

Simply stated, justification means being declared righteous. There are at least two errors that people make concerning this great doctrine.

1. Justification is not by works

The great philosopher Aristotle believed that **people could become good (be justified) by practice**. Many have agreed with him. In Jesus' day, it seems the Pharisees would have agreed with Aristotle. For them, the way to be good, to be acceptable before God was by practice—specifically by living according to God's law.

Those who follow Aristotle's view could be classified as following religion. Here, we are defining religion as *an attempt to reach God*. The Gospel however, teaches something entirely different about how we become good. According to the Bible, the only way to be justified is to accept by faith the salvation provided by the death and resurrection of Jesus. The Gospel, including justification by faith, stands in direct contrast to all other religious systems of acceptance before God.

Table 1.1 The Gospel and Religion

Gospel	Religion
<i>(God's supernatural attempt to reach man)</i>	<i>(man's natural attempt to reach God)</i>
Grace	Works
Faith	Obedience
Unconditional love	Judgementalism
Transforming Holy Spirit	Personal effort
Grace leads to obedience	Obedience leads to grace

Bible-believing Christians will quickly understand that the Gospel is true and that religion is false. We do not want to replace the Gospel with religion, but we are tempted to mix the two. But when we mix the Gospel with anything, we destroy it (Gal 1:6-7).

Someone may be quick to say, "We do good works." True, but we do not receive God's favor by it. Rather we have received God's favor and therefore we do good works.

Discuss: According to the diagram, explain the difference between the Gospel and Religion?

2. Justification is not a pardon

Many believers correctly understand that justification before God is by faith and not by works, but they incorrectly conclude that justification is really simply a pardon in which God chooses to overlook our sin. This is a great mistake. God does not simply choose to ignore our sin. His holiness prevents that possibility. Sin must be paid for. Justification is an act by which someone is declared righteous. We are declared righteous on the basis of the fact that Jesus paid the price for our sin.

Those who think of justification as merely a pardon fail to realize the great price that was paid on our behalf and can tend to take their salvation for granted. However, our justification came at a great price that should inspire us to live out of gratitude for what God has done.

II. JUSTIFICATION IS ...

1. The Righteousness of God: Romans 3:21-24

Romans 3:21-24 is one of the clearest passages concerning justification by faith. Studying the passage phrase by phrase reveals many of the various aspects of justification by faith and how Christ's righteousness forms the foundation of our relationship with God.

(1) *"apart from law"*

The righteousness of God is not obtained on the basis of our obedience to God's Law. Why not? Because not one of us keeps the Law of God perfectly—which is what God requires if we are to be justified by our obedience to the Law (Gal 3:10).

(2) *"a righteousness of God ... has been made known"*

The righteousness of God expresses His "perfect purity." Righteousness for us is exact conformity to this perfect purity of God. If we take the context into account and the fact that justification by faith is being explained here, the "righteousness of God" means a perfect purity that comes from God or is given by God.

(3) *"to which the Law and the Prophets testify"*

In the Hebrew mind, the two primary divisions of the Old Testament were the Law and the Prophets. In both we find God's revelation speaking of this righteousness obtained apart from our obedience. In other words, the whole Bible testifies to this profound truth.

- (4) *"this righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe"*

Faith is the means by which we obtain this righteousness. The object of our faith must be Jesus Christ, because He is the One who died in our place, paying the penalty of sin. He alone was able to pay for our sin in full, because He is the perfect Son of God. This is why it is essential to put our faith in Him.

- (5) *"for there is no difference; for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God"*

All of us need this righteousness through faith in Jesus Christ. There are no exceptions, because we have all sinned and our sin has caused us to fall far short of God's perfection that reflects His true glory.

- (6) *"being justified freely by his grace"*

The perfect righteousness required to be right with God is imputed to us when we believe. It is a gift given because of the gracious character of God, not because we deserve it. It is a gift in the truest sense; not deserved, not expected, but accepted.

- (7) *"through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus"*

In love, God wanted to impart this gift of forgiveness and righteousness to us, but His holiness required that the penalty of sin, which is death, be paid. So Jesus Christ came and died in our place, paying our penalty. As a result, He fulfilled the righteous requirement for God to forgive us and to declare us as righteous in His eyes. The redemption from sin was the price paid to purchase our justification.

Discuss: How would you explain justification to a non-Christian without using Christian terms (Do not use the words 信 or 义)?

2. The Great Exchange

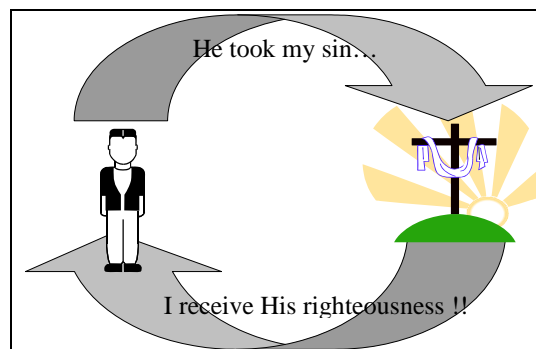
In summary, justification is **the gracious act of God in which He causes a great exchange to take place**. As a sinner approaches God in repentance and faith, God removes the guilt of his or her sin and gives it to Christ. He also takes Christ's perfect righteousness and gives it to the new believer. The result is that the new believer's sin is completely forgiven and he or she receives from Christ the perfect righteousness needed to stand righteous before God (2Co 5:21, Is 61:10, Ro 4:3-5, 8:1, Eph 4:22-24).

Revelation 20:12 speaks of a day when God will open the books that contain the records of our lives and He will judge us according to our deeds. What do you think we will find in our books? The prophet Isaiah explains that under the judgment of a holy God, "all of us have become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous acts are like filthy rags" (Isa 64:6). Most people will be surprised to discover that their books contain long records of sin. However, when we look at Jesus' life, we see that He was perfectly obedient to God for he lived a righteous life without sinning (Hebrews 4:15).

When we repented of our sins and accepted, by faith, Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, God took away our sins and gave them to Christ. He then took Christ's righteousness and gave it to us. The result is that our record of sin was given to Christ, and Christ's record of righteousness was given to us. **Justification can be pictured as the exchange of our "record of sin" for Jesus Christ's "record of righteousness."**

The Great Exchange illustration (Fig. 1.2) helps us understand justification by faith.

Fig. 1.2 The Great Exchange



III. THE CRUCIAL ISSUES OF JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH

1. We Cannot Justify Ourselves

Observing these key aspects of justification as a whole, there is an important truth that is woven through these ideas. When we are told that justification is a righteousness given apart from our obedience to the Law, that it is given through faith in Jesus Christ, that it is given to sinners by God's grace, and that it is paid for by the redemption of Christ... all of these ideas express the truth that man has nothing to do with this righteousness.

Explaining the true nature of justification, Martin Luther has rightly described it as "**passive righteousness**", because we have nothing to do with producing it. Jesus Christ earned this righteousness for us and we may only receive it by faith. This truth is the foundation of man's **justification before God and this is where true Christianity finds its great difference with all other religions, as well as with the false forms of Christianity.** This is also where we have the greatest difficulty ourselves, because justification by faith expresses to us the degree of our true sinfulness and our infinite need for grace. It tells us that to be righteous before God, we must look outside ourselves because we do not have this righteousness, and we must humbly accept the only means through which we may be right with God through faith in Jesus Christ.

This is the key issue of justification. If we think that we can stand righteous before God by anything other than the provision of Christ, then we grossly miscalculate the true holiness of God and the depths of our own true sinfulness. How can we think that we are worthy in ourselves to have peace with a perfectly holy God? This is the worst kind of arrogant presumption because it reduces God to the level of sinful man and lifts up corrupt man to the level of a perfect God.

Discuss: What are some of the ways we try to justify ourselves? What more do find yourself doing to try to justify yourself? Based on the Biblical definition of justification what is the only thing you can do?

2. We Cannot Take Credit for What God has Done

In giving his life, Jesus paid the penalty for all lawbreakers. Because of who Jesus is, we can trust God to justify us. Not fully trusting in the death of Jesus Christ on the cross as the basis of our forgiveness and our relationship with God is insulting to God to say the least.

It is not because of our behavior, or even the greatness of our repentance, that God forgives us of our sins. Even though God's Word teaches that true faith will be demonstrated by our love for and obedience to God, we should not confuse this with the truth that God has pardoned our sin solely because He is loving and gracious, giving His only Son to die in our place on the cross. Jesus Christ paid the penalty for our sin, and it is His sacrifice that bought our freedom from God's wrath.

3. We Must Trust God Completely

Those who believe in religion, and therefore in justification by works, build their relationships with God on their obedience to Him. The problem then is, their conscience keeps telling them that they aren't doing a very good job of obeying Him, and therefore it convicts them that they have no right to believe that God overlooks their sin or will pardon it without justice. This creates a crisis, in which they either conclude that they are not so bad (searing the conscience), or that if they do something that pleases God, God will overlook their sin (compromising the true righteousness of God).

Even Christians face this problem. Our conscience tells us that we do a poor job of pleasing God. **At this point, we are tempted to turn to false cures to soothe our conscience and solve the problem of sin.** Sometimes we try to soothe it by thinking that we are not as bad as someone else is; therefore, we must not be very bad. Or we seek to do much better, trying to make up for our failure. This is a very subtle error because resolving to obey God better is not wrong. But what we are inclined to do is base our relationship with God on our performance, on religion instead of on the Gospel. We commit a critical error when we shift the basis of our trust in salvation away from the work of Jesus Christ on the cross, and onto our performance or obedience. This wrong thinking can cause us to hide from our real sinfulness or become discouraged, and even depressed.

CONCLUSION

As we live the Christian life, we cannot move our faith away from the forgiveness and righteousness Jesus Christ earned for us. The death of Jesus on the cross paid the penalty and allows us to stand just before God. Justification by faith must remain the foundation of our relationship with God. The cross is our only hope for peace with Him. There is no other place that sinners, even justified sinners, can meet God except at the cross.

Building our life upon justification by faith in Jesus Christ should set us free to serve God in bold ways, not because we always obey God perfectly, but because we have the confidence that our relationship with God is built upon Christ's work for us. Justification is not a matter of our own personal effort—but instead is by grace through faith. Justification by faith puts grace before our obedience, which is the way God relates to us in Christ. As we learn that our relationship with God always has been and always will be based upon His grace, and as we trust in the finished work of His Son, we realize how truly great His love is. We have been saved by grace, and we can only live by grace.

QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION, REVIEW AND APPLICATION

- What does it mean when we describe justification by faith as a “passive righteousness”?
- In our daily walk with the Lord, why is it so hard for we who began in grace to continue in grace, trusting in the finished work of Jesus Christ on the cross?
- How does justification by faith affect the way you relate to God and the way you think He relates to you?

ACTION PLAN

- Teach someone else the meaning of justification by faith. Write down the names of the person (people) you will share with:

SPIRITUAL
CHARACTER
2
LESSON

Christian Growth

MAKING CHRIST THE FOCAL POINT OF THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

☞ Lesson Purpose

The purpose of this lesson is to see that the cross must become the focal point of our lives if we are to truly grow.

☞ Main Points and Desired Outcomes

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

- Be a Christian who glories in Christ.
- Know that to grow, he must focus upon the cross- relating all of life to the work of Christ.
- Lay his self-reliance at the feet of Christ and, by faith, claim the power that only his risen Savior can provide.

☞ Suggestions for Mentoring Time

1. Read Isaiah 6:1-3 and use it as a basis for your opening prayer time.
Discuss the questions in the text and at the end of the chapter.
Homework: Complete the Action Plan, Read the assigned Chapter(s) for the next meeting time..
Pray for ministry needs.

INTRODUCTION

In this spiritual character track, we seek to build a foundation for dynamic Christian living. This critical area cries out for attention as we see church leaders become spiritually shipwrecked because of one sin or another. How can we ourselves keep from being shipwrecked? How can our love for God grow strong and not become cold? How can we grow in our faith, so that we have a vital, living relationship with Jesus Christ?

We would like to present a picture of how a Christian grows to have a greater love for God and a living faith that enables him to spiritually lead the Church of Jesus Christ. Specifically, we will learn how to make the cross of Jesus Christ the focal point of spiritual life.

I. WHAT IS SPIRITUAL GROWTH?

Spiritual growth is the continuing work of God in the life of the believer, making him or her actually holy. The word holy means here "bearing an actual likeness to God." As we grow as Christians, our daily life is brought into conformity with the righteousness we already have in Christ (as believers, we are declared righteous). Spiritual growth is a continuation of what was done in salvation, when a new life was conferred upon and instilled within the believer.

Notice the several facets of our growth. The Holy Spirit regenerated us so that we might become transformed into the likeness of God. But this transformation is an ongoing process, and this process is advanced through a cooperative work between God and the Christian. We are told in Philippians 2:12-13, "Work out your salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you, to will and to act according to His good purpose." Here we see the partnership we must enter into with God. We cannot be passive and think that God alone will produce His likeness in us. We must be active as well. We must "work." But this work is not to gain God's acceptance; rather it is the expression of our understanding and grateful acknowledgment of the forgiveness of our sins through the blood of Jesus Christ and our adoption as children of God.

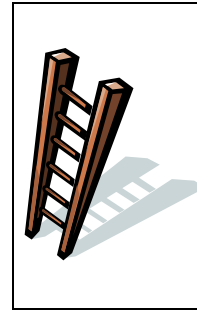
Many illustrations and diagrams have been used to explain the process of spiritual growth.

1. The Ladder or Stairs

Many believers view spiritual growth as a ladder or as a set of stairs that we climb. When we are really spiritual, we consider ourselves to be high on the ladder. However, when we are not spiritual, we are low on the ladder.

2. The Dying of the old self

Others view spiritual growth as a process of exchanging the old sinful self for the new man created in Christ. As the old man dies, the new man comes into being. When that happens, the person grows spiritually.



Diagrams such as this are not necessarily wrong, but as we will see, there is a better way to understand spiritual growth.

Discuss: *What is spiritual growth? How is it related to salvation?*

II. THE ROLE OF THE CROSS IN SPIRITUAL GROWTH

1. Growing in Knowledge of God's Holiness

The first part of the growth process involves growing in knowledge of God. The Lord declares through the prophet Jeremiah, "Let not the wise man boast of his wisdom or the strong man boast of his strength or the rich man boast of his riches, but let him who boasts boast about this: that he understands and knows me, that I am the Lord who exercises kindness, justice and righteousness on earth; for in these I delight, declares the Lord" (Jer 9:23,24). In John 17:3 Jesus says, "Now this is eternal life: that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You sent."

Knowing God is the purpose and meaning of eternal life. The chief pursuit of the Christian life should be to know God in truth. Therefore, when we continually grow to know Him in all His greatness, we grow to be like Him. The key to knowing God is understanding His holy character. We learn to feel as the Apostle Paul did when he said, "I consider everything a loss compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord" (Php 3:8a). This is part of the sanctification process.

2. Learning to Recognize Our Sin

As we grow in our knowledge of God in all His perfection, we grow to know ourselves as well. In particular, we come to know our sinfulness in contrast to the perfect character of God. The nearer we draw to God, the further we see that we are from Him. The more glorious we understand He truly is, the more terrible our sin becomes to us.

Growing in understanding one's own sinfulness can be illustrated in the life of Paul, the apostle. In AD 55 Paul described himself as "the least of the apostles" (1Co 15:9). Later in AD 60 Paul describes himself as "the least of all saints" (Eph 3:8). Still later, in the end of his life in AD 64, he describes himself as "chief of all sinners" (1Ti 1:15). Did Paul become a greater sinner as he matured? It certainly does not seem that way. But, it does seem that he developed more and more humility and sensitivity concerning his sin throughout his life. As he matured, he came to realize that some of his own attitudes that did not bother him previously were actually sinful. This is part of the spiritual growth process.

3. The Resulting Gap

Realization of the gap that exists between sinful man and Holy God was, of course, what brought us to faith in Jesus in the first place. The cross fills the gap whenever a person is saved (figure 3.1).

But even after we come to know Christ as Savior, we should still continue to grow in our knowledge of God's holiness and in the awareness of our own sinfulness. This can be a very fearful experience. To know God and His holiness is to invite self-exposure. This is a terrifying experience for those who wish to hide their faults and shortcomings. But for the growing Christian, the gap shows the continued need for Christ and the magnitude of what He has done on the cross.

The cross continues to increase in importance to us as we grow to know God in His greatness. The greater we know God, the more we feel unworthy before Him. As this knowledge grows, we see the significance of our forgiveness and reconciliation to God through Jesus Christ. As we discover the greatness of God, (as Isaiah did when he saw the glory of the Lord in the Temple, or as the nation Israel did when they met God at Mount Sinai), we discover the true glory of our Savior. His blood washes sinners clean and clothes us with white garments so that we may draw even closer to this God of glory.

Discuss: How are the recognition of God's perfection and your sinfulness related?

III. HINDRANCES TO CHRISTIAN GROWTH

Having at some point accepted the fact that Jesus paid the price to bridge the gap, we strive to move on in our Christian growth. Many Christians have one of two basic problems growing in their faith.

1. Phariseeism—the problem of pride

Many believers get caught up in actions and fall into the trap of seeking to gain acceptance from God and others through performance. The focus shifts off of Christ and onto their service to God. Like the Pharisees in New Testament times, they live as if the Christian life consists only of what we do for God.

The problem is that they forget that there are other, even more important aspects of the Christian life than service, such as knowing God and having a personal relationship with Him (Lk 10:38-42). Modern day Pharisees falsely believe that they can close the gap between themselves and God with their own good works. Pride, or a desire to look good in the eyes of others, may motivate this. Performance becomes the foundation upon which these people build their reputations.

Sin also influences the modern Pharisee in other ways. He/she may think that his sin does not matter to God (*notice wedge number 4 in figure 3.2*). In such a case, the importance of the cross is diminished. What he is actually doing here is reducing God in his mind to be less than He truly is. Others may think, "I'm not really *that* big of a sinner!" These people put a wedge (*number 5 in figure 3.2*) in the bottom space beneath the cross. Isn't it much easier to see someone else's sin than our own sin? Why is this? Is it true that we have less of a problem with sin than others do? If we think this, we are deceiving ourselves. Because we think too highly of ourselves, again the importance of the cross diminishes.

In order to avoid the pharaseeism, we must grow in understanding of the true holiness of God and the true sinfulness of our own hearts. Seeing this will humble us and reveal our need for God's grace.

Discuss: Describe phariseeism (pride) and how it relates to the graphic? In what ways have you found yourself being a Pharisee?

2. Despair—Lack of belief

Others have a different struggle. They recognize God's holiness, and thus their own sinfulness, and they despair because they do not know what to do about it. They try to fill the gap with good works, but they feel that they can never do enough good works to really please God. They may strive to spend time in God's Word each day, but on days that they fail, they feel terribly defeated about their walk with God. They try to keep their tongues in check, but when they fail, they wonder how God could really love them. Because of all their failures, they conclude that they can never please God. Thus they despair.

Figure 3.1

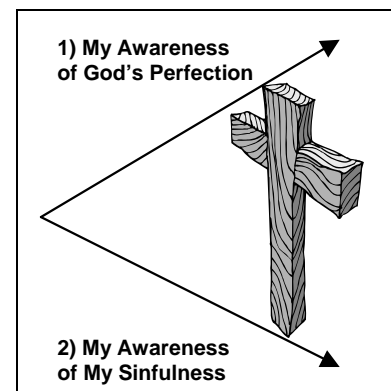
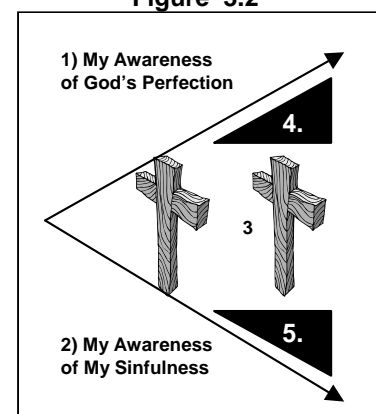


Figure 3.2



The problem here is a lack of faith in what God has done. God has provided all we need to be acceptable before Him in the sacrifice of Christ Jesus (Heb 10:14). We cannot add to what he has done.

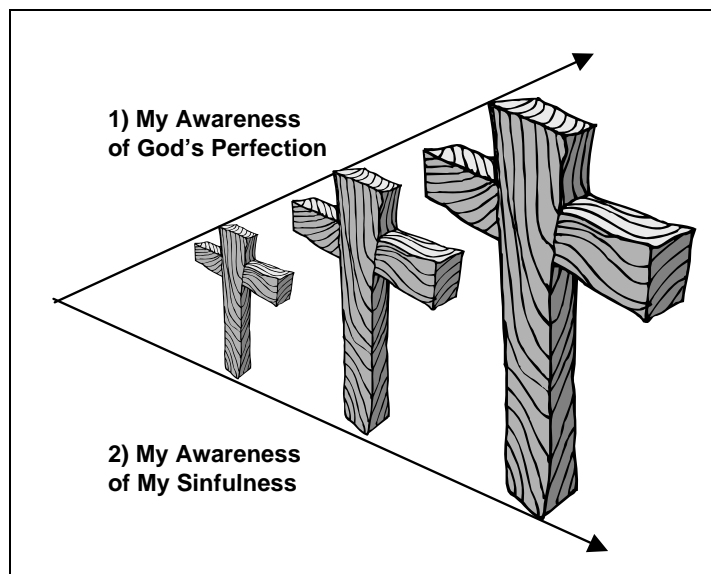
Discuss: What happens when we focus too much on our own sin and not enough on God's perfection? How do you help someone in this situation?

3. The Answer: The Cross must grow

The two problems described above are really similar to one another. The Pharisee incorrectly believes he can earn God's favor with his own works while the one who despairs correctly knows he cannot earn God's favor by his works. But in both cases the standard is wrong. The focus on earning God's favor is the foundational problem.

Since the problems are similar, the solutions are quite the same. Basically, in order for the gap to be closed, the cross must grow. Nothing we do can bridge the gap. As Paul said, "But God forbid that I should boast, except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ" (Gal 6:14a). Jesus Christ and His work on the cross become more and more important to us.

Figure 3.3 - The Growing Cross



We must believe the new realities of our life in Jesus Christ. Though we are still prone to sin, God is gracious and forgives our sin. We stand perfectly righteous in Christ only because of His work on the cross. We have become children of the living God and are loved by Him. He delights in us and is committed to making us into the image of Christ.

Discuss: What are other hindrances to spiritual growth? How does the cross apply to each of these?

CONCLUSION

The cross is our only hope for peace with Him. There is no other place that sinners, even justified sinners, can meet God except at the cross.

In order to grow spiritually, our focus should be on understanding more fully the realities of Christ's accomplishments on the cross rather than on trying harder. Day by day, and moment by moment, we must remember what Christ has done for us on the cross by taking away our sin and giving us new life. In this view of sanctification, we understand that our flesh remains evil until the day we die. But we also recognize the life of Christ in us.

As we grow in knowing God, we are also being changed more and more into His image. Our inability to do this on our own becomes clear and we develop total dependence on Christ. The Gospel becomes much more relevant to us, and our need for Christ becomes much greater. We understand more deeply what we first believed. We remind ourselves of the truths of the Gospel. By faith we are making the accomplishments of Christ's death and resurrection more of a reality in our lives.

QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION, REVIEW AND APPLICATION

- How do you grow in holiness? Describe the process in daily terms and how you have learned that the accomplishments of Christ apply to this process.
- What is your greatest difficulty concerning your spiritual growth?
- List the accomplishments of Christ's death on the cross and resurrection from the dead. Write a description of how you can make these accomplishments more of a reality in your lives.

ACTION PLAN

- Teach someone else the meaning of justification by faith. Write down the names of the person (people) you will share with:.

SPIRITUAL
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LESSON **3**

The Transforming Power of the Gospel

FREEDOM FROM THE MASTERY OF SIN

☞ Lesson Purpose

The purpose of this lesson is to explain how we were set free from the mastery of sin as we were united to Christ, in His death and resurrection, so that we might experience the power of the Gospel in our lives as we walk by faith in this new reality.

☞ Main Points and Desired Outcomes

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

- Understand we have been transformed - our union with Christ renders the flesh dead, no longer mastered by sin.
- Walk by faith in the personal, spiritual death and resurrection experienced in Christ and in salvation from the power of sin.

☞ Suggestions to Trainers

This lesson makes many references to Romans 6:3-10. Carefully studying these passages in preparation will enable you to teach this lesson effectively.

☞ Suggestions for Mentoring Time

1. Read Revelation 5:9 and use it as a basis for your opening prayer time.
Discuss the questions in the text and at the end of the chapter.
Homework: Complete the Action Plan, Read the assigned Chapter(s) for the next meeting time.
Pray for ministry needs.

INTRODUCTION

The Gospel is the foundation of our relationship with God. From God's perspective, our relationship is built solely upon Christ's forgiveness and perfect righteousness given to us by faith. This truth should bring the ability to conquer sin in our lives resulting in profound personal transformation. Yet most of us still struggle with sin and sometimes wonder how we can be transformed today. Why do believers sin? And, what can be done about it? How can we be truly transformed according to the Gospel?

I. THE GRACE OF GOD AND THE PRACTICE OF SIN

1. Can We Go on Sinning?

If God's grace truly abounds beyond all our sin and we are justified by faith apart from our obedience, can we go on practicing sin? If God's grace is offered to those who don't even deserve it but receive it because of their faith in Jesus Christ, it is only natural to ask this question. May we go on sinning and expect God's grace to cover it?

The apostle Paul anticipated this question in his letter to the Galatians when he said, "Do not use your freedom to indulge the sinful nature" (Gal 5:13). And this is the very question Paul responds to in Romans 6 when he asks, "Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase? By no means! We died to sin; how can we live in it any longer?" (Ro 6:1b, 2).

2. The Biblical Answer

The answer to this question is clearly "no", we shall not go on sinning. We understand this and try hard not to sin. Self-discipline and rules become the norm for the serious Christian who wants to avoid sinning. But the real corrective for sin is related to the inner transformation of the believer.

As we study Paul's answer in Romans 6, we understand not only why we cannot go on practicing sin, but also discover the new freedom we have from the power of sin. This is a vital part of victorious Christian living. In our salvation, God has provided the solution to our two most fundamental needs: He has delivered us from the penalty of sin, reconciling us to Himself, and He has delivered us from the power of sin, that we might live in true freedom to love Him. Romans 6:1-2 instructs us that we cannot continue in the practice of sin, as we did before we were Christians, because we have "died to sin."

In our salvation, God has provided the solution to our two most fundamental needs: He has delivered us from the penalty of sin, and He has delivered us from the power of sin.

Discuss: Can we continue sinning?

II. BAPTIZED INTO HIS DEATH—RAISED IN HIS RESURRECTION (RO 6:3-10)

In his letter to the Romans as he answers the question concerning sin, Paul uses baptism to illustrate the change that takes place when a person becomes a child of God. Read Romans 6:3-10 carefully.

1. Our Death with Christ

(1) How did we die?

In Romans 6:2-5 Paul explains how we died to sin. We were united with Christ and we were baptized into His death. Before we consider our baptism into Christ's death, we ought to focus on the real issue, our union with Christ that brought death to our sin. Several action statements in this passage express the union between Christ and ourselves. In verse 3 we see that "all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized *into* His death". In verse 4, "we were . . . buried *with* Him". In verse 5, "we have been united *with* Him," and in verse 8, we have "died *with* Christ."

These passages clearly state that through uniting *with* Christ in His death we also died. If we want freedom from the sin nature within us, our inner man must die. When God supernaturally united us to Christ, He put to death the inner man even though the outer man continues to live.

The term "united" (*sumfutoi*⁴ in Greek) in verse 5, "*we have become united with Him*" was used to describe grafting two separate plants together. When a branch was grafted into a tree, and began taking life from the tree, it was said to have been *sumfutoi*, "united" with it. This was a living, organic union. This same kind of union that takes place when we believe in Christ. We are united to Jesus Christ, and His life gives life to our inner man. Before we can live in freedom, our inner man must die and be separated from the sin nature. So we are united to Christ in His death.

Our death with Christ caused the separation between our inner man and the sin nature. As a result, we are free from the mastery of sin. Though the sin nature still exists, and is a very evil force within us, its mastery over us has been broken and we are no longer chained to its power. This is our certain, new reality and we must believe its truth if we are to successfully live the Christian life.

Discuss: Explain how we died to sin?

(2) What happened because of our death with Christ?

Romans 6:6 tells us that as a result of our death with Christ, our "old self" was crucified. The old self is simply the inner man that existed before we believed and received new life in Jesus Christ. The old man was enslaved to sin. When we were united to Christ in His death, this inner man was crucified and our sin was "done away with." The Greek word *katarge*⁵, "done away with," does not suggest the sin was eliminated from within us. But it does mean, "to render inoperative or invalid," or made ineffective by removing its power of control. Paul uses the same word in Romans 3:3 when he says that man's unbelief does not "render inoperative" the faithfulness of God. In Romans 7:2, he says that a woman is "released" from her husband if he dies. This is the meaning in our context. We have been released from the mastery of sin because its power to control has been removed. The chains of sin have been broken and we are no longer slaves to it.

⁴ συμφυτοῦ

⁵ καταργεω

Discuss: How were we crucified with Christ?

2. The End Result: New Life with Christ

There is one final idea communicated in this passage that explains the transformation our inner man has gone through. We are told that we are not only united with Christ in His death, but also in His resurrection. We have not only died, but we have also been resurrected to new life. Through our union with Christ, because Christ lives, our inner man now lives. Romans 6:4 tells us that as the power of the Father was demonstrated in raising Christ from the dead, so we are made to walk in newness of life as a demonstration of this same power. The same power that raised Christ from the dead has now also raised us from the dead.

The result of all this is that something very powerful and supernatural has happened to us, and our inner man is no longer what it used to be. The old man has died and a new man lives. What kind of new man is this? In verses 6 and 7 of Romans 6 we learn that this new inner man is free from sin and no longer a slave to it. This is who we now are in Christ.

Discuss: Explain your new life with Christ.

C. Reckoning by Faith Our New Life in Christ

It is imperative for Christians to bring these truths into their everyday lives. We all know that sin still exists within us, and as we continue in our earthly struggle with sin, we can lose sight of our new life that truly exists in Christ. There are times when we don't feel very free from sin, and we wonder if anything supernatural has happened in us at all. We can agree with the Apostle Paul who said, "For what I do is not the good I want to do; no, the evil I do not want to do—this I keep on doing" (Ro 7:19).

This is why Paul's closing words in Romans 6 are so important to us. Three times in this passage Paul has commanded us to "know" this truth (vv. 3, 6, 9). He wants us to understand what has truly happened to us in Christ. Then, in verse 11, Paul concludes, "*In the same way, count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus.*" In this verse, the Greek word *logizomai*⁶, "count," was a mathematical term used when someone was calculating a problem or counting numbers. It is used figuratively in this passage to "fully affirm" the truths that are taught here. We are being exhorted by Paul to put our confidence in and fully believe this fundamental truth about us. The old man no longer lives within us. He was a slave to sin, but he has been crucified as we have been united to Christ in His death and resurrection, and we are now transformed into new men and women. We now must affirm and believe that we have been made alive in Christ and that we have been made new creatures inside.

Our Christian life is a life in which we walk by faith in this truth. Even though we don't perfectly experience this all the time, it does not change the reality of what has happened. We must continue every day to repent of our sin and believe that we are one with Christ, and that we now live in union with Him.

Discuss: What does it mean to count yourself dead to sin?

III. THE POWER NOT TO SIN

According to Romans 6, because we are united to Christ, we died and were resurrected with Him. His victory over sin was our victory over sin. Sin is no longer our master. But this great Christian reality does not mean that sin no longer seeks to enslave us. Sin is not our master, even though it is always striving to regain its authority and power over us.

You might be thinking, "But I constantly struggle with sin. How can I beat it?" Be sure that no list of rules or self-discipline alone can lead to a victorious Christian life. We can try and try in the power of the flesh and we will eventually fail because our flesh is prone to sin. The real corrective for sin is related to the inner transformation of the believer. We fight sin by strengthening our awareness of who we are in Christ.

⁶ λογίζομαι

1. Understand the New Nature

When you became a Christian, you didn't add a divine nature to your old sinful nature. You exchanged natures—you became a new creation (2Co 5:17). You were transferred from the kingdom of darkness to the kingdom of light, when you became a child of God. "Our old self (old nature) was crucified with him" (Ro. 6:6). The old nature is powerless!

If we have a new nature, why do we sin? There's a Greek word used many, many times throughout the New Testament as a source of sin in the believer's life. It's the word flesh. What is the flesh? It's the part of our mind, emotions and will that has been conditioned or trained to sin. Habits and patterns of thinking are passed on to us by the world, by ungodly teachers, and by Satan's direct attacks. Our worldly experiences programmed our brains to live independent from God and according to the world's ways.

Discuss: How does knowing your new nature give you power over sin?

2. Live in the Spirit

Romans 8:5-7 contrasts those who live according to the flesh with those who live according to the Spirit. There you find that it's the mind that's set on either the flesh or the Spirit. Your flesh, which was trained by the world, generates worldly thoughts and ideas leading you to sin. As believers, we are no longer to be in the flesh, but in the Spirit (Ro 8:9, Gal 5:16). But it's possible for us to walk according to the flesh (Ro 8:12,13). Unbelievers have no choice—they walk in the flesh because they live in the flesh. But we are not obligated to the flesh... we have a choice. We must learn and choose to walk by the Spirit, not the flesh. As Paul says: "live by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature" (Gal 5:16).

Discuss: How does living in the Spirit give you power not to sin?

3. Identify Yourself as a Child of God

Before knowing Christ we were sinners, but when we became God's children we became 'saints.' Are we saints or are we sinners? The answer can be difficult. But if you think of yourself as part saint and part sinner, part light and part darkness, you will continue to struggle and to live a defeated life. Having come to understand the transformation that has taken place, believers should strive to maintain the awareness of who they are in the resurrected Christ. When we face sin, we should think of ourselves as children of God. If we think of ourselves as sinners, we will tend to live like sinners. We must see ourselves as saints, as children of God, in order to live like children of God.

Discuss: How does identifying yourself as a child of God give you power over sin?

4. Renew Your Mind

Many sinful patterns begin with bad thought life. Sinful patterns of thinking must be "transformed by the renewing of the mind" (Ro 12:2). The mind is the focus of the battle against sin. 2 Corinthians 11:3 indicates that just as Eve was deceived by Satan, our minds can be led astray from a sincere and pure devotion to Christ. Satan influenced the minds of David, Solomon, Ananias, the Christians in Corinth, and he can influence your mind as well. He can bring his thoughts into your mind and deceive you into thinking they are your thoughts, or even God's thoughts. But we "take every thought captive to make it obedient to Christ" (2Co 10:5).

Discuss: How does renewing your mind give you power not to sin?

5. Know the Truth

Where is sin's power? Satan, according to John 8:44, "is a liar and the father of lies." When we are tempted to sin there is always a lie behind it. But Jesus says in the same chapter, "and you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (Jn 8:32). Our defense against sin is the truth. By knowing our true, victorious identity as believers in Christ, we find freedom from the power of sin.

Discuss: How does knowing the truth give us power not to sin?

CONCLUSION

The Gospel is the foundation of our relationship with God. From God's perspective, our relationship is built solely upon Christ's forgiveness and perfect righteousness given to us by faith. This truth should bring the ability to be honest about our sin before God, and the assurance of His abundant grace toward us. It should inspire us to live as righteous ones not because we have made ourselves righteous, but because that is what God, by His grace, has declared us to be.

What is truly important concerning victory over sin is a growing, dynamic faith in Christ, a faith that is founded on Christ's accomplishments on the cross, so that His power mightily works in us revealing sins and weaknesses more clearly. This faith understands and appreciates the grace of God more deeply and leads us to know God more intimately.

QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION, REVIEW AND APPLICATION

- How do you allow your feelings instead of your faith in God's Word to affect the way that you view your life in Christ?
- When fighting against sin, which brings more power into your life: trying harder or believing more?
- How is "count" in Romans 6:11 related to faith?
- What has happened to your sinful nature according to Paul's letter to the Romans?
- How can you live by the Spirit?

SPIRITUAL
CHARACTER

4

LESSON

Repentance As a Way Of Life

☞ Lesson Purpose

The purpose of this lesson is to help the trainee understand how a life focused on the Gospel leads us to a lifestyle of repentance and faith. The Gospel should create faith in our hearts so that we will be truly honest about our sin, able to release it in repentance before God and experience the joy of God's great grace and mercy.

☞ Main Points and Desired Outcomes

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

- True repentance involves being honest about our sin instead of making excuses about it or denying it.
- True repentance does not involve penance since penance shows a lack of trust in God's forgiveness.
- Sincere and humble believers ought to repent whenever the Holy Spirit reveals sin.
- Understand that a life focused upon God's grace should lead to an honest dealing with sin and a joyful, continual, and complete surrender to the Lord.
- Grow to have a lifestyle that is increasing in the knowledge of God, repenting more deeply of sin, and discovering the true riches of God's grace found in Jesus Christ.
- Become one of the chief repenters in his congregation and a minister of grace as he himself experiences the great grace of God.

☞ Suggestions to Trainers

Use personal examples and stories to show how repentance has impacted and deepened your own spiritual life and how God honors those who are repentant.

☞ Suggestions for Mentoring Time

1. Read Psalm 51:1-13 and use it as a basis for your opening prayer time.
Discuss the questions in the text and at the end of the chapter.
Homework: Complete the Action Plan, Read the assigned Chapter(s) for the next meeting time.
Pray for ministry needs.

INTRODUCTION

We have been learning about our adoption by God and how this should affect our thinking and functioning like sons instead of orphans. Our adoption, which has brought us into a new relationship with God, should then lead us to focus upon the Gospel and not simply the law. From this we learn not only what we are supposed to do as Christians, but we also experience the motivation and power to truly grow in holiness. We also talked about life in the Spirit and how this produces a far greater holiness than if we bound our life to the law, because the Spirit changes our hearts and not simply our behavior.

Heart changes require first the breaking of the old heart. This happens in the repentance that we experience at salvation. And what we discover is that God continues this work in our sanctification by breaking our hearts in order to make them new. As Proverbs 6:23 says, "Corrections of discipline are the way to life." Here we discover God's way to life-reproof, which corrects the wayward heart, responded to in humility. This is not only the way which introduces us to the life God offers us in Christ, but it is the way of life continually leading us back to the grace of God which again and again renews our hearts.

It is this way of life that we now consider. If we could capture the central idea of this lesson, we might say, "Repentance is the way of life."

I. CHARACTERISTICS OF TRUE REPENTANCE

For us to get a picture of what true repentance is and the fruit that it produces in our life, turn to Psalm 51. Here is one of the most graphic descriptions of genuine repentance. It is David's psalm of confession, his own heart has become broken over his sin. From this psalm we learn the traits of true repentance, the reason why repentance must be a way of life, and also the blessings of a life of repentance.

1. Acknowledge Your Sin

The first trait of true repentance is a humble acknowledgment of our sin. David confesses in verse 3, "For I know my transgressions, and my sin is always before me." One of the great diseases of sin is that it blinds and deceives the heart. David lived under this deception for nearly a year, until Nathan the prophet confronted him with his sin through a story. But the moment that Nathan reproved David, David responded by humbly confessing, "I have sinned."

Example

Once a pastor had a temper that would periodically flare up even during meetings with fellow church leaders. When this pastor admitted to a friend that he was praying that God would give him self-control, the friend wisely stated: "Brother, you are praying about the wrong thing—your problem is not a lack of self-control, your problem is with anger. If God gave you self-control you would not be any better because you would only use it to hide the sin which is anger."

This pastor had problems facing his sin and in such a condition could never truly repent and change. In Psalm 32, David recounts the time when he was aware of his sin, but refused to acknowledge it (v 3), and here we see the key difference between awareness of sin and repentance of sin. He refused to acknowledge that what he did was wrong. Sometimes, we simply don't see our sin, but often times we know we have sinned, but our heart refuses to admit that what we have done is truly wrong. We often make excuses, such as, "The person deserved what I did to him." or, "I couldn't help it, I lost control of myself." Through these excuses, we escape from honestly facing our sin and acknowledging our wrongdoing. But the repentant heart sees and admits the sin that has been committed. It owns up to the sin, and acknowledges that what we have done is truly wrong.

Discuss: Why must you acknowledge your sin?

2. Realize The "Sinfulness Of Sin"

Secondly, a repentant heart realizes what sin truly is. David confesses in Psalm 51:4, "Against you, you only, have I sinned, and done what is evil in your sight..." David sinned against other people, but a repentant heart realizes that our greatest offense and guilt rest before God, because the essence of all sin is placing ourselves above God. Sin is like throwing God down to the ground and seating ourselves upon His throne. A truly repentant heart grieves over such an arrogant attitude.

Example

At a Christian youth camp, a teenage boy and girl were caught in an immoral situation. They were both terribly embarrassed and when they were taken to the office of the camp to be sent home, the girl began to cry uncontrollably. After about ten minutes of listening to this sobbing the counselor asked her, "Why are you crying like this? Is it because you were caught and you are afraid of what your parents will say? Or is it because you realize that what you have done is against God and you are sorry for how you have offended Him?" Immediately, the girl stopped crying, because she realized that she hadn't even thought about her wrong before God.

For the truly repentant heart, great remorse comes from the realization of what sin truly is. We realize the sinfulness of sin. We have dishonored God and exalted ourselves above Him. This is the greatest shame to the one who knows that God is his Creator. It is also a great shame to those who know the incredible love of Christ. Though He is our Creator, He humbled Himself by dying on the cross to rescue unworthy creatures like us. Knowing God's incredible love, the repentant person is crushed by the realization that he has violated and abused this amazing love.

This kind of remorse leads us to confess to God along with David, "you are proved right when you speak and justified when you judge." Whatever God's judgment will be upon my sin, He is blameless and I am worthy of the judgment. A sense that we deserve God's just judgment comes from a repentant heart that knows what its sin truly is.

So true repentance sees and acknowledges the sin. It also understands the sinfulness of sin, as it is committed against God.

Discuss: What does “the sinfulness of sin” mean?

3. Be Brokenhearted Over Sin

In true repentance, the heart is broken and contrite. There is a brokenness over sin. Psalm 51:17 says, “The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, You will not despise.” Here we are told that God does not delight in the outward expressions, which can become cheap imitations that don’t reflect the true attitudes of the heart. In Israel’s day, an animal sacrifice was often being made while the heart was never truly repentant, and God was repulsed by this outward show (Isa 1:10-15).

God does not delight in the outward expressions, which can become cheap imitations that don’t reflect the true attitudes of the heart.

A broken and contrite heart is one that has been crushed and brought low. It does not soar on high, being filled with pride. It takes the low place, the sinner’s place, as it grieves over pride, which had no basis, and rebellion which wrongfully usurped the supreme Creator. He alone is over all things. It is a heart that is subdued and made tender by the grief of our failure to love the greatest Lover of our soul.

Discuss: Why does repentance require being brokenhearted over sin?

4. The Dangers Of Apathy And Penance

All of us know how we struggle with the issues of the heart. Sin deceives us so that we easily become phonies, and our outward expressions are often empty containers lacking the true desires of our heart. Let us be aware that while it is easy for us, on the one hand, to not sense the true “sinfulness” of sin. On the other hand, it is easy to turn our repentance into a penance by which we try to pay the penalty of our sin through our own suffering. Both are just as repulsive in the eyes of God, because both are full of arrogant presumption. To be apathetic about sin is to belittle our sin and to think more highly of ourselves than we ought. But to try to make ourselves worthy of God’s forgiveness through our penance is to fail to humbly acknowledge our true need for God’s grace and a Savior who alone paid the terrible penalty of our sin and who provides the only righteousness acceptable in the eyes of a perfectly holy God.

...to try to make ourselves worthy of God’s forgiveness through our penance is to fail to humbly acknowledge our true need for God’s grace.

The great danger for the “religious” person is to despise the apathy, but not the penance, because he doesn’t see the arrogant presumption of penance. He thinks that he is expressing his unworthiness, but his deceived heart in reality is expressing arrogance in the worst degree. He is assuming that his suffering for sin will make him acceptable to God. Here again he is making little of his sin, little of the holiness of God, and little of Christ’s sacrifice on the cross, while he is making much of himself.

Someone might say, “Well, I am a Protestant. I don’t do penance for my sin.” Do you really think so? How long do you weep over your sin and beat yourself inside for the wrong you have done? For hours or days? Do you sometimes feel that God cannot truly forgive you, because your sin is too terrible? Do you sometimes try to do something to make up for your sin so that you think that God now accepts you? These are forms of penance and are not true repentance, and if your repentance doesn’t produce the “fruit of repentance,” maybe it is because you are not repenting, but simply doing penance.

In true repentance, the heart is broken and it is humbled (brought low). But if our sorrow leads us to become preoccupied with our sin and our unworthiness, then our repentance is turning into penance. A wise Christian used to advise people, “For every one look you take at sin, take ten looks at Christ.” This is good advice for us as well, that our repentance may not become a practice of penance which leads to a lifestyle of misery and self-suffering for our sin.

True repentance is a way of life because it creates within us a renewed heart for God as we see our sin and acknowledge it. True repentance is a way of life because our heart is broken and humbled and made to love God again. But true repentance has its counterfeits, as does everything else in this world. Therefore, we must let God’s Word once again instruct us, that we might not fall into the snares of something that looks like repentance, but does not bear the fruit of true repentance.

Discuss: What are the dangers of apathy and penance?

II. TRUE REPENTANCE AS A WAY OF LIFE

To live a life characterized by repentance the following concepts should be understood:

1. The Father is Waiting to Forgive Us

Most people will not be honest enough to acknowledge their sin unless they are certain that they will be able to bear the punishment. Children may hide important information from their parents out of fear of punishment. We can be the same way with God and others when we are guilty!

We have nothing to fear when we repent of our sin. We cannot bear the punishment for our sin. Jesus Christ already has! So that "there is now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus" (Ro 8:1). We can be honest about our sin since we know that God is waiting to forgive us (1Jn 1:9, Heb 4:16).

God invites us to the deep wells of His grace, that we might not be afraid to sincerely draw near to Him in all His holiness. God knows that honesty and transparency grow best in the soil of unchanging love, and this is what He offers to us. So God has established a new covenant. Christ has fulfilled the law that grace may be given in full. God has created a new heart in us, so that sin no longer rules. Instead sin becomes an old, despised master as we grow to love God.

God knows that honesty and transparency grow best in the soil of unchanging love, and this is what He offers to us.

Discuss: Do you see God waiting to punish you or waiting to forgive you? How does this affect your relationship with Him?

2. Repentance is an Honest Admission of our Real Problem

The idea that repentance is a way of life seems strange to some Christians, because it is easy to think that we are no longer, as Luther put it, "real, great, hard-boiled" sinners. Notice David's admission as he comes to have a repentant heart: "Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin my mother conceived me" (Ps 51:5). Certainly, this is an important statement, which speaks of the seed of sin that is inherited from each generation since Adam and Eve committed the first sin. But David is not concerned with giving us a theological statement on original sin here. Rather, this is an honest admission of his real problem, and it would do us well to take to heart his sober confession.

Sin is not just isolated behavior patterns of wrongdoing. Rather, it is ... an integral part of our natural attitudes, beliefs and behavior deeply rooted in our alienation from God.

A lifestyle of repentance is an important part of our Christian walk, because our problem with sin is very real and very deep. Even after the Apostle Paul had become a Christian and had known the Lord for more than 20 years, he admitted his struggle with sin. In Romans 7:15 he says, "I do not understand what I do. For what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do." Sin is not just isolated behavior patterns of wrongdoing. Rather, it is a part of our fallen nature and an integral part of our natural attitudes, beliefs and behavior deeply rooted in our alienation from God. This captures the real problem that we have with sin, and therefore our need for ongoing, deep-down, heart-breaking repentance. If we are to experience deep, ongoing renewal in our spiritual life, we must also soberly admit our real problem with sin.

Discuss: Why is a lifestyle of repentance important for a Christian?

3. God is Committed To Working In Us

When we understand our real problem with sin will we be encouraged with the next verse in Psalm 51: "Surely you desire truth in the inner parts; you teach me wisdom in the inmost place" (v. 6).

God had created in David a heart that knew the truth again, as David's heart was broken over his sin. He says in Psalm 32:2 "Blessed is the man ... in whose spirit there is no deceit." God had taken away the deceit of sin in David's heart, and his repentance was the fruit of God's work.

Be encouraged that in spite of our sin, God is at work to produce truth and wisdom within us. Our times of deep repentance are really the work of God creating truth in our inner being and wisdom in our spirit. Therefore, we should open up our hearts for God to freely do this work within us. We need His help. If we are sincere about walking in the truth, then we can pray as David did: "Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there be any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting" (Psalm 139:23-24). It is not easy to really want our hearts to be broken, but it is through this brokenness that we walk in truth and wisdom.

Discuss: How do these verses in Psalms encourage you in your Christian walk?

III. BLESSINGS OF TRUE REPENTANCE

The truths in these lessons focus upon our new relationship with God based upon His grace, and a life of freedom and power. Usually when we think about grace and freedom, we get nervous about the fruit which all of this “liberation” might produce. Does teaching grace encourage sloppy Christian living? The answer is ‘no;’ it does not encourage sloppy Christian living. On the contrary, teaching grace results in people so in love with the Father that they want to obey His every command.

The Bible teaches the blessings of a repentant heart. David asks that God would respond according to His loving-kindness in restoring what he had before he had sinned. David anticipates that he would experience God’s grace again (v1), that he would be clean from his sin (v2), that he would have joy (vv. 8, 12), that his sin would be erased so that God does not see it anymore (v9), that he would have a right spirit (v10, 12) and that he would have the Holy Spirit (v11).

We can be certain that God will do this for us, that these are the blessings of repentance promised to us, because we are told in 2 Corinthians 1:20, “For no matter how many promises God has made, they are ‘Yes’ in Christ.” All the promises by God are “yes” to us who are in Christ. In all the ways in which David asks God to respond to his repentance, we find promises or principles which assure us that this is truly how God will respond to our repentance.

In the end, in verse 17, David expresses the final and greatest of these blessings when he says as a statement of fact, God “will not despise a broken and contrite heart.” We may question His pleasure in us at times, but God will never turn away from a heart that is broken over its sin. This is always the way back to God, and we will always find a welcome when our heart is broken over our sin. He delights in this kind of heart and will draw this heart near to Himself.

The nearness of God is the great reward of a life of repentance. Jesus tells the repentant Christian in the Laodicean church I will “come in and eat with him and he with Me” (Rev 3:14-20). This speaks of the intimacy that we will know as our hearts continue to be broken over sin and we enter into a deeper fellowship with God. This happens as we make repentance a way of life.

Discuss: What are the blessings of true repentance?

CONCLUSION

In this lesson we have been talking about David the king of Israel. The fact that David was a king did not mean he was exempt from repenting. On the contrary, his leadership position meant he needed to model true repentance to all Israel. Wise pastors and church planters teach their congregations to repent. In fact, leaders should be among the first to admit their struggles with sin. Furthermore, they ought to be willing to repent of their sin to offenders. When the leader can do this, a congregation or fellow ministry associates can be more intimate with God as well.

Discuss: Why is it important for leaders to admit their struggles with sin?

QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION, REVIEW AND APPLICATION

- What is true repentance?
- What are the dangers of the heart after we see our sin?
- What is the difference between repentance and penance? Define both.
- How can I recognize when my repentance has turned into penance?
- List the blessings of repentance requested by David in Psalm 51:1-2, 7-17. Write the Scripture reference that states the promise or principle that makes these blessings sure to us who are in Christ.
- Do you feel that God rejects you when you have repented of your sin? Why do you sense this rejection?
- Do you think that you should be the “chief” repenter in your church? Why or why not?

ACTION PLAN

- Set aside a special time (1-3 hours) to read and pray through the scriptures in the chapters of “The Transforming Power of the Gospel” and “Repentance as a Way of Life”.

PRAYER

PRAYER
1
LESSON

How to Facilitate Prayer

HOW TO MOBILIZE PRAYER FOR YOUR CHURCH PLANT

☞ Lesson Purpose

The purpose of this lesson is to help church planters understand the strategic role of prayer in church planting and to give them practical ideas on how to mobilize prayer for their church planting ministries.

☞ Main Points and Desired Outcomes

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

- Understand how to mobilize prayer for church planting.
- Know the principle of the strategic role of prayer in church planting.
- Participate in praying and mobilizing prayer for his/her specific church planting efforts.

☞ Appendix

1A Prayer Triplets

☞ Suggestions to Trainers

This is a workshop lesson. Review the key verses identified in section I and then talk with students about ideas for mobilizing prayer for church planting. What strategies have they tried in mobilizing prayer for their own ministries? Share experience from your own personal or ministry life, showing how prayer undergirds church planting.

☞ Suggestions for Mentoring Time

1. Read 1 Timothy 2:3-4 and use it as a basis for your opening prayer time.
Personal Growth Question: If you could change one thing in your spiritual life what would it be?
Suggestions for discussion time:
Discuss the questions in the text and at the end of the chapter.
Homework: Complete the Action Plan, Read the assigned Chapter(s) for the next meeting time..
Pray for ministry needs.

I. PRAYER—A VITAL ASPECT OF EVANGELISM AND CHURCH PLANTING

The apostle Paul believed that prayer was a vital aspect of evangelism and church planting. He prayed and encouraged the early Christians to pray for the advance of the Gospel. We see examples throughout the New Testament Scriptures:

- In talking about his desire for the Jews to receive the Gospel, Paul tells the believers in Rome, "Brothers, my heart's desire and prayer to God for the Israelites is that they may be saved" (Ro 10:1).
- When Paul warned the Ephesian Christians of the spiritual battle they were to engage in, he told them to put on the whole armor of God and to stand against the devil's schemes. Standing against the devil's schemes involved understanding God's truth about salvation, using the Word of God as a sword, and continuous prayer. Paul urged the Ephesian believers to "...pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints" (Eph 6:18).
- In regard to the advance of the Gospel, Paul specifically asked believers, "Pray also for me, that whenever I open my mouth, words may be given to me so that I will fearlessly make known the mystery of the Gospel... Pray that I may declare it fearlessly, as I should" (Eph 6:19-20).
- Paul wrote a similar message to the believers in Colossae: "Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful. And pray for us, too, that God may open a door for our message, so that we may proclaim the mystery of Christ, for which I am in chains" (Col 4:2-4).
- Paul also told the church in Thessalonica, "...pray for us that the message of the Lord may spread rapidly and be honored, just as it was with you. And pray that we may be delivered from wicked and

evil men, for not everyone has faith. But the Lord is faithful and He will strengthen and protect you from the evil one" (2Th 3:1-3).

It is clear from these passages that the early Christians prayed strategically for the spread of the Gospel and against the evil influences which hinder the Gospel from advancing.. These same prayer needs still exist today. In developing and implementing a church planting strategy, **take prayer seriously**. Do nothing without prayer. Your saturation church planting ministry must be born out of prayer and then continuously be bathed in prayer from start to finish.

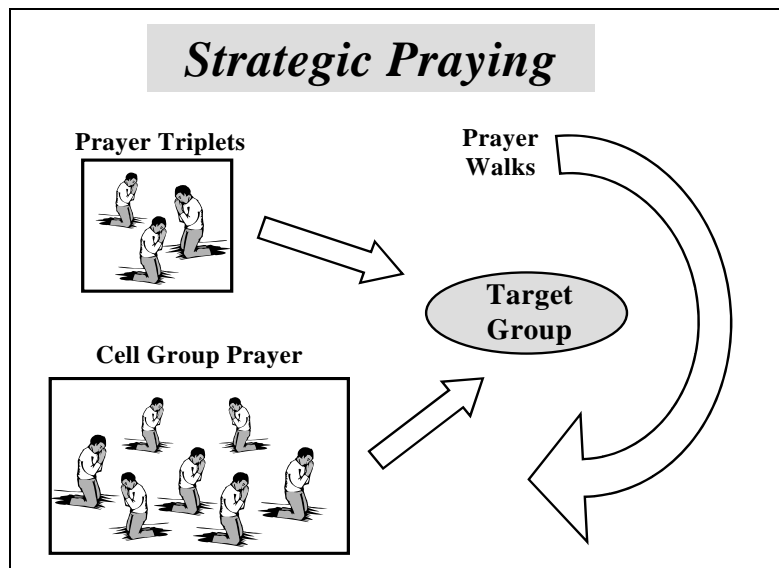
Discuss: How is prayer a vital aspect of planting new churches? Are you taking prayer seriously enough?

II. HOW TO INTEGRATE PRAYER WITH EVANGELISM AND CHURCH PLANTING

In the previous section, we saw that the apostle Paul viewed prayer as a vital aspect of evangelism and church planting. What are practical ways in which you can involve believers in praying for your church planting ministry? Several ideas are discussed in this section. The essential points for mobilizing prayer for church planting are:

- Ask God to lead you to people with a burden for your target area.
- Be committed to good information dissemination between your church planting work and your prayer team.
- Encourage regular, specific, concentrated prayer *for* the Gospel to penetrate the hearts of people living in your target area and *against* evil influence which keep people in bondage to Satan and which hinder the advance of the Gospel in your target area.

Figure 3.1 Forms of Strategic Prayer



1. Large Group Prayer

Often Christians are stirred to prayer by participating in a dynamic prayer event that takes them beyond their previous experience. By praying with a large group of other Christians from various backgrounds and churches, believers realize that they are not alone and isolated but part of a great movement of God. They see that prayer is not a boring exercise but something exciting, faith building, and power releasing. On all five major continents of the world, prayer concerts have stimulated prayer on a large scale, promoted unity among Christians, and fueled evangelism and church planting efforts.

Large group prayer meetings focus on two main biblical concepts:

- Prayer directed *inward*—asking God to reveal to His church the “fullness” of Christ as Lord in her midst. This is the idea of revival, renewal and awakening of the church.
- Prayer directed *outward*—asking God to “fulfill” His purpose through His church among all the nations. This is the fulfillment of the Great Commission—world evangelization, local church evangelism, and saturation church planting.

Large group prayer meetings can be organized for a local church or on an area basis involving many local churches with an emphasis on unity and working together. The important thing is to pray regularly and corporately.

The following are suggested elements that can be included in a large group prayer meeting. Plan on 2-3 hours for the prayer event, such as an evening or afternoon. The length of each element depends on the particular goals for each concert of prayer. However, it is important to have all of the elements as part of the prayer meeting. This ensures that the meeting stays focused, balanced and flows well.

Discuss: What is the difference between inward and outward prayer?

1. *Theme*

It is helpful to develop your prayer meeting around a particular theme or topic. This will help the prayer to stay focused and allow prayers to be specific. For example, in the capital city of Kazakstan, a prayer event was held around the theme of reconciliation. The celebration focused on God as the reconciler of people to, and on Christians as agents of reconciliation. During the prayer times, both Russians and Kazaks asked forgiveness for past wrongs done to each other. This prayer concert helped to create a spirit of unity and common purpose among the Russian and Kazak churches in the city.

Discuss: What are some themes of prayer for your area?

2. *Agenda*

Welcome everyone and use Scripture to present the topic or theme of the prayer time. What does the Word of God say about that theme?

3. *Celebration*

Praise God for His faithfulness, His Kingdom, His Son Jesus Christ, etc. Be sure that praise focuses on God's character. Highlight important issues in spiritual awakening and world evangelization.

4. *Confession and Preparation*

Have participants reaffirm their readiness to hear God's voice and their desire to serve the Church and the world through this ministry of intercession. Lead them in prayer for confession of any known sin, that they might be clean and ready to pray. This does not mean that the confession has to be out loud. Ask for the filling of the Holy Spirit and His leading in all that is prayed. Spend time quietly waiting on God to hear what He is saying in Scripture or through the Holy Spirit.

5. *Small Group Prayer*

Have participants form small groups of 2-6 people and pray about the topic as it relates to local, regional, national and international level. After the designated time for small group praying, lead in prayer for a growing prayer movement. Pray that God will daily keep all participants consistent and persistent in prayer. Pray for the emerging prayer movement in your city or town or locality. Pray for God to raise up concerted prayer in the church nationwide.

6. *Presentation*

Information and materials may be used throughout the prayer time to help focus and motivate those praying. Maps showing areas of need can be great visual aids. Local maps can be made showing where churches exist in the area and where there are none at all. Also maps showing where there is high unemployment, single parent families, etc. can help inspire breakthrough prayer.

7. *Praise and Worship*

A time of praise and worship of God for His wonderful ways. Offer yourselves to be answers to your prayers and live accordingly.

Discuss: Are there currently any large group prayer meetings with the purpose of praying specifically for new churches? If not, what is keeping you from starting one?

2. Prayer Triplets

A prayer triplet consists of three individuals or three couples committed to meeting regularly together (weekly or every two weeks) to pray for nine non-Christian friends, colleagues or neighbors they would like to see become Christians. Ideally, those prayed for should be people whom the praying individuals frequently see or speak to. Prayer triplets are discussed in more detail in appendix 3A.

Prayer triplets are ideal when the church planter has a nucleus of believers in his target area who are seeking to help him plant a church. They are an excellent way to involve new believers to pray for their unsaved relatives and friends. In addition, prayer triplets are very effective for involving existing churches in evangelism of their own communities.

Discuss: How could forming prayer triplets or prayer partners with the specific goal of praying for new churches help you with your goals?

3. Prayer Walking

Prayer walking is not a new idea. Prayer walking enables the participants to get out to see and be where the needs are. When we are shut up in a room, we do not have the same understanding as when we are face to face with real life situations and needs. Walking around a neighborhood in prayer gives a totally different perspective on that neighborhood and its needs than just taking a pleasant stroll through the same neighborhood.

In church planting, prayer walking is a tool that can help to break up the fallow ground and prepare the soil of people's hearts to receive the Gospel. Prayer walking should be done by the church planting team or others with a burden for the particular area being targeted for church planting. The prayer walkers will need to walk and pray around, through and in the target area repeatedly. They should do this with sensitivity to the Holy Spirit.

Prayer walking should be followed by strategic evangelism. Evangelism must be preceded and accompanied by prayer. If you and your church planting team are going to distribute literature, show the Jesus film, feed the poor, or any other evangelism activity, a key part of that outreach should include prayer before and during the event. Prayer walking breaks up the fallow ground and prepares hearts and homes for the sowing of the seed of God's word. Streets that have been prayed over in this way are much more fruitful than those streets that have not been prayed over.

Prayer walking can be done in various ways: individually or large/small groups. The following two case studies are real-life examples of how prayer walking was used in church planting ministry.

Case Study 1:

A neighborhood known to contain a large number of problem families was being targeted for a church plant. Unemployment, family breakups, drug addiction and crime were very common. In the early part of the church planting effort, a prayer walk was planned for every street in the neighborhood. As they walked and prayed, they recorded the insights the Holy Spirit gave them. Many other prayer walks followed the initial one. Some prayer walks took place around the local school, some in and around the shopping area, and some around the circumference of the neighborhood. One prayer walk took place in the woods overlooking the neighborhood. In these woods, known to be a place where drugs were handed out, witchcraft symbols were found on the trees. The prayer walk team spent time praying against these evil influences. In the three years since the neighborhood was targeted for church planting, social problems have diminished, crime has decreased by 40%, and a church of 70-80 people has been planted. There is now a spiritual influence to challenge the pervading evil, and God is at work in many lives (DAWN Europa Prayer Manual, August 1994, pg. 13).

Case Study 2:

A church planter and his family moved into an apartment block in a city which they desired to see a church started. Late one evening, the family walked through the apartment block together. Standing in front of each apartment door, the family prayed for the people in the apartment. The young son prayed that each person in the apartment would ask Jesus into his or her heart. One daughter prayed that the family's financial needs would be met, another daughter prayed for good family relationships. The mother prayed for the health of the family members and the father prayed for God's blessing to be on that household. After the prayer walk, the church planter and his family saw 14 people in the apartment block come to Christ and a small church formed.

Practical Considerations for Prayer Walking

- Determine the area to prayer walk. Decide whether to take a small area and regularly prayer walk it (e.g. once a week) or a larger area bit by bit. This decision should be made with the church planter/team so that prayer walks can be linked with evangelistic activities.
- **Set a specific time for the prayer walk.** Prayer walk in groups of two or three. This is less threatening for others to see strolling along, apparently in conversation with each other rather than a large group or a single individual. Set a time limit for the prayer walk.
- **Decide on a particular focus of prayer,** such as protection of children, prayer for the poor, conversions to Christ, racial harmony, etc. (Paragraph E below contains a list of suggested topics). Decide on a particular passage of Scripture to focus your prayers around. For example, you may want to use the different phrases of the Lord's prayer to guide your prayers. Or, you may choose to pray through the verses of a psalm.
- **Walk at a leisurely, steady pace, taking in the surroundings without obviously staring.** Pray with your eyes open and in a conversational manner, talking to the Lord about the needs of the people around you, the homes you pass, the schools, shops or factories, etc. Pray silently some of the time, particularly when you pass other people.
- **At the end of the prayer walk, share briefly together.** Write down these thoughts and impressions in your spiritual journal. Set a date for the next prayer walk.

Discuss: How do the Case Studies impact you? Have you ever prayer walked as a church?

4. Prayer Support Team

Each church planter or church planting team should develop a prayer support team. These are people from your own church or other Christian friends or family who have a burden to pray for the you, your team, your families and your church planting ministry. Ask people to pray for you regularly, such as once a week, daily, or monthly. Write your prayer supporters' names on a calendar and the days that they have committed to pray for you. This will help you to remember who is praying for you and when, so that you will know whom to contact with urgent prayer requests.

Your prayer support team may choose to meet together to pray for you and your ministry—once a month or even more frequently. One person on the prayer support team should take responsibility for contacting the church planter or church planting team for updated prayer requests and answers to prayer. The prayer support team needs to be kept informed of answers to prayer and new prayer needs so that they can rejoice in what God is doing and also be encouraged to keep on praying.

Discuss: Why is it important for leadership to have a prayer team?

5. Topics for Strategic Prayer

Prayer groups, prayer walkers, and prayer support teams all need specific topics on which to focus their prayer efforts. The following are examples of topics for prayer that can be used during prayer walking or by prayer teams. Through your research, you will have learned about other specific things to pray for as well as those listed here.

- For families, that they might be strengthened and blessed, and acknowledge the Lord.
- For the unemployed, that they may be able to get jobs.
- For churches and individuals, that they might have a hunger for God.
- For schools, that the teachers and students may know peace, harmony and the love of Jesus.
- For shops and banks, that righteousness might prevail in money matters.
- For local government offices, for righteousness and good decisions and power used rightly.
- Pray for God to reveal the gatekeepers, those who are influential in their community and if won to Christ will open the way for the advance of the Gospel.

III. RESEARCH: GATHERING INFORMATION FOR PRAYER

One of the first activities you did as a church planter was to research your target area (Manual 1, SCP Vision Lesson 4 "Principles of Research"). Use that research now as a prayer guide.

You began your research by locating the churches and mission groups working in your target area. Pray for each by name; for their spiritual growth; for their outreach in the area; for any problems you might know of that they are having. Has the Church been perceived as making a positive or negative contribution to the area? Is there a history of division or cooperation? Is the Church growing? Where? Pray as Jesus prayed in John 17:23, "May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that You sent me and have loved them even as You have loved me."

As you continue praying, remember the different groups you identified in your harvest field research. Are there areas that have always been known for their poverty, wealth, prostitution, persecution, etc.? Ask God to show you how you might reach people in the different groups. Are there physical needs that you should be helping to meet in the name of Christ? Are there any new age, occultic or satanic groups or centers? Pray for God to deliver His people from the influence of the evil one through these groups (Mt 6:13). Pray by name for government leaders and people of influence in the community. Ask God to give you divine appointments with people who can open doors for the Gospel.

The information you gained in your research should be a part of your daily prayer for your target community. Continue to use it to determine areas that should be targeted for prayer walks and to give you insight into potential evangelistic ministries. Share this information with your prayer team and others with a burden for your target area.

Discuss: What types of research could you do to encourage yourself and others to pray more?

CONCLUSION

There is a saying among Christians that the "army of God advances victoriously on its knees." This word picture captures the strategic role of prayer in the advancement of God's Kingdom on earth. Church planting is a spiritual activity, involving spiritual warfare against the powers of darkness (Eph 6). As church planters, our work must be born in prayer, preceded by prayer and accompanied by prayer. Only then will it bear the fruit that God intended.

QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION, REVIEW AND APPLICATION

- How do you devote yourself to prayer (Col 4:2-4) or pray at all times (Eph 6:18) as Paul exhorted the early Christians to do?
- Have you ever been on a prayer walk? Describe your experience. What did you do? Where did you go? What kinds of things did you pray for? How did it impact your ministry in that area?
- What are some other ideas to help facilitate prayer for your church planting ministry?
- What are ways in which you can keep your prayer support team informed of prayer needs and answers to prayer?
- What types of information do you feel would be appropriate to share with a prayer team and what kinds of information would be inappropriate?
- Give examples of how you have seen prayer linked with evangelism. What were the results?

ACTION PLAN

- Determine to do your first large group prayer event to support the vision of Saturation Church Planting. Write down the day and date you will do this: _____
- Determine to do regular prayer events. Write down how often you will do this here: _____
- Do an inductive study of Ezra 9:1-10:17. Include answers to the following questions:
 - What was the specific sin of the people? (Ezr 9:1-2)
 - What was the response of Ezra and the other leaders to this sin? (Ezr 9:3, 5; 10:1)
 - What was the attribute of God on which Ezra based his hope? (Ezr 9:15)
 - What was the response of the people who saw Ezra's repentance? (Ezr 10:1-4)
 - How did the revival penetrate the society? (Ezr 10:9-17)
 - Remember to include the application to your own life, your church and your society.
 - Organize a concert of prayer for your church or small group using the pattern you have learned in this lesson.

SOURCES

- Livingston, Glenn. *Prayer that Strengthens and Expands the Church*. South Holland, IL: 1999. (This *Alliance for Saturation Church Planting* publication is available from The Bible League, 16801 Van Dam Road, South Holland, IL, 60473 USA. tel 1-800-334-7017. Email: BibleLeague@xc.org)
- Mills, Brian. *DAWN Europa Prayer Manual*. Birkshire, England: DAWN Europa, 1994.



Prayer Triplets

I. WHAT IS A PRAYER TRIPLET?

It is a simple convenient way to win people to Christ. You just link up with two other Christians and pray together regularly for the salvation of nine friends or relatives who do not know Jesus personally. Then rejoice as you see Matthew 18:19-20 fulfilled: *“Again, I tell you that if two or three of you on earth agree about anything you ask for, it will be done for you by my Father in heaven. For where two or three come together in my name, there I am with them.”*

II. HOW TO MAKE A PRAYER TRIPLET WORK

1. Choose two Christian friends or relatives to make your “triplet.”
2. Each of you choose the names of three people who do not know Jesus as personal Savior and Lord.
3. Agree on a time to meet once a week to pray together for your nine. You can meet in your home, workplace, school or before church.
4. Pray together for the nine people by name to accept Christ as personal Savior. Include their personal needs and family members.
5. As much as possible, as God leads, involve yourself with your “three” in a friendly, helpful way. Look for God to give you opportunities to share the Gospel message with these people. Pray for each other as you seek to do this.
6. When the people you have been praying for become Christians, continue to pray for them as God leads, but in your triplet choose other friends and relatives to pray for who don't know Jesus. The focus of the prayer triplet should be friends and relatives who do not know Jesus personally. *Note: You may want to pray as a family using the “Prayer Triplet” concept!*

III. PRAYER TRIPLET WORKSHEET

1. My prayer triplet partners are:

- _____
- _____

2. We are praying for:

List the names of nine unsaved friends for whom your prayer triplet will pray regularly:

My List:	List 2	List 3

BIBLE STUDY METHODS

BIBLE STUDY
METHODS

1

LESSON

Introduction to the Inductive Bible Study Method

LETTING THE BIBLE TEACH US

☞ Lesson Purpose

The purpose of this lesson is to introduce the inductive Bible study method, and explain why it is superior to other methods of Bible study.

☞ Main Points And Desired Outcomes

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

- Understand the difference between deduction and induction.
- Be convinced that the inductive method is better than the “common” approach to studying the Word.
- Know the three stages of the inductive method: Observation, Interpretation, Application
- Know that when the inductive method is not rushed, it provides a solid foundation for understanding the Bible.

☞ Suggestions for Mentoring Time

1. Read Ephesians 4:11-13 and use it as a basis for your opening prayer time.

Personal Growth Question: How has your Bible reading this week impacted your life?

Suggestions for discussion time:

Discuss the questions in the text and at the end of the chapter

Homework: Read the assigned Chapter(s) for the next meeting time..

Pray for ministry needs.

INTRODUCTION

Since we believe the Bible was given to us by God for instruction, we must approach it carefully and accurately (2Ti 2:15). The divine nature of the Scriptures demands that we read it with the intent of *learning from it*, rather than *making it say what we want*. How can we rightly understand the Word? The inductive Bible study method is designed to help every believer—layman or pastor—understand the Word of God. This lesson will introduce this simple, effective method. Following lessons will describe each step in more detail.

The inductive Bible study method is designed to help every believer understand the Word of God.

I. THE INDUCTIVE APPROACH

It examines the particulars of a situation, and then attempts to form a general principle from them. It is normally used in those situations where we do not have a general principle that seems to fit, and are therefore unable to use deduction.

1. Inductive Reasoning

Deduction is essentially the process of using pre-existing knowledge. Induction, by contrast, is about *learning*. We assume that we do not yet know the answers, and examine the facts in order to try to understand *what they mean*. In this method, the emphasis is on the specific details and facts of the situation. Figure 1.3 shows the progression of the inductive method.

2. Inductive Bible Study

When we use the inductive method to study the Bible, we come to the Scripture as learners. We acknowledge to God and to ourselves that we do not yet know all the answers. Our purpose is to *gain understanding*. We come with a commitment to carefully examine the text, and allow the Lord to speak to us through it. The deductive method usually leads to a quick sermon—the inductive method leads to spiritual growth.

Discuss: What is the inductive approach?

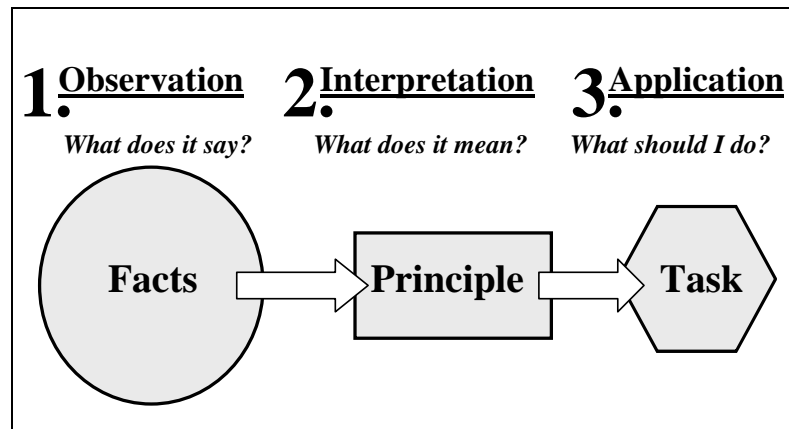
II. STEPS OF INDUCTIVE BIBLE STUDY

The three steps of the inductive Bible study method are each important. They build progressively on each other to lead us from the Bible text to a correct application to our lives. Essentially, the three steps ask three different questions about the text.

- What does it say? [Observation]
- What does it mean? [Interpretation]
- What should I do? [Application]

The relationship between each of these steps is shown in Figure 1.3. Notice the logical progression through the three steps, beginning with the Bible text and ending with application to our Christian life. If the steps are not completed in the proper order, the result is flawed.

Figure 1.3 The Three Steps



1. Observation – What Does It Say?

The first step of the inductive method is observation. It is also the most important step—in the same way a solid foundation is critical to the construction of a house. At this stage, we observe the text, looking for every detail we can find in it, and recording our observations. The key to this step is to ask an endless series of questions such as "Who?, What?, Why?, Where?, When?, etc." These questions help us focus on *what the Bible says*, rather than bringing our ideas to it. We also look closely at the context of the verse, paragraph, chapter, and book to discover and understand the situation in which it was written. At this stage, it is very important *not to interpret or apply* the text. We must discover all the information first—in the next step (interpretation) we will look at what it means.

Discuss: What is observation?

2. Interpretation – What Does It Mean?

The process of interpretation has two parts. The first part is to determine *what the passage was intended to say to the original audience*. The second part is to formulate *the message of the passage as a biblical principle* that can be applied to other similar situations.

This is a difficult stage, requiring serious and prayerful thought, and the leading of the Holy Spirit. At this point, we need to compare all our understanding of the original historical, geographical, political, cultural, and religious situation with the facts that we unearthed in the observation stage. Any facts that we have missed in the observation stage will hinder our work here. Now is also the time to compare this text with other similar passages to see if they can help us understand it—being careful that they do not distort the facts of the text we are studying. If the meaning of the passage is still unclear, it might be necessary to return to the observation stage and keep digging for more information.

Discuss: What is interpretation?

3. Application – What Should I Do?

The final stage of the inductive method is application. At this point, we take the result of the interpretation stage and decide how the principle might apply in our situation. Since we have carefully looked at the original context, and know the details of it, we can look for similar contexts in our day.

The difficulty of this stage is to determine what situation today is really analogous to the original situation. We can only say “thus says the Lord” if we can demonstrate that this similarity exists. If our situation is truly the same as a biblical passage, then we can assume that the Lord expects us to apply the message to ourselves. In that case, the important task is to state *specifically* and *clearly* “what we should do.”

Discuss: What is Application?

Discuss: How can not spending enough time on observation affect your application?

BIBLE STUDY
METHODS

LESSON **2**

Demonstration of the Inductive Bible Study method

Lesson Purpose

The purpose of this workshop is to introduce the inductive Bible study method through example.

Main Points and Desired Outcomes

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

- Gain exposure to the inductive method and appreciate it's usefulness.

Suggestions to Trainers

Take time to answer the questions you feel are most relevant and try to keep everyone involved.

Suggestions for Mentoring Time

1. Open with a prayer.
Suggestions for discussion time:
Follow the steps outlined below.
Pray for ministry needs.

WORKSHOP

The passage we will use for our workshop is Jeremiah 1.

We are going to use the inductive Bible study method to see what we can discover about God's truth in an Old Testament passage about a young man called to serve God. As we study this passage, it will become very clear that he was being called to take a stand that was radically different from his contemporaries. No doubt some of you will be able to identify with the struggles this young man had to face as he responded to God's call. The passage is found in Jeremiah 1.

Observation:

First read the passage (if you are doing this on your own, read the passage three times).

Who are the people in this passage, what do we know about them, and what are we told about them?

Where is this passage taking place?

What is happening in this passage?

When is this happening? Any significant events / time of year/day...

Does the passage discuss how or why any of this is taking place?

What are the key words or phrases in this passage?

Interpretation

What is the main point(s) of this passage? Are there any sub points?

Application:

How can we apply the main point(s) to our lives?

What topic does this passage deal with?

What is the challenge we are called to face in this passage?

What is the application you see for your life?

**BIBLE STUDY
METHODS**
3
LESSON

Understanding the Inductive Bible Study Method

WHAT DOES IT SAY, WHAT DOES IT MEAN, AND HOW TO APPLY IT.

☞ Lesson Purpose

The purpose of this lesson is to model for the church planter how to study the Bible through the inductive Bible study principle of "observation."

☞ Main Points and Desired Outcomes

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

- Know how to prepare inductive Bible study observation questions.
- Know how critical context is to interpreting a passage's meaning.
- Be committed to study the Word of God diligently.
- Know the 6 questions to ask about any passage.
- Know the basic principles for interpreting the Scriptures
- Be committed to study the Word of God diligently.

☞ Know how to apply principles learned from the Scriptures.

☞ Suggestions to Trainers

You should emphasize the kinds of questions asked, because the trainees will be required to make up their own questions in the workshop lesson.

☞ Suggestions for Mentoring Time

1. Read Jeremiah 1 and use it as a basis for your opening prayer time.

Personal Growth Question: What gives you the most satisfaction in ministry?

Suggestions for discussion time:

Discuss the questions in the text and at the end of the chapter.

Ask the group to answer the questions listed referring to Jeremiah.

Homework: Read the assigned Chapter(s) for the next meeting time..

Pray for ministry needs.

I. INTRODUCTION TO OBSERVATION

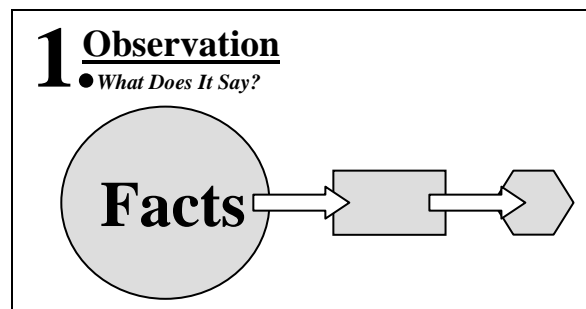
One of the best ways to systematically discover, understand, and apply God's truth is the inductive Bible study method. The inductive Bible study method leads to this process of discovery through three basic steps that are called "observation", "interpretation", and "application." The Holy Spirit teaches us, but God also expects us to study His Word diligently using all the resources He has put at our disposal. We should never choose between studying hard or depending on the Holy Spirit—both are important!

God expects us to study His Word diligently using all the resources He has put at our disposal.

I. Observation—What Does The Text Say?

Observation concerns the details and facts that are seen in a selected Bible passage. It answers the question "What does the text say?" It clearly shows the people, places, events, circumstances, objects, time, relationships, personal opinions, ideas, etc., which were in the writer's mind and the context when the text was written.

Figure 2.1



To quickly read a Bible passage, and assume that we understand it completely is utterly foolish. There is always more to understand.

1. Take Enough Time

There are some proven principles for understanding the general focus of the passage. If the process is rushed, the result will be a shallow understanding of the text. It is important to exercise the patience and determination to keep working until the text is understood.

The first step is to **read the text over several times** to get an overall understanding of the passage. This takes time, but bears much fruit. There are many passages where it is easy to get bogged down in details unless you can discern the general theme through several readings. A good understanding of the passage's overall focus will help you to keep a proper balance and divide your time appropriately for the different parts under study.

Discuss: Why is it important to take enough time and even read the text several times?

2. Look at the Context

The term 'context' refers to the verses that surround the passage being studied. Understanding the context is one of the most valuable tools of Bible study, and yet it is often ignored. When we look at the context, we are seeking to understand what is the theme or subject of the book, chapter, and paragraph of the verses that we are studying. Looking at the context means examining.

- What do the preceding and following verses talk about?
- What is the theme of the paragraph?
- What is the theme of the chapter?
- What is the purpose and theme of the book?
- Is the passage in the Old or New Testament and what does this mean?

A good example of the importance of context is Philippians 4:19, where Paul promises that God will "meet all your needs." Many understand this to be an unconditional promise to everyone. Many would recognize that since Philippians is written to believers, this promise is only for Christians. However, a more in-depth study of the context reveals that Philippians is a "thank-you letter" to the Philippian church for the gift they sent to Paul through Epaphroditus. The context of chapter four is specifically talking about this generous gift that they had sent to Paul out of their poverty. The context of verse 18 shows that God was pleased with this gift. Therefore, the context indicates that verse 19 is a promise to those who have sacrificed to financially support a missionary church planter (Paul) who was preaching the Gospel to the lost (in Rome, at that time).

Understanding the context is one of the most valuable tools of Bible study.

Some Bibles have notes before each book that explain what the particular book is about. These can be helpful. There are also other commentaries and books available that discuss the setting and background of a particular Bible book or chapter. However, it is better to limit the use of these resources until the interpretation stage. There is no substitute for reading the Scriptures yourself and allowing them to speak to you with the guidance of the Holy Spirit. During the observation stage, focus on what *you* see in the passage and the context. Take the time to listen to God before you move on to the commentary of men, even if they might be gifted teachers or authors.

Observing the context involves reading more than just the passage being studied—it includes the surrounding verses, chapter, or book. We step back and look at the passage from a distance before we move in for a closer look. Insights and notes about the context should be carefully recorded. They will be of major importance in the interpretation stage.

Step back and look at the passage from a distance before moving in for a closer look.

Discuss: Give a specific example of how you could incorrectly interpret a particular Bible verse if you don't examine the proper context.

3. Examine the Structure

Having looked at the passage from a distance, it is now time to look more closely. Read the passage several times, looking for and recording any of the following details of the structure:

- Key words - Note any word or words that are repeated. Often this indicates the theme.
- Comparisons or contrasts - Is something the same as something else, or the opposite?

- Progression of an idea - Does one thing build upon another? Are they linked to other ideas like a chain?
- Verbs – Is there some kind of action? Is there a command we must obey?
- Conjunctions - Is something equal to something? Often the conjunction “but” appears in contrast, and the words “like” or “as” may indicate comparison.
- Illustrations - Visualize in your mind the thing or action that is being described.
- Kind of literature – A passage may be history, prophecy, allegory, didactic truth, logic, parable, or many other possibilities. Appendix 2A lists many more of these. Noting the type of literature in the passage will also affect the interpretation in the next stage, so it should be recorded carefully now.

Discuss: How can examining the structure help you understand a passage?

4. Ask Questions: Who?, What?, Where?, When?, How?, and Why?

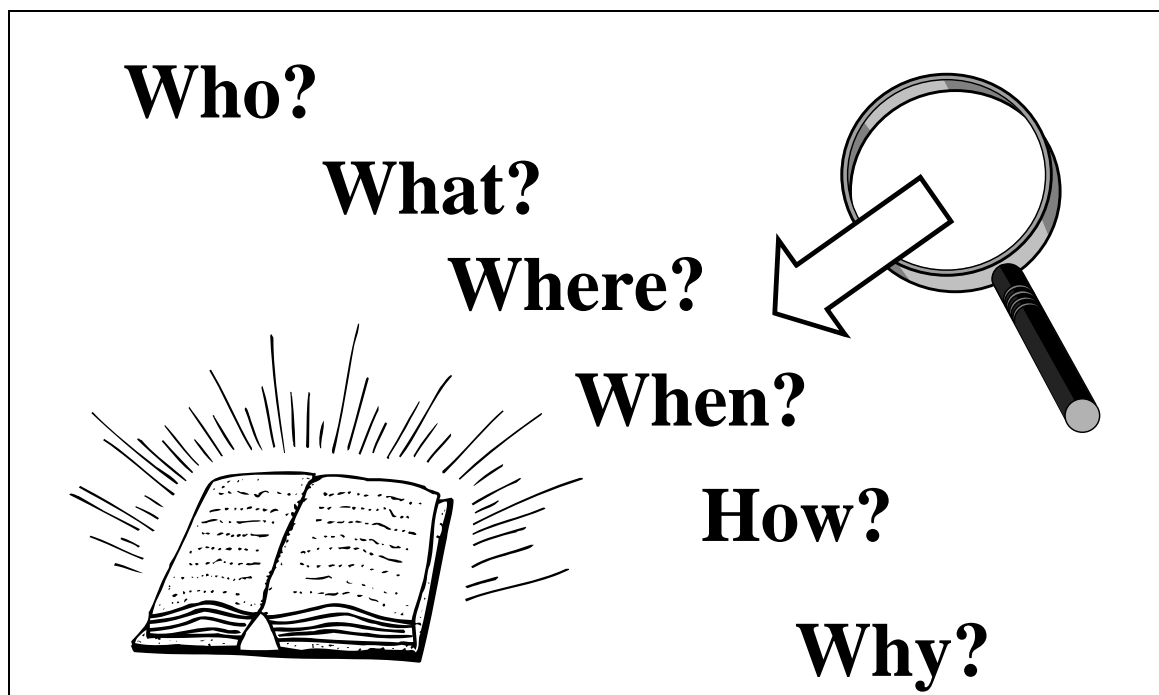
The best method of discovering the content and meaning of a passage of Scripture is to ask key questions about it, and record the answers. Figure 2.2 shows the six key questions that should be asked and answered. There are, of course, other possible questions, but these are the most important ones. Other questions tend to be variations of these six.

Ideally, you should ask every form of these questions that you can think of (the more the better). Sample variations of these questions are shown in the next section. As you ask questions, carefully record the questions and the answers on a sheet of paper. You will need to refer to them in the interpretation stage.

If you ask a question and cannot find the answer, note the question and come back to it at a later time. Do not disregard those questions. They may be important. Instead, pray about them, meditate on them, and ask God to show you the answers. Be prepared for this to take time and effort, but it will be worth it when you arrive at a clearer understanding of the passage. Only then will you be able to apply it with confidence in your own life, and teach “thus says the Lord . . .” to others.

If you cannot find the answer to a question, come back to it at a later time.

Figure 2.2 Key Observation Questions



II. INTERPRETATION—THE SECOND STAGE OF THE INDUCTIVE METHOD

Interpretation answers the question “What does the text *mean?*” This session presents some guidelines for discerning what the Scriptures are really saying. This is not intended to be a full treatment of this subject, only an introduction. We also want to take the same passage we have been dealing with in Jeremiah chapter 1 and apply these principles to gain a clearer understanding of that passage.

The interpretation stage follows the observation stage of inductive Bible study. This seems obvious, but all too often those who study the Bible rush ahead to this stage without doing a thorough job of observation. As a result, their interpretation is often faulty, since they do not have enough facts to accurately interpret the passage.

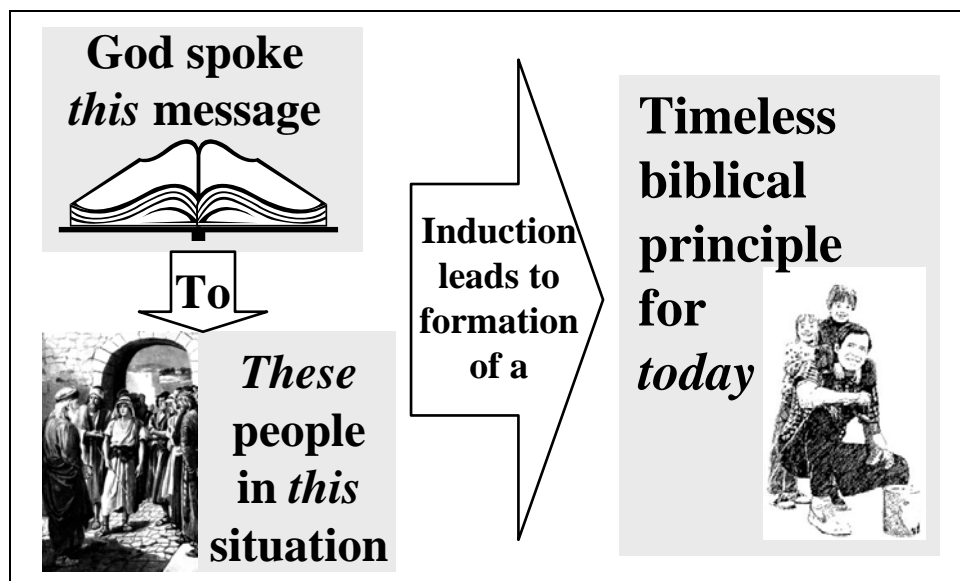
Discuss: What is interpretation?

1. The Process Of Interpretation

When we interpret a passage of Scripture, we seek to clearly describe the original biblical situation, and to state the message that God communicated in that situation. We can then carefully and prayerfully assume that God would speak in a similar way to a similar situation—resulting in a general biblical principle.

Interpretation should be done carefully, prayerfully and thoughtfully.

Figure 4.2 Using Induction to Discover the Biblical Principle



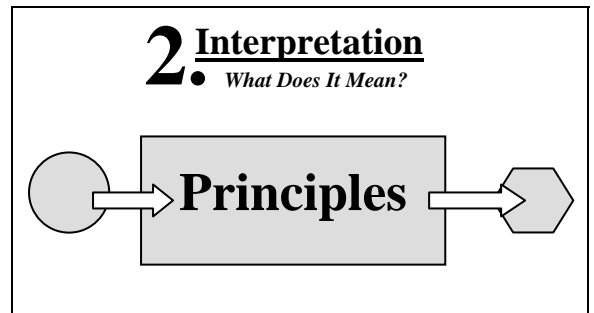
Therefore, interpretation involves:

- Understanding the original, biblical situation and people
- Identifying the message communicated to those people at that time
- Formulating a principle that summarizes these facts, and which would apply to a similar situation in any era—especially today.

The principle that results from interpretation might be a warning, a promise, a challenge, etc. The important thing is to understand the original situation clearly enough that we can say “thus says the Lord” with confidence when we apply it to our own lives and the lives of others.

Discuss: What is the result of clear interpretation?

Figure 4.1



Determine the Author's Main Point

When we refer to the author of the passage, we have in mind both the human writer, and also God who directed the writing. With the exception of some prophecies that the human writer did not understand, the writer's point and God's point should be the same.

In some cases, the main point may be clearly stated in the passage. Usually, however, it will be necessary to look for the clues and key observations. The context is normally the most important indicator of the topic or main point. Repeated word or phrases are also valuable clues. Each passage will be different, but you will be looking for the following information:

- What subject is the author writing about?
- What is he saying about that subject?

The ideal situation is to be able to summarize these two things in a concise sentence. This may take quite a few attempts before it is right. Continuing the analogy of building a house, this is like laying the foundation properly. The fuller description of the message of the passage will be built on this statement, as will the application.

The ideal situation is to be able to summarize the point of the passage in a concise sentence.
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2. The Basic Rules Of Interpretation

1. *General Principles of Biblical Interpretation*

- (1) The Bible is the authoritative Word of God.
- (2) The Bible is its own best interpreter, reflecting the character of God.
- (3) Saving faith and the Holy Spirit are necessary to understand the Scripture.
- (4) You should interpret history, actions, attitudes, personal experience, etc., in the light of Scripture and not Scripture in the light of these things.
- (5) The primary purpose of the Bible is not to increase our knowledge, but to change our lives.
- (6) Every Christian has the right, the responsibility, and the privilege to investigate and interpret the Word of God with the help of the Holy Spirit.

Discuss: Summarize the general principles of interpretation.

2. *Grammatical, Historical, and Theological Principles of Biblical Interpretation*

- (1) You should interpret words according to their meaning in the historical and cultural context of the author. Always think about how the original hearers would have understood and reacted to the message.
- (2) It is important to understand the grammar of a passage before trying to understand the theological truth that it teaches.
- (3) Figurative language normally has one main point. Do not try to read too many things into that kind of passage. (See Appendix 2A "The Language of the Bible" for a description of different kinds of figurative language.)
- (4) You should be no clearer on a subject than the Scriptures are clear. Don't add your own thinking or church tradition to what the Bible says, for you or others could come to believe those thoughts are actually Scriptural.

3. *Common Interpretation Errors to Avoid*

Three common errors in interpretation happen because of the failure to remember key attributes of Scripture.

(1) *Springboard*

This kind of error takes its name from the springboard that gymnasts use to help them jump higher. The springboard is not central to their performance—it only helps them get started. This error occurs when the interpreter already knows what he wants to say, and is not particularly interested in discovering the meaning of the text. He briefly looks at a passage and "jumps" from there to some other topic or teaching that he really wants to discuss. This insults the Lord, Who wrote the Word to communicate truth to us.

(2) Allegory

This method is also very common, but just as unacceptable. It involves ignoring the clear meaning of Scripture and trying to find some hidden message. There are indeed some passages that are very difficult to understand. However, most passages make sense when we look carefully and the words and grammar.

We should never look for "hidden meanings" when one is presented clearly.

We should never look for "hidden meanings" when one is presented clearly. Even in the case of a difficult passage, it is better to admit that we don't understand it than to try to fabricate some kind of meaning that is hard to support.

(3) Ignoring Progressive Revelation

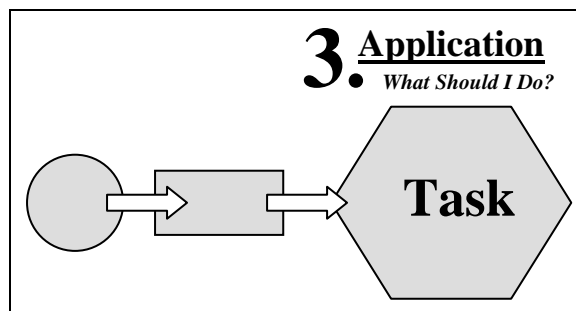
It is impossible to understand a passage if we forget the progressive nature of Scripture. God sometimes changes the way He deals with men. For instance, in the Old Testament, God required a series of literal animal sacrifices. However, these sacrifices were only temporary. When God's perfect Lamb died on Calvary, He fulfilled all the Old Testament requirements (Heb 9:12). No sacrifice of any kind is required in the New Testament. If someone were to sacrifice a lamb for his sin today, it would be an insult to Christ. Therefore, interpretation decisions must be made with care, and with the broader teaching of the Word in mind.

Discuss: Explain each of the 3 errors of interpretation.

III. INTRODUCTION TO APPLICATION

For some reason, the hardest part of the Christian life is applying the truths of Scripture to everyday life. We might gain much knowledge and our faith might increase from our study of the Bible. However, unless we understand how to put into practice what we have learned, the study will not greatly profit us. In the preceding lessons, we have collected our materials (observation) and constructed them into a biblical principle (interpretation). Now it is time to live in the truth (application). Application specifically asks the question "what should I do?"

Figure 3.5



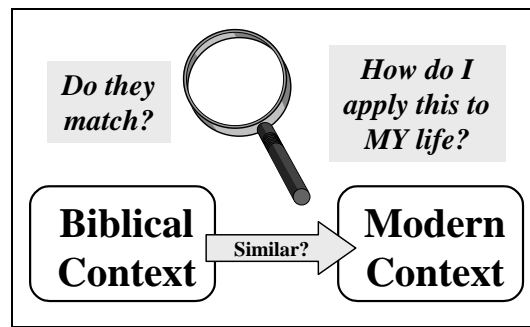
I. Application—The Third Stage Of The Inductive Method

There are two very important issues that must be addressed in the application stage. The first is the fact that application should always be made to oneself, rather than only to others. It does not matter whether the study is for the purpose of personal growth, or for teaching others. If we do not apply it to ourselves first, we become hypocrites. Whatever we teach to others should always flow out of what we have already learned and applied in our own life. Then we can teach others if the need arises.

Application consists of asking "What in my life is similar to the situation described in the passage?"

The second important point is to make sure that *our context* is the same as the *original context*. We cannot, and must not apply a message given to biblical characters to our own lives unless our situation is equivalent. Therefore, much of the application stage consists of asking "What in my life is similar to the situation described in the passage?"

Figure 3.6 Comparing the Contexts



II. Process Of Application

Proper application starts with a logical and systematic consideration of the basic areas of our life and ministry that should be affected by the biblical principle that we have seen in the text. It is helpful to consider each topic, and then to ask ourselves probing, thought-provoking questions about what we should do in response to the message. As always, this process should be surrounded by prayer, and accompanied by a willingness to learn and grow in the Lord.

1. Application Topics

The ultimate goal of application is personal character development and greater ministry effectiveness. There are a number of areas or topics that we should consider when we try to apply the message of a passage personally. These topics include both our personal life and ministry. Some examples are listed here:

Faith: What can I learn about personal faith?

Attitudes: What attitudes are good or bad? What are their results? How can I change negative ones?

Actions: What should I start doing? What should I stop doing?

Sins: What sin(s) have been pointed out to me? How can I right things with God/others?

Challenges: What challenges have been made clear to me in my personal life? In relationships with others? In my ministry?

Promises: What promises can I claim as my own? Are there conditions? What are the implications for my life and ministry?

Character: What are the godly character qualities that I need to develop in my life and ministry?

2. General Questions

Hendricks lists a number of helpful application questions that can be asked of any passage of Scripture. They are:

- Is there an example for me to follow?
- Is there a sin to avoid?
- Is there a promise to claim?
- Is there a prayer to repeat?
- Is there a command to obey?
- Is there a condition to meet?
- Is there a verse to memorize?
- Is there an error to mark?
- Is there a challenge to face?

SOURCES

Hendricks, Howard G., and William Hendricks. *Living By the Book*. Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1991.

**BIBLE STUDY
METHODS**

LESSON 4

Workshop: Using the Inductive Bible Study Method

☞ Lesson Purpose

The purpose of this workshop is to give the trainees opportunity to practice forming and answering inductive Bible study observation questions.

☞ Main Points and Desired Outcomes

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

- Be able to prepare inductive Bible study observation questions.
- Know the importance of studying a passage as a group.

☞ Appendix:

5A How we Got the Bible
5B Language of the Bible text.
5C Bible Charts

☞ Suggestions for Mentoring Time

1. Read Acts 17:1-10a and use it as a basis for your opening prayer time.
Suggestions for discussion time:
The mentor should guide the group through the following exercise.
Homework: Read the assigned Chapter(s) for the next meeting time. Choose one of the following:
Use this method yourself to study a selected Bible Passage.
Use this method with other students to practice doing this kind of a Bible study
Use this method instead of preaching at your next meeting.
Pray for ministry needs.

WORKSHOP FORMAT

The passage we will use for our workshop is Acts 17:1-10a.

Observation:

First read the passage (if you are doing this on your own, read the passage three times)

Who are the people in this passage, what do we know about them, and what are we told about them?

Where is this passage taking place?

What is happening in this passage?

When is this happening? Any significant events / time of year/day...

Does the passage discuss how or why any of this is taking place?

What are the key words or phrases in this passage?

INTREPRETATION:

What is the main point(s) of this passage? Are there any sub points?

APPLICATION STEPS

How can we apply the main point(s) to our lives?

Of the following topics, which is most relevant to this passage. (If you are leading a group study, chose this topic beforehand and ask the following questions.)

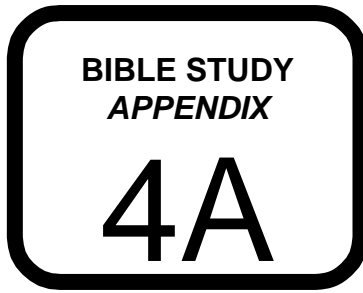
- Faith
- Attitude
- Action
- Sin(s)
- Challenge
- Promise
- Character
- (*other*)

What does the passage say about this topic?

How does it relate to our lives?

Which of the following questions is most relevant to this passage? (If you are leading a group study, chose the relevant question beforehand and ask it to the group.)

- Is there an example for me to follow?
- Is there a sin to avoid?
- Is there a promise to claim?
- Is there a prayer to repeat?
- Is there a command to obey?
- Is there a condition to meet?
- Is there a verse to memorize?
- Is there an error to mark?
- Is there a challenge to face?



How We Got the Bible

THE BIBLE IS RELIABLE

The Bible has often been attacked, despite its clear teaching about its divine origin and the miracles and fulfilled prophecies that have proven its authority. It is understandable that Satan would spare no effort to undermine our most powerful tool. He wants the Lord's workers to doubt its value, question its accuracy, ignore it, or neglect it. But understanding the origin and transmission of the Bible from God to us helps us to appreciate this wonderful tool and its centrality to the success of our ministry.

Written by more than 40 different authors, in three languages, in a span of more than 1400 years, the Bible is the greatest literary undertaking in history. Yet its unity, consistency and lack of contradiction prove that God Himself is its main author, guiding every human author to assure that the product is exactly as He planned.

HOW WE RECEIVED THE BIBLE

The Lord has acted, and still acts to bring a reliable Bible to us. This process began with the original authors, and continues when we open His Word today. There are several stages to this process.

1. Inspiration

The term inspiration literally means God "breathed" or "breathed out," and affirms that the Bible is the product of the living God (2Ti 3:16). Because the Bible is a divine product, it must be approached as such.

The Bible is not merely the product of human thought, but God's Word, spoken through man's lips and written with man's pen. The prophets and apostles all claimed to speak and write the words of another: God Himself. Even Jesus, the Son of God professed that he spoke only those words given him by his Father. According to 2 Peter 1:20-21, "men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit." It is important to note that it is the Bible itself that is inspired, not the human writers of the Bible. Furthermore, inspiration refers not to the literary quality of that which is written but to its divine origin and character.

2. Preservation

From the beginning, the unique nature of the Bible was understood. Faithful men have always exercised great care in accurately copying the biblical text. They made very few errors, and the massive number of manuscripts discovered has enabled us to find and fix mistakes that were made. The sections in the Bible where we lack enough evidence to positively know the original text are very few, and none of these sections involve any significant issues or doctrines.

Considering the multitudes of copyists, the thousands of years of copying, the numerous languages into which the Bible was copied, the wide geographical area, and the numerous attempts to destroy the Bible, it is amazing that we have such a reliable, accurate text. God has clearly worked to preserve it for our use.

3. Canonization

The term 'canon' is borrowed from a Greek word that means rule or standard. The Canon has been used by Christians since the 4th century to identify an authoritative list of books belonging to the Old or New Testament by which all other books were measured.

Many early church fathers and church councils contributed to the task of canonization, with God's help. They examined the witness of the books themselves, the credentials of the author, the agreement of the book with other accepted books, and the books' acceptance by the church. The formation of the Old and New Testament canons was a process rather than an event and transpired under the supervision of the Holy Spirit.

By the time of Jesus, the Old Testament consisted of the law, prophets and writings. By the beginning of the Christian era, all 39 Old Testament books were generally accepted, with the oldest surviving canonical list dating about AD 170. The formation of the New Testament canon, with the current 27 books, was completed in the 4th century. There has been general agreement within the church that the Bible is composed of the current 66 books. The exception to this harmony concerns the Apocrypha.

The Apocrypha is rejected by the Protestants, but accepted by the Orthodox and Roman Catholic Churches. However, there is a significant difference between the Apocrypha and the other 66 books. The Apocrypha does not claim to be Scripture, contains obvious errors, and was denied canonical status by the Jewish community. However, the Apocrypha has a devotional style that appeals to the liturgical worship of the Orthodox and Roman Catholic Churches. The Apocrypha contains several works which the Roman Church found helpful during the Reformation in the struggle against the Protestants, which may have influenced the Council of Trent to include them in the Canon of the Roman Catholic Church in AD 1548.

4. Translation

Godly men have labored so that each person might hear the Word in his own language. The task is huge, and ongoing. Modern languages and cultures often vary greatly from biblical times, and constantly change. Translators must choose the best words and phrases to carry the meaning of the original languages and still be easy for someone of any age or educational level to understand. No translation is perfect, but modern scholarship, discovery of new manuscripts, and growth in biblical understanding help in this never-ending task. Constant comparison with the original language texts is necessary to ensure that any particular translation accurately carries the meaning of the Word of God. God uses talented, educated, capable men, who depend on His direction and wisdom in this ongoing, vital step.

5. Illumination

As the Christian reads, studies, and meditates on the Word, the Holy Spirit reveals the meaning to him. The process of illumination is also never-ending, or should be. It is a joint effort. Man cannot learn without the Spirit (1Co 2:11-14; Ps 119:18), and the Spirit does not teach without a man's effort (2Ti 2:15; Ps 119:97-99; Pr 2:1-5).

Teaching God's Word is a special honor (2Ti 4:17) but also a serious responsibility (Jas 3:1). It should never be undertaken without serious, prayerful preparation. And yet, God has made all the necessary provisions for us to have a reliable text in our language, and has enabled us to understand His Word through the Spirit's help. Nothing is lacking other than our decision to handle it correctly, and faithfully use it to develop our own Christian life first of all, and then our ministry to others. What a privilege to be part of this process of bringing the living Word of God to a needy, perishing world!

CONCLUSION

God has supervised the transmission of His Word from the time of the initial writing until we open it to seek instruction for our lives. The copy we have in our hands is reliable for use in both personal growth and ministry. However, it is a living, spiritual book, and can only be understood as we prayerfully and reverently approach it and allow the Holy Spirit to open our eyes to the truths contained in it. Thanks to the Lord for this wonderful book to guide us.

BIBLE STUDY
APPENDIX
4B

The Language of the Bible

When we study the Word of God, we are looking for its intended, literal meaning. We want to understand the message that the Lord desires to communicate through it. But it is important to realize that, like all great literature, the Bible writers often used figures of speech to communicate truth. In addition, they used many different kinds of literature in their writing. Studying the Bible accurately requires that we recognize these differences, and treat each passage according to the kinds of language and literature used.

I. KINDS OF FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE IN THE BIBLE

1. Simile

A simile compares two dissimilar things, using words such as “like,” “as” or “than.” Psalm 1 compares the righteous man to a tree planted by streams of water. Both bear fruit and prosper.

2. Parable

A parable is a simile in a longer story form. Jesus helped the disciples understand His kingdom by telling a parable about workers who were paid equally though some had worked longer than others had. He begins with the words, “For the kingdom of heaven is *like* a landowner who went out early in the morning to hire men to work in his vineyard...” (Mt 20:1).

3. Metaphor

A metaphor compares two dissimilar things without using obvious words such as “like” or “as.” In Jeremiah 1:18, the Lord said to Jeremiah, “Today I have made you a fortified city, an iron pillar and a bronze wall...”

4. Allegory

An allegory is a long metaphor. In Judges 9:7-15, Jotham tells a story about a worthless thorn bush being king over the other productive trees to describe a corrupt political leader.

5. Hyperbole

A hyperbole expresses something in extreme terms to make a point. When Jesus says that a judgmental person has a log in his eye and doesn’t know it, he is saying something that is physically impossible. His point, however, is that a person who is unaware of his own sins is totally unable to evaluate another person’s sins.

6. Sarcasm

Sarcasm criticizes by using undeserved or ridiculous praise. Paul criticizes the Corinthians’ pride by writing, “Already you have all you want! Already you have become rich! You have become kings – and that without us!” (1Co 4:8).

Deciding when the biblical writers were using language figuratively or literally is serious work. It would be a grievous error to ignore one of God’s commands by claiming it to be figurative language. On the other hand, to say that every verse in the Bible should be interpreted literally leads to some perplexing problems. When the Lord referred to Jeremiah as “a fortified city, an iron pillar and a bronze wall...” He obviously wasn’t speaking in a literal sense (Jer 1:18). The same is true when the Lord said he was appointing Jeremiah to “uproot and tear down, to destroy and overthrow...” (Jer 1:10).

How can we know the difference between literal and figurative language? You can ask some simple questions like these:

- Does the passage state that it is figurative? (“Listen to another parable...” Mt 21:33).
- Does the passage become absurd or impossible if it is interpreted literally? (“I see a boiling pot, tilting away from the north... from the north disaster will be poured out on all who live in the land...” Jer 1:13-14).
- Does the passage describe God, who is Spirit, as if He had a physical body and other strictly human qualities? (“Then the Lord reached out His hand and touched my mouth...” Jer 1:9).

If the above questions don't apply, then the verse can most probably be interpreted literally.

II. KINDS OF LITERATURE IN THE BIBLE

1. History

The Bible is full of historical accounts and biographies. For example, the book of Judges tells the history of Israel between the time of Joshua's conquest of the land and King Saul's reign. The book of Nehemiah is Nehemiah's diary of the rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem. The Gospels are Jesus' biographies and include His teachings. The book of Acts records the significant happenings in the early history of the Church.

2. Instruction

Throughout the Bible you will find guidelines, commands, principles, proverbs, doctrines and practical advice. The major part of the book of Leviticus contains detailed instructions for the Israelite priests. Proverbs gives advice on finances, relationships, and work. Paul's letters to specific churches are full of both doctrine and practical guidelines for the Christian life.

3. Prophecy

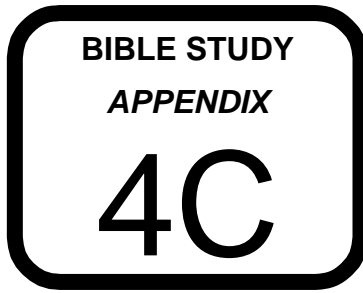
Most prophetic literature is a written account of sermons originally preached to God's people. Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel, the larger prophetic books, are collections of sermons spanning the careers of these prophets. These books were not meant to be read from start to finish as a single unit. The secret to understanding these books is finding the beginning and ending of the individual sermons and reading from one sermon to the next. Nearly all the sermons dealt with the historic periods of the writers. Some of the sermons dealt with the future beyond the lifetimes of the prophets.

4. Poetry

In the poetic literature of the Bible every human emotion is expressed. Many biblical books contain poetry. The Psalms and the Song of Songs are entirely poetry and many of the prophetic books are predominately poetic.

5. Apocalypse

Some prophecy is written in a special kind of literature known as apocalyptic. The word apocalyptic means “unveiling” because it reveals events that will take place in the future. The book of Daniel and the book of Revelation are good examples of this literature. Apocalyptic passages are highly symbolic and it is necessary to understand the symbolism in order to interpret the message. The central message in apocalyptic literature is the second coming of Christ and his ultimate victory over Satan. Typically, the whole of creation is involved in the coming events. (Compiled from Inch and Bullock, eds., 1981. *Literature and Meaning of Scripture*. Baker Book House.)



Bible Charts

On the following pages are two charts that may help be of help to you:

- 5C.1 Inductive Bible Study Method
- Figure 5C.2 gives the big picture of God's eternal plan through the Old and New Testaments.
- Figure 5C.3 shows the historical periods of the Bible.

INDUCTIVE BIBLE STUDY METHOD

OBSERVATION

Key Questions: Who?, What?, Where?, When?, How?, and Why?

Context

Preceding verses
Following verses
Paragraph / section
Chapter
Book

Structure

Key words
Comparisons or contrasts
Progression of ideas
Verbs``
Conjunctions
Illustrations
Kind of literature

INTERPRETATION

- A. Find the Key Facts
- B. State the Main Point
- C. Ask "What Does It Mean" Questions
- D. State Biblical Principles

APPLICATION

A. Application Topics

Faith	Sins	Character
Attitudes	Challenges	
Actions	Promises	

B. General Questions

Is there an example for me to follow?	Is there a condition to meet?
Is there a sin to avoid?	Is there a verse to memorize?
Is there a promise to claim?	Is there an error to mark?
Is there a prayer to repeat?	Is there a challenge to face?
Is there a command to obey?	

C. Specific Questions

Now as you work through the passage, think of specific questions for each verse that focus on "What should I do?"

D. SUMMARY

The application I see for my life is:

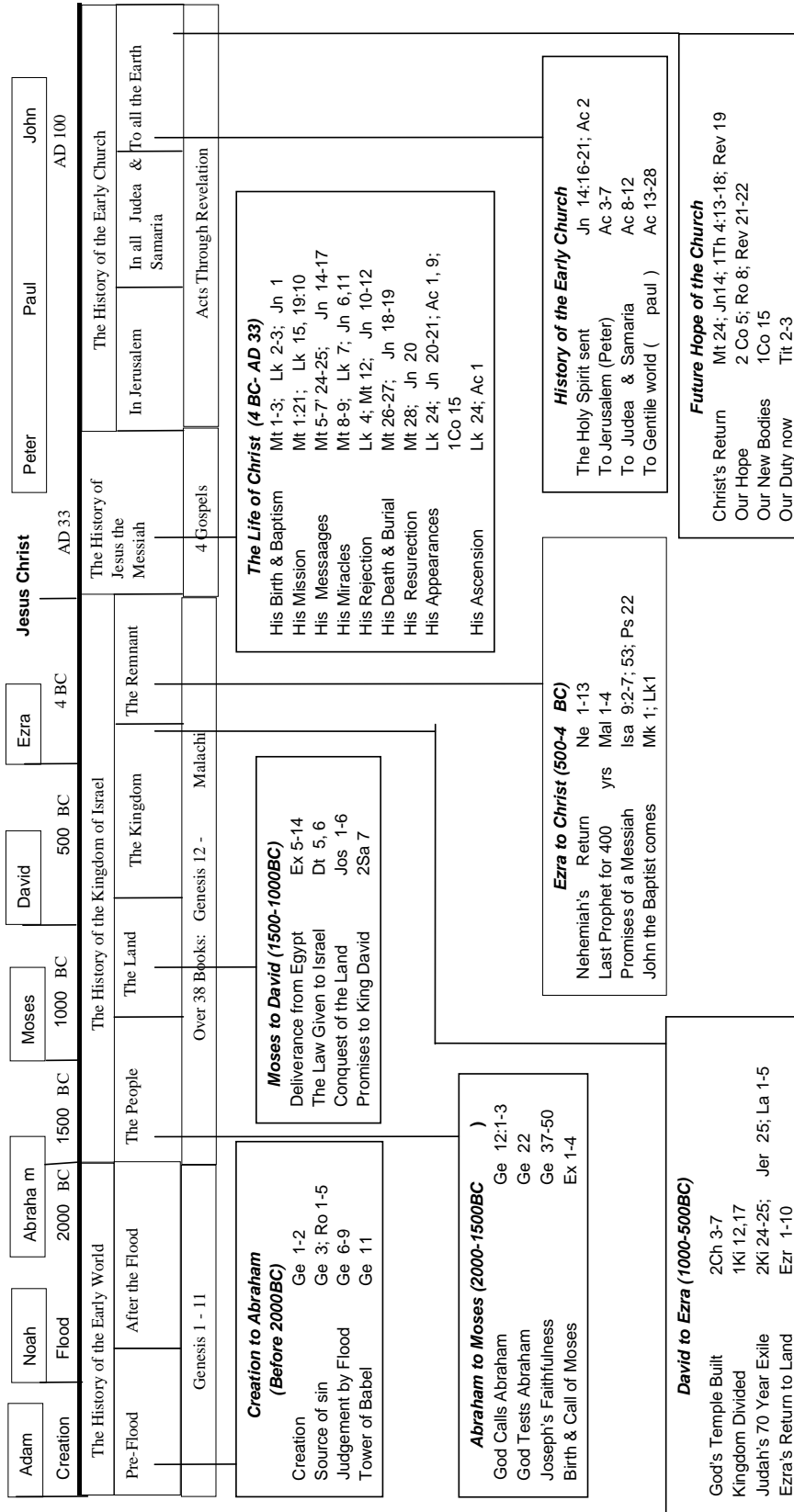
Figure 4A.1: Redemptive History of the World in the Old Testament (OT) and New Testament (NT)

The chart below is intended to give the BIG PICTURE of the Bible by showing that the Old and New Testaments are united in declaring God's eternal purpose. Beginning in Genesis, God created Man (male and female) to have a relationship with Him. When Man sinned, that relationship was broken. The account of how God began rebuilding that relationship begins in Genesis 3:15 and ends in Revelation 22. In fact, the Bible is primarily the history of God's redemptive plan.

OT	Creation: Ge 1, 2	Fall/Sin: Ge 3:1-14	Promise of a Redeemer: Ge 3:15, 21	Promise repeated to Abraham: Ge 12	Sacrificial System initiated under Law of Moses/Blood Atonement: Exodus	A chosen people to be His Witness throughout the World
	- Man (Male & female) created in IMAGE of God 1:27 - to have relationship with God, 3:8 - to have relationship with each other, 2:24 - to reproduce, 1:28 - to rule over earth, 1:28 - to receive God's	- Image Marred - Relationship with God broken - Pain and suffering - Try to rule over each other - All under a curse	- The "offspring" of the woman would strike the heel of the serpent. - God made garments of skin for them.	- I will bless you - In you all nations of the earth will be blessed - God chose one nation to be His people & to make Him known throughout the earth.	- Isa 53:7 - Ex 12:13 A lamb to be sacrificed for sin. (Picture of the Lamb of God that would take away sins of the world). - Leviticus	- Jos 2:8-14; 4:24 - 2Sa 7:25-26 - 1Ki 8:41-43 - Isa 43:10-12; 54:5; 55:4, 5; 59:20; 60:16 - Da 7:13-14 - Zec 13:1 - (plus many, many more)
NT	Jesus: Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world	Gospels: Jesus the Redeemer Came	Acts: History of story of Redemption taken to ends of earth	A Redeemed people being transformed into image of Christ: "How should we Live?"	Revelation: Ultimate Redemption	
	- Jn 1:29	- Mt 1:21 - Jn 3:16, 17 - Lk 4:18, 19 - Lk 19:10	- Jerusalem 2 & 6:7 - Judea & Samaria 6:8 - 9:31 - Palestine & Syria 9:32 - 12:24 - Eastern part of Roman World 12:25-19:20 - To Rome 19:21-25:31	- Ro 3:24; Ro 4:22-25; Ro 6:11-14; - Ro 8:29 - 2Co 3:18 - Eph 4:21-33 - Col 1:15-22 - 1Pe 5:1, 10 - 1Th 2:19 - Jude 24, 25	- (Creation of) a New Heaven and New Earth (21:1) - Everything made new (21:5) - His servants will reign with Him (22:5) - Blessed are those who wash their robes (22:14)	

Chronology of the Bible

This chart shows how the Bible is broken down into historical periods. Key figures in each of the periods are noted



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EVANGELISM

EVANGELISM
1
LESSON

Introduction to Evangelism

GOD SO LOVES THE WORLD

☞ Lesson Purpose

The purpose of this lesson is to introduce the nature, need, motive and place of evangelism in the SCP strategy.

☞ Main Points and Desired Outcomes

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

- Evangelism is a process, and not just an event.
- Skills and experience in evangelism can be developed.
- The process of evangelism is not complete until a more mature believer has begun to disciple the new Christian and help him or her to grow in the faith.
- Recognize the urgent need of the lost and be increasingly motivated out of unconditional love to evangelize them.

☞ Appendix

1A The Bridge

☞ Suggestions to Trainers

Have participants read selected verses aloud in Section II. Take same time to review prayer triplets. Encourage participants to organize their own prayer triplet before the next training seminar.

☞ Suggestions for Mentoring Time

1. Read 2 Peter 3:9 and use it as a basis for your opening prayer time.

Personal Growth Question: What has given you the most joy this week?

Suggestions for discussion time:

Discuss the questions in the text and at the end of the chapter.

Homework: Read the assigned Chapter(s) for the next meeting time..

Pray for ministry needs.

INTRODUCTION

Evangelism is important work for all believers. For those involved in church planting, evangelism is no less important. In fact, planting a church without evangelism is impossible. We can find hope for the process in Matthew 4:19, where Jesus challenged the disciples to follow Him with the words, "Come, follow me . . . and I will make you fishers of men." Jesus wanted these experienced fishermen to use their lives to build His Church. As we follow Christ, observe His law and obey Him, He also desires to make us fishers of men, able to attract and win people to Himself. Only the Lord is able to make us effective fishermen for souls.

There are many ways to catch fish. We use large boats, complicated machines and huge nets to catch them by the thousands. We cast smaller nets to catch several. And we use barbed hooks with bait or attractive lures to catch them one at a time. We do not catch fish with every toss or cast, but we can be learning with each experience. We have to go where the fish are and choose an appropriate method in order to catch them.

In the same way, there are a multitude of methods to bring men, women, youth and children to Christ. There is, of course, only one true Gospel. As we preach this Gospel, God's Holy Spirit convicts the world of guilt regarding sin, and righteousness and judgment (Jn 16:8) and brings people to life-changing faith. Our task is to combine effective methods and strategies to win people to Christ and incorporate them into the church. We will be considering some of these methods and strategies in this lesson.

Discuss: Why should we talk about strategy when discussing evangelism?

I. THE NATURE OF EVANGELISM

Evangelism means “telling the good news.” The “good news” that Jesus Christ has made salvation possible and available as a free gift is the best news ever to strike the human ear and heart. Evangelism involves assisting those outside of faith in Christ to move toward faith in Him. However, evangelism is not the end of the process. True evangelism is like the first leg of a relay race. Once people are won to Christ they must be “handed over” to a discipler who will help them nurture their new lives in Christ. The race is not complete until believing fellowships are planted and the body of Christ multiplies through further evangelism and discipleship. Dropping the baton after the evangelism stage is not acceptable.

1. The Process

This process of evangelism is one important way that the Lord involves Christians, in cooperation with the work of the Holy Spirit, to build the kingdom of God—the Church of Jesus Christ. While the work of the Holy Spirit in the hearts of men is invisible, the Christian’s efforts in evangelism are both public and private.

Evangelism begins in private, with prayer. This includes both individual prayer and also “Prayer Triplets” (see Prayer Appendix 3A “Prayer Triplets”). A prayer triplet consists of three Christian believers meeting regularly to pray for three unsaved friends or relatives. The group meets to pray for these people until they become believers or until circumstances prohibits the group from continuing to pray together. Encourage others to pray as you are engaged in the work of evangelism, following Paul’s example in Ephesians 6:19-20 and Colossians 4:2-6. When we pray, we ask God to:

- Prepare the hearts of those to whom He wants us to speak
- Lead us to those who are prepared
- Help us present the Gospel in a clear and meaningful way
- Preserve the planted message

Publicly, we capitalize on divine encounters to share our faith as we go about the ordinary activities of our lives. We initiate genuine relationships with people in our communities. We spend time with people so they can observe our lives and we can see theirs. We build bridges of trust to individuals and families, expanding the testimony and influence of Christ. Evangelism often includes specific activities designed to win a hearing for the Gospel. It could be through simple acts of kindness or sharing a tract, or it could be as complex as organizing a regional outreach effort using the *Jesus* film or a gifted evangelist.

Discuss: What is the process?

2. The Message

In a letter to the newly established church at Rome, the apostle Paul wrote these words:

“I am not ashamed of the Gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile” (Ro 1:16)

What is the Gospel message—the “good news”—that we share? Paul makes a clear and simple presentation of the Gospel in 1 Corinthians 15:3-7. In this passage, he breaks the content of the Gospel into two parallel parts—repentance and trust. Theologians are able to write countless volumes on the content of the Gospel. However the essence of the “good news” is summed up in this text.

The parts of the Gospel are clearly seen if we print the verses as shown below:

Christ died for our sins [*according to the scriptures*]

- that he was buried

that He was raised on the third day [*according to the scriptures*]

- that he appeared to Peter, and then to the Twelve . . .

In this form it is easy to see the two main points—the death and resurrection of Christ. Both were accomplished “according to the scriptures” and each has a supporting proof. The proof of His death was His burial, and the proof of His resurrection was His appearances to the believers. Look closely at each of the main points.

(1) *Repent – (because He died)*

There is a lot packed into this statement. First of all, we must acknowledge that we are sinners before a Holy God. If there was anything we could do to save ourselves there would have been no reason for Christ to die. But there is absolutely nothing we can do to gain favor with God. There is no such thing as a righteous person (Ro 3:10, 20). We must cast ourselves on His mercy. We need grace, and not justice (Eph 2:8,9).

The death of Christ also means that His death was sufficient to save us. This would not be possible if He were not the Son of God—the God-Man—God in the flesh. God could not die until Jesus took human flesh on Himself. But a mere man cannot die for everyone. He can only die for his own sins. Therefore only Jesus, as God Incarnate, could satisfy the wrath of God against sin and offer salvation to us by grace.

The first part of the Gospel includes an admission of our utter unworthiness and of the deity and sufficiency of Christ. No one is genuinely saved until they acknowledge the supremacy of Christ and repent.

(2) *Trust Christ – (because He rose)*

The second part of the Gospel involves trust. It is necessary to repent, but that alone is not enough to save us. Many “Christians” believe Christ died for sin, but they think they need to do some kind of work to merit His salvation. This was the heresy that Paul confronted in Galatians. Some taught that we must both believe and also keep the law in order to be saved. Paul condemned that idea in the strongest possible terms (Gal 1:8-9; 2:15-16; 3:3,11). Christ’s sacrifice was sufficient to save us. We need not and cannot add anything through our own effort.

The fact that Christ arose from the dead means His promise is true. He has gone to prepare a place for us and will come again to take us home with Him (Jn 14:2-3). Our salvation is settled when we trust Him. We can indeed serve Him with our good works as a way of thanking Him and worshipping Him. But these actions are part of our *sanctification* and not of our *salvation*.

Discuss: Explain the Message for Evangelism:

3. The Medium

The most powerful presentation of the Gospel message is the one we authenticate with our lives. The way we live brings life to the words being spoken. Our integrity, compassion and transparency are essential tools used by the Lord to make us “salt and light” right where we live. A simple poem challenges us:

*You are writing a Gospel, a chapter a day,
by the deeds that you do and the words that you say.
Men read what you write, distorted or true.
What is the Gospel according to you?*

Discuss: What is the Medium for evangelism?

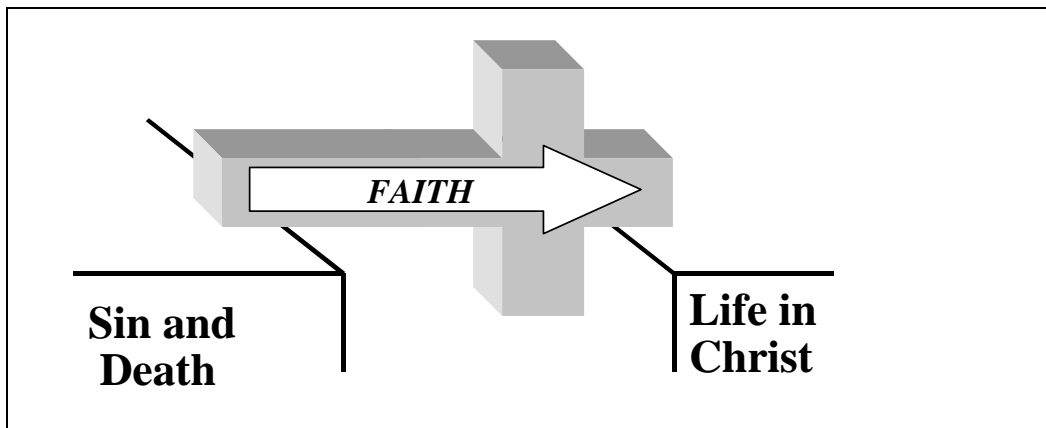
II. THE NEED FOR EVANGELISM

1. People Are Spiritually Lost and Forever Separated from God without Jesus Christ

Not only is every person separated from God spiritually, but also each person is absolutely unable to redeem himself. Because of sin the Holy God is inaccessible to him. Whether an individual is aware of his condition or not he is desperate and doomed apart from receiving the solution offered by Jesus Christ, and no one else. Please see appendix 1A “The Bridge” for a simple way to explain how Christ bridges the gap between God and us.

- ◆ Romans 1:18ff
- ◆ John 14:6
- ◆ Romans 6:23
- ◆ Romans 3:9-20,23
- ◆ Ezekiel 3:16-21
- ◆ Ephesians 2:1-3

Figure 1.1 The Process of Evangelism



Discuss: What do the above scriptures say about lost people?

2. We Are God's Method of Reaching the World

Since the time of Christ, followers have been charged with the responsibility to represent the Lord and His kingdom in the world. The apostles were the first to receive the charge. They understood that they were to be witnesses—that they were to be spokesmen and ambassadors of Christ. These roles imply a faithful presentation of the truth as we understand it and a faithful representation of the God who has won us and sent us out.

Paul understood this responsibility as a debt or obligation that he owed to the Lord and to the lost. While it is true that a person may be saved through the Word of God and the Holy Spirit only, this is highly unusual. In fact, even when Christ Himself spoke to Paul on the Damascus road, He sent Ananias to complete the evangelism process in Paul's life. God desires to use men and women who know Him as the means to reach the lost.

- ◆ 2 Corinthians 5:16-21
- ◆ Acts 1:8
- ◆ Mark 16:15
- ◆ Matthew 28:18-20
- ◆ Romans 1:14-17
- ◆ 2 Timothy 4:5b

Discuss: What do the above scriptures say about God's method?

3. Many are Eager to Hear and Understand the Solution to Their Dilemma

French Philosopher Blaise Pascal noted that there is within man a God-shaped vacuum, which only God can adequately fill. Through the ages, people have sought resolution for their spiritual dilemma. The list below is just a sample of the many in the New Testament who would openly discuss their condition in the hope of resolving their problems. There are others like them who will listen to the Gospel if we will go to them and make it plain.

- ◆ Nicodemus—John 3
- ◆ The man born blind—John 9
- ◆ The woman at the well—John 4
- ◆ Jerusalem crowd—Acts 2
- ◆ Zacchaeus—Luke 19
- ◆ Ethiopian eunuch—Acts 8

Discuss: Jesus focused his attention on those that were already eager to hear, not trying to convince those who were disinterested? How do we find those that are eager to hear?

4. The Gospel Has The Power to Change

(1) *The Gospel changes spiritual realities.*

The Gospel moves people from the kingdom of Satan into the kingdom of God, from darkness to light, from death to life. No longer enemies of Christ and slaves to sin, we (and those who come to faith through our testimony) have become a part of the household of God (Col 1:10-14).

(2) *The Gospel changes the whole world.*

The Gospel is changing lives—in huge cosmopolitan areas, in obscure mountain villages, in steaming tropical jungles, among troubled youth, within struggling families, among hard-working businessmen and concerned political leaders. Throughout every continent, the Gospel is having an impact. Families, communities and nations around the world are being changed by the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

(3) *The Gospel changes society.*

As people come to Christ and yield themselves to the indwelling Holy Spirit, the community of those who love Christ can exert a moral influence for good felt across the face of your nation.

(4) *The Gospel changes individuals.*

All who have placed their faith in Christ upon hearing the Gospel message have a testimony of how God's grace has profoundly changed them personally, making each one a new creation in Christ. Individuals and families are profoundly affected.

(5) *The Gospel changes life now.*

Christ's life-giving Gospel has delivered us. We have been saved from the penalty of sin! Moreover, we will be saved from the presence of sin. However, right now we are being saved from the power of sin. The Gospel makes a difference today (1Co 15:55-56; Ro 5:8-10).

(6) *The Gospel changes our future.*

Through those who come to faith because of the work of the Gospel in us, we can affect not only our generation but succeeding ones as well. We can become the foundation of spiritual generations in and outside our own families.

(7) *The Gospel changes our eternity.*

The change brought by the Gospel affects not only our temporal life, but our eternal destiny as well. We, as Christ's bride, the Church, are an eternal testimony to the spiritual realm of God's mercy and grace (Eph 3:10, 11).

Discuss: What does the Gospel change, why and how?

III. THE MOTIVE OF EVANGELISM

1. It Is Possible to Evangelize Out of a Sense of Duty or Obligation to God or Others

Paul wrote in Romans 1:14 that he was a debtor to those who had not heard the Gospel message. He sensed an obligation to share that which he possessed, the Gospel, with others. Men of God have often referred to themselves as His servants, implying that their activity was at least partially motivated in response to the authority of God, their master.

In Colossians 1:28, the apostle Paul speaks of the goal of his Gospel ministry, ". . . so that we may present everyone perfect in Christ." Often that which motivates God's servants to evangelism is the long-range goal of seeing God's purposes in the world accomplished. That hope and satisfaction itself can powerfully stir us as we serve the Gospel.

2. It Is Possible to Evangelize Out of Fear of God and His Judgment

Perhaps from time to time the feelings of love for God and man are not there, and a sense of duty does not motivate us. Sometimes the fact that we are accountable to God and will one day answer to Him for our service stirs feelings of fear in us. Even that fear can motivate us to service. God warned Ezekiel in strong language to take His message to the people or bear the consequences (Eze 3:16-21). Jonah evangelized only after being terrorized by a whale (Jnh 2).

3. It Is Even Possible to Evangelize for Totally Inappropriate Reasons

In one of Paul's letters to a young church, he noted that some had proclaimed the Gospel "out of envy and rivalry" (Php 1:15). He went on to say that it did not matter! That the Gospel of Christ was being proclaimed is what was important to Paul. He rejoiced that the right thing was happening in spite of wrong motives! (Php 1:15-18)

D. We Should Evangelize Out of Love for Christ and The Lost

The maturing believer increasingly finds himself growing in his love for Christ and, in turn, for those whom Christ loves—the Church and the lost. Paul spoke of Christ's love "compelling" him to persuade men (2Co 5:14).

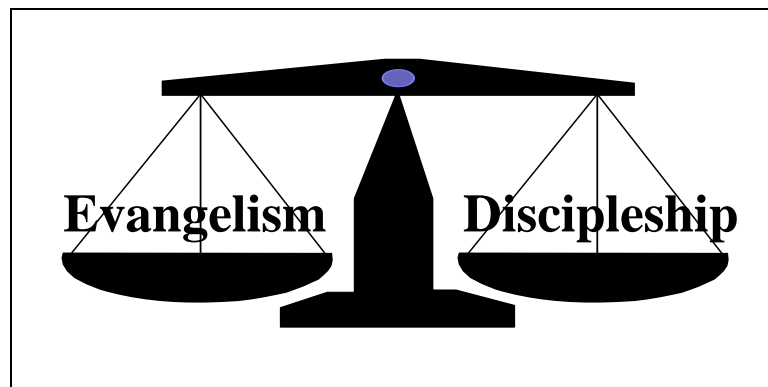
It seems from reading 1 John that what motivated and stirred the apostle John to proclaim the Gospel was a desire to include increasing numbers of people in the fellowship of the Church.

Discuss your motives for evangelism in the past, and how you can develop a love for the lost to motivate you in the future?

IV. THE PLACE OF EVANGELISM IN AN SCP STRATEGY

The strategy of saturation church planting is largely dependent upon focused evangelistic effort. Saturation evangelism goes hand-in-hand with saturation church planting. The initial and foundational work of evangelism—winning people to faith in Christ—must be succeeded by the ongoing work of nurturing and equipping new converts and disciples. But in that subsequent work, we dare not neglect the critical place of intentional, continuing evangelistic work, building bridges to the lost and moving them toward faith. There is a balance that must be maintained between telling the Good News and assisting those who have come to faith. To neglect either jeopardizes the work of God in which we are involved.

Figure 1.2 Keeping the Balance



We certainly need to help those whom God has given us to disciple, but we must never be satisfied with the number of those who have come to faith. We must not forget the task of evangelism. We must be committed to and diligent in our responsibility to reach the lost with the Gospel. Without people continually being won to faith (thinking of the church planting cycle), there is no further establishing, no further developing of leaders, and no hope for on-going multiplication of churches. Evangelism must take the first place in saturation church planting. Equipping and mobilizing all believers to do the work of evangelism will be a primary ingredient in any SCP strategy.

QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION, REVIEW AND APPLICATION

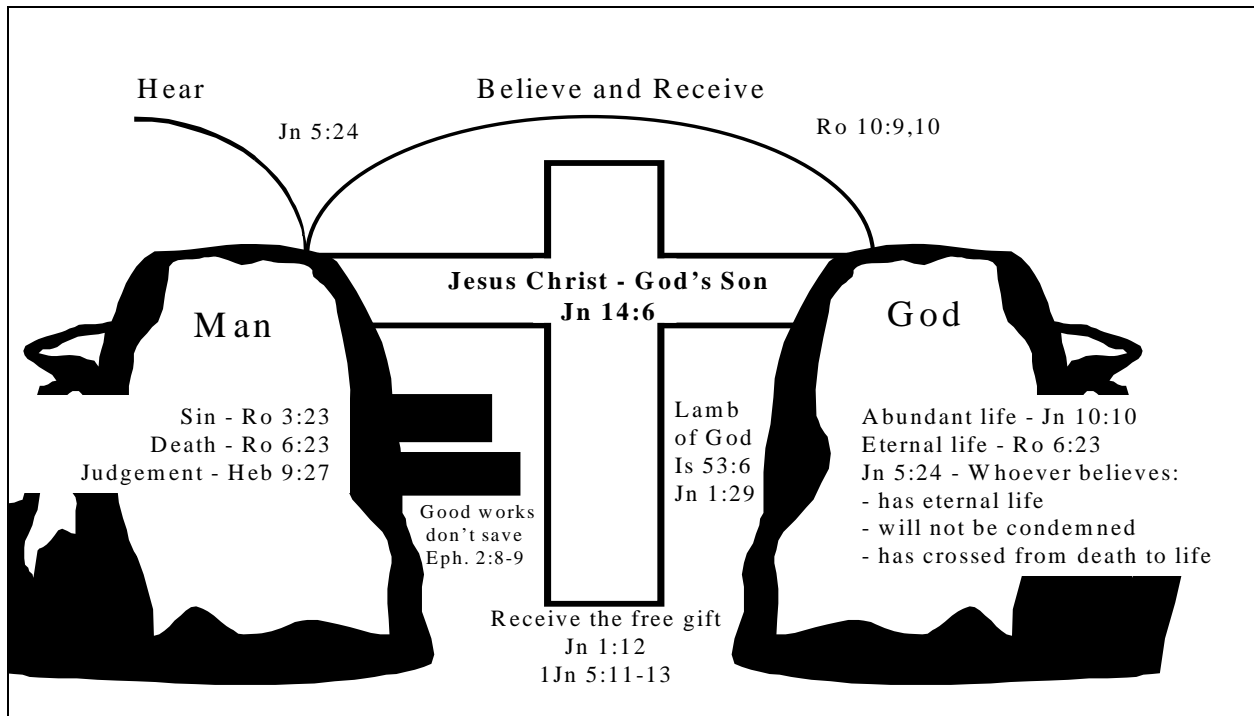
- Why is it important for the whole church to be involved in evangelism for SCP to work?
- Do you believe that God could use you to reach others for Him?
- What is the most important thing that has ever happened to you personally?
- If that is true, what, then, is the most important thing you can do in life to make a positive impact on the many people you know?
- What is “the work of an evangelist”? (2Ti 4:2)
- What most motivates you to share the Gospel?
- Can you think of ten people in your web of relationships who need a personal relationship with Christ?
- What plans do you have for increasing your evangelistic efforts?

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EVANGELISM
APPENDIX
1A

The Bridge



The Bridge diagram can be an effective evangelism method. You might find it helpful to gradually make a rough sketch of this on a blank sheet of paper while you share the Good News (with related Bible verses) with unsaved friends. A verbal and written presentation is often more powerful than using either medium alone.

EVANGELISM

APPENDIX

1B

Developing Your Personal Testimony

THIS IS WHAT GOD DID FOR ME!

Suggestions to Trainers

This is a two-hour lesson. The first hour should introduce the participants to what a personal testimony is and help them write their personal testimony. The second hour should be used to practice sharing their personal testimony (point V. in the outline). Although the lesson is written all together, you may want to leave a few days between the two hours to give the participants a chance to learn their testimony well before sharing it in class.

Be sure that the testimonies are not longer than five minutes. Consider using a stopwatch to ensure that this is not violated. It takes great discipline to keep a testimony short, but there will be situations where you will only have time to share a short testimony. It might be more effective to divide the group into two or three groups for sharing of testimonies.

I. THE NATURE OF A TESTIMONY

1. We are Called to be Witness

In Acts 1:8, Jesus promises His disciples that they will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon them and that they will be His witnesses. But what is a witness? In a legal courtroom, a witness is one who is called upon to tell others what he has observed. He tells the truth about a critical event, as he has perceived it. A witness is not expected to know every detail or have various perspectives on truth. He is expected to tell what he remembers accurately and honestly. The content that a witness communicates is his testimony.

2. We are Called to Give Testimony

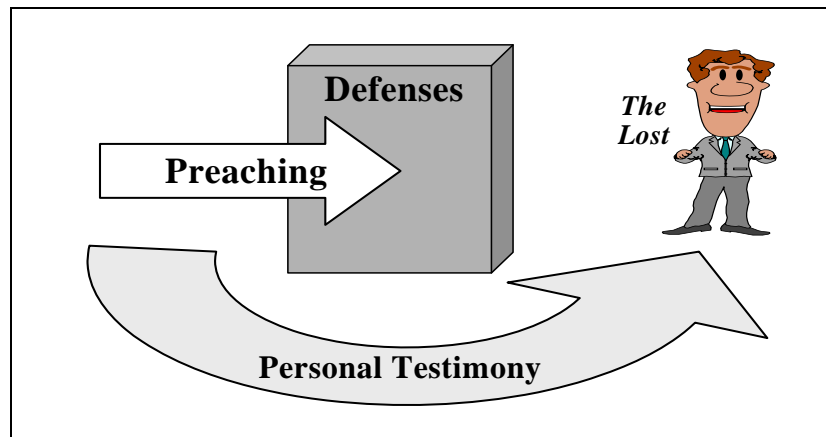
Each of us who has placed our faith in Christ also has a testimony to share. What has been your experience with Christ? Our testimonies are as individual as fingerprints and snowflakes. Our testimonies provide valuable insight to others about the way God works among men. This is vital information unbelievers need to make an informed decision about Christ. Our testimonies also provide encouragement to those who love God. As we tell of Christ's work in our lives, others are stimulated to greater faith and obedience.

II. THE VALUE OF A TESTIMONY

1. Overcoming resistance to the Gospel

People listen selectively. The people you want to win to faith may resist a theological discussion about salvation. But they will easily and readily hear your personal story of how you came to faith in Christ. People like to listen to interesting stories. Whether they admit it or not, they want you to give them a good reason to believe. Your testimony, shared honestly, briefly and creatively, can be used by the Spirit to open up their eyes and minds to see spiritual truth in a fresh way.

Figure 2.1 Overcoming Defenses With Personal Testimony



2. Overcoming Satan in spiritual warfare

When we are sharing our faith with others, we are engaged alongside God in spiritual warfare, assaulting the kingdom of the devil. In Revelation 12:10-12, we read the following:

"... Now have come the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God, and the authority of His Christ. For the accuser of our brothers, who accuses them before our God day and night, has been hurled down. They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony; they did not love their lives so much as to shrink from death. Therefore rejoice, you heavens and you who dwell in them!"

Note the means by which the accuser of our brethren, Satan, was overcome ... "the blood of the Lamb" and "the word of their testimony." The finished work of Christ and our relationship to Christ are two things God uses to defeat the evil one. Your testimony of faith in Christ and faithfulness to Christ is an important tool God uses to build his church. Even if we have to experience hardship, suffering or ultimately death for our faith, we win and Satan loses! So tell people what God has done in your life!

III. EXAMPLES OF TESTIMONIES

Scripture is filled with accounts of people giving their personal testimony. Read the following as examples of personal testimonies and see what you can learn from them. Use the methods you are learning in the lessons on inductive Bible Studies.

1. The woman at the well (Jn 4:28-29)

- What did she say?
- To whom did she witness?
- Why did she choose this particular form of testimony?

2. The man born blind (Jn 9:13-34)

- To whom did he witness?
- What did he say?
- What was the occasion for the testimony?
- How was the testimony received?
- How did he deal with opposition?

3. Paul's conversion (Ac 9, 22, and 26)

In these passages, note how Paul emphasizes different aspects of the same experience to impact different audiences.

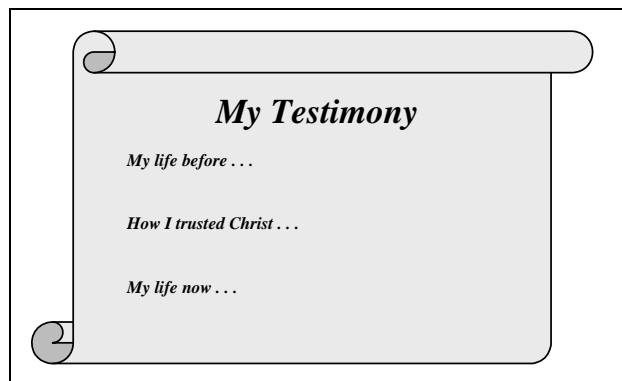
- Chapter 9 is Luke's account of Saul's conversion.
- Chapter 22 is Luke's record of Paul's interrupted testimony before the Jerusalem Jews.
- Chapter 26:2-23 is Luke's record of Paul's testimony before King Agrippa.

4. Paul's testimony about events in Jerusalem (Ac 24:10-21)

IV. THE PREPARATION OF A TESTIMONY

Please take the remainder of this session to prepare a 3-5 minute version of your personal testimony. Ask God to help you recall your conversion clearly. Make some notes about key ideas or verses you want to be sure to include. It is best if you can isolate one particular thing that moved you to faith in Christ—something that others, non-Christians, could relate to. In your testimony, share in these three broad categories:

Figure 2.2 My Testimony



1. What was your life like before you met Christ?

This will point to areas of need that you believed Christ would meet in your life. It provides a sense of common ground between you and the person you want to win to faith. Why did you need Christ? Try to isolate the prominent issue that led to your repentance.

2. How did you come to Christ?

What actually happened? Where were you? When did you trust Christ? What did you do? What Scripture did the Holy Spirit use in your life? Did someone help you in this process? Make this as basic as possible; assume that the hearer is a God-seeker and your experience will be used as a plausible scenario that he could relate to.

3. How has knowing Christ changed your life?

What impact has your faith had on your life? In what practical ways was your life changed? Were there changes that surprised you? Were your expectations met? Do not only talk in the past tense—tell what the Gospel is doing in your life today. Do not necessarily avoid talking about difficulties—non-Christians need to know that Christians have problems because they, the non-Christians certainly have problems. Listeners need to know that Christ is a solid anchor in the storms and that the Christian life provides power for life.

V. THE SHARING OF A PERSONAL TESTIMONY

Now that you have prepared your personal testimony, take some time to share it with the other trainees. Each participant needs a chance to share his or her testimony. Take five minutes to hear each testimony and no more than five minutes to give feedback. As testimonies are shared, use the following points to consider the effectiveness of each.

1. Complete

Does the testimony tell the whole story? Does it include the three parts?

- Life before Christ: What can the non-Christian relate to?
- Circumstances at the point of conversion: How is it like the non-Christian's situation?
- Life since finding Christ: How is your life different than the non-Christian?

2. Clear

Will the testimony be easy for a non-believer to understand, or is it filled with religious language that might confuse non-believers? Does it sound like a sermon or is it a helpful recommendation to a friend?

3. Gospel

Are all necessary points of the Gospel message touched upon in the testimony? While it is impossible to go into detail concerning all of this in a short testimony, all or some of the following points should be properly treated.

(1) *The Bad News*

- We are sinners, and the penalty is death
- God is holy, and we cannot please Him
- Jesus—the Son of God—died in our place

(2) *The Good News*

- We are saved by faith—not by our works
- We are born again into God's family as His children
- We have the assurance of eternal life

4. Concise

These testimonies should be not longer than five minutes. Is there any unnecessary detail in the testimony? We do not need to tell the whole story now—evangelism is a process.

QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION, REVIEW AND APPLICATION

- Where are some places and what are some of the times in your day or week during which you could share your testimony?
- What topics of general conversation might readily provide “openers” for the casual introduction of your testimony? Do you travel on public transportation?
- Do you take breaks or eat a meal at work? Ask the Lord to arrange “divine appointments” for you to be able to share your testimony.

ACTION PLAN

- Share your testimony with at least three other Christians who will see if you are clear in your presentation. Write down the names of the people you will practice with here: _____
- Share your testimony with two non-Christian friends or existing contacts within the next week. Ask God to prepare “divine appointments” for you to share your testimony (perhaps without advance warning) within the next four weeks. Write down the names of the people you will pray for and share with here:

EVANGELISM
APPENDIX
1C

Using Stories

SHARING THE GOSPEL

Lesson Purpose

Share the “Story-ing” technique of sharing the good news. If you desire you can memorize these stories.

I. PART 1

I want to tell you a story. This story is from a book called the Bible. Men did not make up the Bible. It is the word of the Most High God. These stories are true and reliable because they are the words of the Most High God. There is only one God, and He is the Most High God. The Most High God is more powerful than men and kingdoms. The Most High God is more powerful than other gods such as the fire god, sun god, or dragon god. He is also more powerful than idols made by men. The Most High God is the most powerful.

2. PART 2

In the beginning the Most High God existed. The Most High God is the Creator. He created everything on earth and in heaven and is all powerful over everything. His name is God (Shangdi).

When God began to create things, He just used His words. He spoke and everything came to being. He created angels to worship and serve Him. They were very beautiful. God created everything in 6 days. [He created the sky, land, water, mountains, oceans, sun, moon, stars, all plant and animals. He created everything.] Finally, He created man according to His image. God created man to enjoy all that He has created. God created everything and saw that it was good.

3. PART 3

God placed the man and woman in a beautiful garden to live. They had a very good relationship. He told them to take care of the garden and enjoy everything. He gave them a special command: they could eat from every tree in the garden except one. If they ate from that one tree, they would die. Man and woman listened to God and had a wonderful relationship with Him in the garden.

However, do you remember the angels God created? One of the angels was very smart and beautiful. This angel became very proud. He wanted to be like God and to have the other angels to worship him instead of God. Only God deserves all the worship and service. Therefore God cast the bad angel, Satan, and the other angels who listened to him out of heaven. These bad angels are known as demons.

One day, Satan tempted woman, named Eve, to eat the food from the tree that was forbidden. [Satan lied to the woman. He told Ever that if she ate of the tree, she would be just like the Most High God.] Eve listened to Satan and ate the fruit. Then she gave it to her husband, Adam, to eat. Both of them disobeyed God's command. Disobeying God's command is sin. God is righteous and holy. He must punish sin. God cast the man and the woman out of the garden, and their relationship with God was broken.

Man and God were now separated forever. Like Adam and Eve, all people since then have sinned by not listening to God's commands and are separated from God. The result of sin is eternal death. We cannot live with God forever.

4. PART 4

Over time, the number of people on earth multiplied. God loved them very much and wanted them to have a relationship with Him. He gave them 10 commandments to follow. Remember God is perfect and holy, so we must be perfect and holy to live with him. [The 10 commandments teach man how to relate to God and how to relate to people. Some of the commands were: do not worship other gods or make idols; honor your parents; do not lie, steal, murder or commit adultery.]

However, no one was able to obey all of these commands. So, each time they sinned, God allowed them to repent of their sins and offer a blood sacrifice to take the place of their punishment. This sacrifice was shedding the blood of a perfect [first-born, male, without blemish] animal [for example a bull or male goat]. If they would repent and offer the blood sacrifice, God would forgive them.

Only by the shedding of blood can man's sin be forgiven. However, man kept sinning and the sin sacrifice became a ritual rather than something from their heart. God became tired of the blood of animals. The shedding of animal's blood was never sufficient to bring men back to God. What can be done?

5. PART 5

Remember that God loves man whom He created very much. He is angry that they disobey Him, and is sad that they cannot come back to Him. Therefore He gave man a perfect way to reconnect to Him.

God sent Jesus to show us the way back to Himself. Who is Jesus? Jesus is God's son, His one and only son. Jesus was a wise teacher. [Many people would come to hear Him teach about how they could return to God.]

Jesus was a powerful miracle worker. Jesus calms the storm. [On one occasion, He was with some of His students crossing a large lake on a boat. It was late at night. While Jesus was sleeping, a powerful storm arose on the lake. Jesus' students were very afraid. They awakened Jesus and said, "We are about to die!" Jesus rebuked the wind and said to the waves, "Quiet! Be still!" Immediately the wind and rained stopped.] Jesus' power is greater than natural powers.

Jesus fed over 5,000 people. [On another occasion over 5,000 people came to listen to Jesus teach about God. When evening came they had not eaten and were hungry. Altogether they only had five loaves of bread and two fish. Jesus used the five loaves of bread and two fish to feed over 5,000 people.] Jesus' power is able to satisfy man's needs.

Jesus cures a demon possessed man. [Another time, Jesus saw a man with many demons inside him. The man was very powerful and dangerous. Jesus loved the man and cast the demons out of him.] Jesus is more powerful than demons. Jesus raised the dead. [Jesus' good friend became sick and died. Jesus was not with him. Four days later Jesus arrived at His friend's house. Jesus felt very sad. His friend was already in the tomb. Jesus went to the front of the tomb and said, "Friend, come out." His friend was resurrected. He walked out of the tomb alive!] Jesus' power is greater than death.

Jesus was the good shepherd. He loves and cares for people. Jesus was perfect. He never sinned.

6. PART 6

Jesus was the Lamb of God.

Many people loved Jesus. However, there some leaders were jealous of Jesus. These men grabbed Jesus and decided to kill Him. They placed Jesus on a cross. A cross is made from two large pieces of wood formed together in the shape of a large cross. They took His hands and His feet and nailed them to the cross. His precious blood flowed from His hands, feet and body. Jesus suffered much pain on the cross.

Jesus is the perfect sacrifice. Jesus was perfect and did not deserve to die. Instead, Jesus died for all mankind. God loves us and allowed Jesus to die on the cross in our place. Only through the shedding of Jesus' precious blood was God able to forgive our sin. Jesus death demonstrates God's love towards us. However this story doesn't end here. On the third day Jesus rose from the dead!

7. PART 7

We all have left God and are forever separated from Him. We all must repent and return to God. Jesus can lead us back to God's side. Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me." We must go through Jesus to return to God. How can we go through Jesus? You must believe in your heart and with your mouth confess that Jesus is Lord. Do you want to go through Jesus and return to God's side?

God wants you and your whole family to return to Him. To do this, you must go through Jesus. Jesus is the perfect sacrifice. Only through Jesus can your relationship with God be restored. Do you want to go through Jesus to return to God's side?

If you want to, you must believe in your heart and confess, "God, I have sinned. I confess that I am a sinner. Jesus was the perfect sacrifice for my sins. I believe in Jesus. I repent and ask Jesus to forgive me. I accept Jesus as the Lord of my life and now am reconciled to God. From now on, I will follow Jesus."

In the same way I just talked with God, now you talk to God with me. I'll say each part and you repeat after me. "God, I have sinned. I confess that I am a sinner. Jesus was the perfect sacrifice for my sins. I believe in Jesus. I repent and ask Jesus to forgive me. I accept Jesus as the Lord of my life and now am reconciled to God. From now on, I will follow Jesus."

Great! Now your relationship with God is restored. I know you care about your family. God is waiting for your whole family to believe in Him. Go home and tell your family and friends this good news. God loves them too!

EVANGELISM

LESSON 2

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

- 2A Evaluating Evangelism Strategies
- 2B Examining Jesus' Approach to Individuals

☞ Suggestions to Trainers

Appendix 4A can be used as a discussion tool during this lesson.

☞ Suggestions for Mentoring Time

1. Read Acts 16:31-34 and use it as a basis for your opening prayer time.
Personal Growth Question: Does your home reflect the of joy and worship of a Christian life?
Suggestions for discussion time:
 Answer questions from previous lessons or homework.
 Choose 3 of the questions at the end of this chapter for discussion.
Homework Assignment: Read the next chapter and appendix.

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).

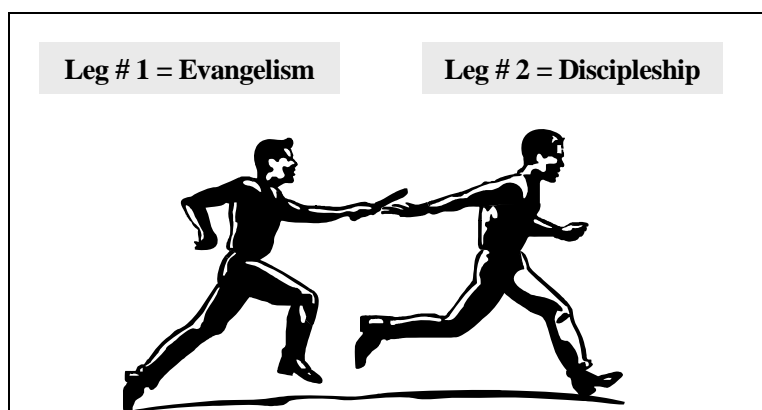
The church planter needs to use a method of evangelism that assimilates people into the church. He needs strategies that naturally lead to follow-up, and lead naturally to discipleship and growth in the church.

Discuss: How many new believers (not individuals transferring from other churches) have you had come to your fellowship in the last 12 months? What percentage stay? Are you happy with these numbers?

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 disciplined 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." Church multiplication 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, multiplying churches are small and intimate, with opportunity for healthy relationships to grow and be seen.

Discuss: What does the writer mean by using the example of a relay race?

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.

1. 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.

Discuss: How can you better use natural webs in your evangelism?

2. 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? Here are two reasons.

(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.

Discuss: Do you have any concerns with allowing new converts witness immediately? What do you think Christ would say about your concerns?

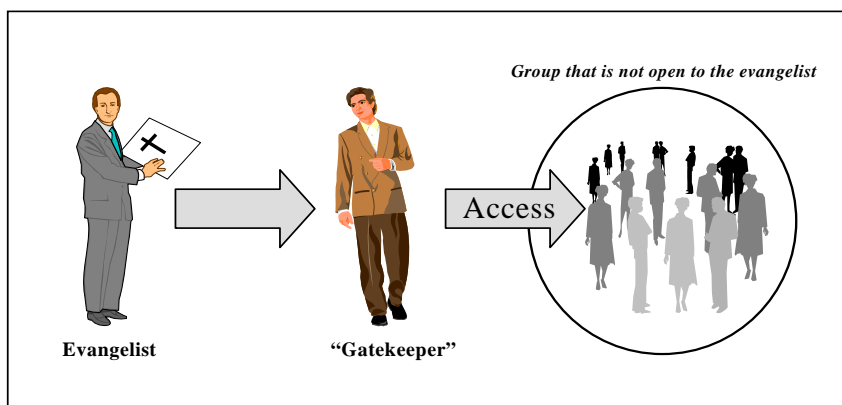
3. Go For "Gatekeepers"

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!

Discuss: Do you know any "Gate Keepers"? What kind of influential people might you know in your neighborhood or your natural webs of friendships?

4. 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.

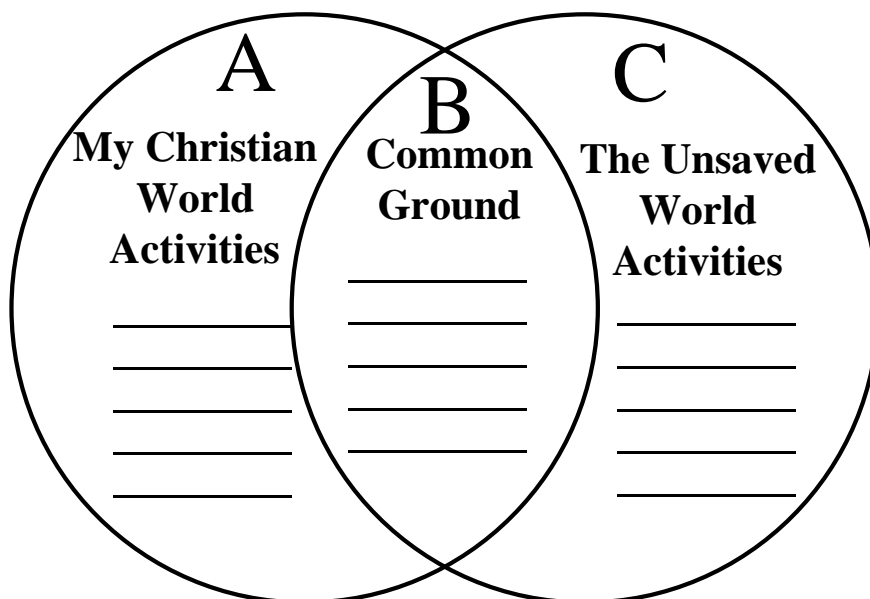
Discuss: Why is it important to consider cultural barriers?

5. Look For 'Common Ground'

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

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

Figure 4.4 Common Ground



Discuss: What does it mean to look for common ground? Do you have any common ground with unbelievers? How can you begin to build more common ground with non-believers?

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?

SOURCES

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- 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.



Answering Common Objections

USE SCRIPTURE AS YOUR AUTHORITY

The people we meet come from lots of different backgrounds. The questions they ask do have answers. You can help them discover the answers through knowing 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
APPENDIX**

2B

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?				

MULTIPLYING CHURCHES

**MULTIPLYING
CHURCHES**

1

LESSON

Functions and Benefits of Multiplying Churches

☞ Lesson Purpose

The Purpose of this lesson is to provide a general overview of churches that multiply.

☞ Main Points and Desired Outcomes

- Churches that multiply are different from other churches because.
- Understand the life cycle of a multiplying church.
- Understand the role of multiplying churches in a saturation church planting strategy.

☞ 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.

☞ Suggestions for Mentoring Time

1. Read Thessalonians 1:6-8 and use it as a basis for your opening prayer time..
2. Personal Growth Question: How are you showing the love and peace of Christ to those in your family?
3. Suggestions for discussion time:
 - Answer questions from previous lessons or homework.
 - Answer the questions in this chapter as a group.
4. Homework Assignment: Read the next chapter and appendix.
5. Pray for ministry needs and discuss any progress or difficulties with the action plans from previous lessons.

I. FOUNDATIONS OF MULTIPLYING CHURCHES

1. Introduction

More and more churches all over the world are realizing the tremendous importance of multiplication. Through these principles, 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.

Multiplication in the church is described in the book of Acts. The churches 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 churches also came together for larger meetings in the temple courts for worship, teaching and evangelism.

To understand the difference between churches and multiplying churches, we can use an example from science. In biology, a cell is a living, growing organism that multiplies itself over and over again. 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 almost never will multiply on its own.

2. Distinctives

It is important from the beginning to understand the foundational distinctives. Every multiplying church must have:

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.***

Discuss: What four foundational things must multiplying churches have?

II. OVERALL LEADERSHIP CONCEPTS

1. Model the Christian Life

Since evangelism is an essential element of church multiplication 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 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 church 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 leader needs to set an example in lifestyle and ministry that his group can follow.

Discuss: Why should the leader model what it means to be a Christian and not just teach?

Discuss: What are ways that the leader can model following Christ?

2. Develop New Leaders

One of the foundational purposes 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 a multiplying church is that it provides an excellent means to develop new Christian leaders. One of the first priorities of the leader of a multiplying church 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 leader is to be a mentor for the apprentice leader. The apprentice must not only listen to and see what the leader is doing, but he or she must also take an active role in the leadership ministry as well. Multiplying Churches lesson 5 "Training New Leaders" (in Manual 2) 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 leaders themselves.

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

3. 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 multiplying churches enables Christians not only to discover their spiritual giftedness, but also to develop and use that giftedness in ministry.

The 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 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.

Discuss: Why should new leaders be found and given opportunity to use the gifts that God has given them?

III. CHURCH MULTIPLICATION PHILOSOPHY

Each church 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 church, there are many areas of responsibility and many activities to plan for and carry out. The leader, as well as the members of the group, will indeed stay very busy meeting the needs and accomplishing the goals of the group.

1. Churches that Multiply Have a Life Cycle

As a church 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. It will go through identifiable, systematic phases of development. The 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 church is in, he can make sure that his group is on target to multiply itself.

Every multiplying church goes through identifiable, systematic phases of development.

In a typical **church**, multiplication does not happen. In fact, experience has shown that the tendency in churches is to stop growing. The current group members become comfortable in their relationships, and new people are not frequently welcomed into the church. Similarly, without proper planning and vision, a church 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 leader must consciously guide the group through the life cycle phases so that the church does not get "stuck" and remain in any one phase.

Churches can only be part of a strategy to see new churches started if they are consciously aware of 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 church should pass. Note that the times given for the duration are only approximate, and will vary depending on the particular location and context. The leader should refer to this chart periodically to determine where the church is in the life cycle, and what he can do so that they move to the next phase.

Table 6.1 Phases of a Multiplying Church

Phase	Duration	Description
Orientation	Week 1-4	People learn about each other. There is a very shallow level of sharing and a low level of trust. The leader directs almost the entire ministry.
Transition	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.
Community	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.
Action	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.
Multiplication	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.

Discuss: What are the cycles of a multiplying church? How can this information help you?

2. Multiplying Churches Work Toward a Common Goal

Multiplying Churches, much like the cells in our own bodies, each have a "job" to do. In a certain city, one church might reach out to a particular geographical area, while another works with a certain segment of the population. Both 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, churches working together can also accomplish much greater goals than any of them could on their own.

Before the first church is started, thought needs to be given to the overall goal. Start with the end result in mind, and work backward from that goal. What types of churches are needed, and where? How many would be needed to meet the goal? **Discuss: Why does a group need a common goal and work together toward that goal?**

3. **Multiplying is 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 requires methods that are simple, 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, flexible and reproducible.

Churches that multiply 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 is on people and needs, not on programs and systems. These churches 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, multiplying churches 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 church multiplication as the foundation.

IV. **DEVELOPING A CHURCH MULTIPLICATION MINISTRY STRATEGY**

At every phase of the church planting process, 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 churches.
2. How do the churches 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 the target people? Research should be done in order to understand the types of activities needed (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 churches?
5. Who are the key leaders in the target area? How would it be possible for one or more churches to develop relationships with these people and hopefully win them to Christ?

QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION, REVIEW AND APPLICATION

- Can the "one another" ministries be done in a traditional Sunday morning church service? What will be the impact 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 churches be used as a "bridge" to unbelievers?
- In general, how can church multiplication be used as part of an effective saturation church planting strategy?

SOURCES

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**MULTIPLYING
CHURCHES**

2

LESSON

A Simple Meeting Model

Lesson Purpose

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

Main Points and Desired Outcomes

- Participants with "hands on" experience with a format will be better equipped to lead their churches.
- 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.

There are basically four types of activities to choose from, and they relate to the four parts of a typical meeting: fellowship, worship, edification and evangelism.

The examples and suggestions given in this lesson are only guidelines.

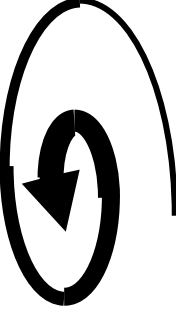
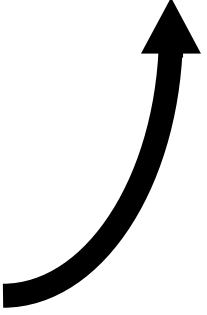
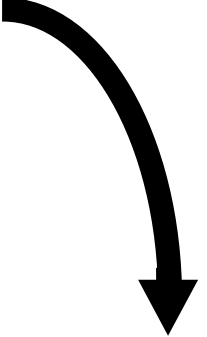
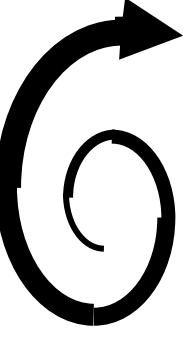
If the group of trainees is large, they should be divided into several smaller groups of no more than 8-10 persons for the in-class exercise.

Keep in mind that the overall goal of this lesson is to give practical, hands-on experience in simplified methods of ministry. It should also be fun!

I. SIMPLIFIED MEETING DEMONSTRATION

The purpose of this lesson is to provide an opportunity to observe and participate in various aspects of a simplified meeting. Remember that a church 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. 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 Church 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 multiplicative church 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.

1. Fellowship

Open up by welcoming everyone to the group and stating the purpose of the group, and leading an opening prayer. You can say something like:

"I want to thank you all for coming today. I am so happy that we have this opportunity to grow together in the Lord and have the opportunity to work together for the purpose of spreading his Glory throughout this area. Let's start with a prayer. Lord God, we thank you for today and for bringing us together. Bless our time here that we may grow closer to each other and closer to you. Use this time for your glory and your will to be realized in our lives. In Jesus name, Amen."

Secondly, you should prepare a brief period for everyone to grow to know each other. This is an organized fellowship time specifically to make sure everyone learns something new about everyone else. Prepare a question or activity that each individual will participate in. You can choose an icebreaker from the Appendix, "Ice Breakers. Newer groups will need easier questions, while older groups could use deeper questions. Here is an example of something you can do:

"Our purpose is to grow together in the Lord, but we cannot do that if our relationships are not deep and strong. Therefore, we will open with a question, and I would like you all give a brief answer. What was your nick name while you were growing up and why? Since I asked the question, I will volunteer to answer it first....(then answer the question and ask others to do the same.)"

2. Worship

Your purpose for this worship time is to praise the Lord with singing, thanksgiving, declaration, etc., all in a participative way. You can do something simple like this:

Choose a scripture to open your time of worship. Next Choose two or three songs that most people know or are simple enough to learn quickly. You can use a song book, CD, or songs from scriptures in the Bible. Prepare the order of these songs and a time in the middle to individually give thanks to God or speak out a word of praise. Ask the other participants to pray, read a scripture, and speak out thanksgiving and praise to God. Remember worship is a participative activity to praise and thank God together not just one person doing all the speaking and praying.

3. Edification

Prepare a group Bible study using the inductive Bible study method. Make sure you include the group as much as possible when asking questions. The purpose is to help each member know, understand, and apply the word to their lives.

4. Evangelism

There are many things you can do to encourage the group to evangelize. For this demonstration, I suggest the following.

Before starting, make sure there is an empty chair. If all the chairs are filled, grab another chair.

During the last part of the meeting you can say the following:

"We are almost done with our meeting, however there is one more thing which we must do. You probably noticed that we have an empty chair. There is someone that God wants to come and occupy this chair next week. We need to pray that God leads us to this person and gives us the opportunity to share the good news with him/her. To help us do that, I have organized a short exercise to help us. I would like everyone to grab a pen and paper. On this paper, write the names of three of your friends, family, co-workers, gate guards, vegetable sellers, or whomever you feel God is calling you to share with this week. Pray about whose name you should write down. Please do this now."

Give the group several minutes.

"Now, I would like you all to get into groups of 2 or 3 people and share with each other what names you wrote down and why. Then I want you to pray for each other and the opportunity to share with these people. If you have the opportunity, please call each other this week to pray again and each other about these three individuals. As you pray now, also pray for the individual who is supposed to occupy this empty seat, and that next week we could grab a new empty seat."

5. Closing

Close the group with a prayer, and an invitation to come back next week.

"Thank you all for coming. Let's pray as we finish our time together. Lord God we thank you for this time, and for what you have taught us here today. Please help us remember all that we learned today, and be able to apply it to our lives as we go back into the world. Bless us as well as we seek to share with the individuals whose names we wrote down. We also ask that you would help our group grow and fill our area with churches. Bless us now as we return home. In Jesus name we pray, Amen."

II. EVALUATION

The trainees should evaluate the different activities of the meeting. What were their strengths and weaknesses? How did the "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 meeting?

ACTION PLAN

Choose an activity in one or more of the areas that your current group is deficient in and use them in one of your next meetings.

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 multiplicative church methods in order to reach those goals. 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.

**MULTIPLYING
CHURCHES**

3

LESSON

Leading A Multiplying Church

☞ Lesson Purpose

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

☞ Main Points and Desired Outcomes

- The four primary functions of a multiplying church are: fellowship, worship, discipleship and evangelism.
- Understand the unique role of the leader as a facilitator.
- Know the principles of effective planning for growth and multiplication.

☞ Appendices

2A Conversation Ice Breakers

☞ Suggestions for Mentoring Time

1. Read a scripture or sing a song related to the content as a basis for your opening prayer time.

Personal Growth question: Who has been the greatest influence in your life and why? What do you enjoy most about being a part of the body of Christ?

Suggestions for discussion time:

Answer questions from previous lessons or homework.

Choose 3 of the questions at the end of this chapter for discussion.

Pray for ministry needs.

I. LEADING THE MEETING

There is no "correct" format for a 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 multiplying church (fellowship, worship, edification, and evangelism).

Generally speaking, the entire 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 multiplying church is vital to the growth and maturity of the members, so the leader must make sure that the group spends time in each.

A leader is responsible for facilitating the planning and direction of each part of the meeting. As the church 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:

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).

II. FUNCTIONS OF MULTIPLYING CHURCHES

Fellowship Time : 20 minutes	
<i>Biblical Basis</i>	<i>Possible Activities</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 meeting, 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 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 members get to know one another better, see Appendix 3A "Conversation Ice Breakers."

Worship Time: 30 Minutes	
Man to God	
<i>Biblical Basis</i>	<i>Possible Activities</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 meeting, worship is praising and magnifying God by focusing on His nature, actions, and words, in order to bring joy to God.</p> <p><i>Possible Activities:</i></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

Leading worship 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!

Prayer will be a part of each of the activities of the 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.

Discipleship Time: 30 Minutes	
God to Man	
<i>Biblical Basis</i>	<i>Possible Activities</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 meeting, 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

It is the responsibility of the 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 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.

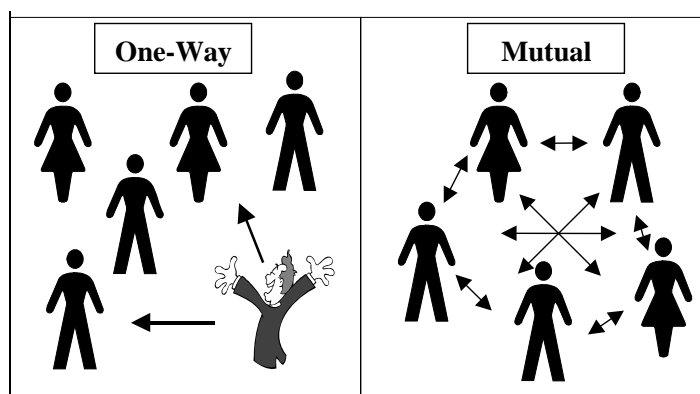
A word of caution: many groups place too much emphasis on Bible study, since this has been the model they have observed in past church experiences. An overemphasis on the Bible discussion time takes away from the other activities. It is vital that the leader maintains a balance of the four functions.

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 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 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 meeting. The apprentice should be involved in all aspects of ministry with the leader, so that he can see and experience leadership first-hand.

Figure 1.1. Mutual Discipleship



Evangelism: 10 Minutes	
Man to World	
<i>Biblical Basis</i>	<i>Possible Activities</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 meeting, evangelism is encouraging members to reach 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><i>Possible Activities:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Praying with two others in a Prayer Triplet for unsaved friends • Talk about Inviting unbelievers to the group • Talk about how to Meet needs of people outside the group • Encourage members to make friends with unbelievers • Talk about Sharing Christ with unbelievers

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

QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION, REVIEW AND APPLICATION

- Should a leader delegate activities and responsibilities to all members, 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 leader wait until he chooses an apprentice leader? What kinds of activities can the leader do with the apprentice to prepare him to lead his own group?
- Why should the 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

Plan a simple one hour meeting and then practice it in an existing group, with a few friends or at the next meeting. Have a good time.

SOURCES

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



Conversation 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 church meeting. Some notes:

- An icebreaker must be appropriate for the 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 church's 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 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 church been a help to you? Spend time talking about it and thanking each other.
55. Tell the 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? 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?

ACTION PLAN



Systematic Multiplication

INTRODUCTION:

We must remember that one of the church's main purposes is to bring the gospel into a world that desperately needs it. The church exists to Glorify God, Spread the Gospel and to build up the workers in the harvest. This three-fold truth must be remembered when putting together the workings of any church. All too often churches get caught up in meetings, meetings and more meetings. Each meeting in itself may not be bad, but you must analyze if these meetings really are helping your church, or hindering your church from accomplishing the three fold mission of the church.

We have already talked about doing a basic Sunday meeting. What you need to consider now is how all the other pieces of the church fit together into an integrated system. All the parts should work well together. If there is a part on a bicycle that is making it difficult to ride, you want to fix, or replace that part with something that will make riding that bike easier. In the same way, we want to do this with all the parts of the church – find out how to make all the parts work together smoothly.

I. COMPREHENSIVE DISCIPLESHIP PLAN, WITH A VISION:

Discipleship is an integral part of developing the church. We propose that most discipleship plans fall short because the goal of discipleship is somewhat unclear, or at least, incomplete.

Before we talk about discipleship, let's look again at the threefold purpose of the church. It is to Worship God, Evangelize the Lost, and Build up Laborers. The goal of discipleship should also be to ultimately build up people that can (1) Worship God, (2) Evangelize the Lost, and (3) Build up other Laborers. But before we move on, let's put another goal out there, just a little bit further than this. Just as when we are evangelizing or worshipping, or praying with the ultimate goal of planting a new church - the ultimate end of discipleship is also -- planting a new church.

Let's break this down into something simpler and less abstract. In order to plant a new church, we need leaders to lead that new church. In order to get leaders, we need people who know how to participate in the ministry of the church (worship, prayer, etc.). In order to get people that can participate in ministry, we need well grounded disciples. In order to get well grounded disciples, we need eager new believers. And lastly, to get new believers we need to evangelize well. This is the beginning of a goal oriented method of discipleship!

The goal of discipleship is not just to ground people in the word, it is to find new leaders who can use the word well and lead a new church! We realize that not everyone will become a leader, but if we produce many more well grounded followers along the way, that is not anything to complain about! Additionally, we don't want to lay that burden of "you will have to lead a church" on a new believer, however that doesn't mean we don't have this goal when creating our discipleship methods.

II. THE DISCIPLESHIP CYCLE:

Just above, we worked backwards from our goal of starting a New Church. We started from Leaders to people able to participate in ministry, to disciples, to new eager believers, to evangelism. This gives us the foundation of our discipleship plan, and we will call this the discipleship cycle.

We need something for New Believers, flowing into Discipleship, flowing into teaching basic ministry skills, and finally flowing into leadership skills. It should be noted that these all are not necessarily classes or meetings. The method will vary.

For each of these, we will need to know what Knowledge, what Skills and what Relationship issues will need to be passed on to the learners. For instance, among many other things, New Believers need to know Who is God (knowledge), how to pray (skill), and form accountability with other believers (relationship). Don't worry about all the details right now. Just keep these three things in mind: knowledge, skills and relationship.

So far we have the following stages in our overall discipleship cycle:



III. SISTER FENG'S STORY:

Sister Feng had four new church plants. Whenever anyone came to Christ, it was unsure if they would be discipled or not. Some used this material, some used that and some were just encouraged to start reading the Bible from Genesis. Sister Feng was very astute and realized that as her church grew, if there was no common way of discipleship across each meeting place, it would soon become chaotic and unmanageable. She knew that the most healthy, reproducing churches had clearly defined ways of doing things.

Every week during the main meeting she made sure there was time to allow people to share stories on how they have been able to share their faith during the week. This has created an atmosphere of expectation and prayer for new people to come to the group. New people are coming and she wants to make sure that she has a plan for these people.

Sister Feng wanted to start discipleship from the standpoint of finding new leaders. She started by defining all the things that new believers needed to learn. She broke this learning into three groups – Knowledge, Skills and Relationships. She noted that new believers need to know: Who is God, Who is Jesus, the Condition of Man, the Holy Spirit, The Bible and The Church. She also noted that new believers must know how to pray, read their Bible, have quiet times, and share their faith. Lastly, she noted that in order to grow, these new believers needed to have a prayer partner and accountability partner to make sure they were integrated into church life.

Sister Feng had tried new believers classes before and realized that interest began to decrease after 8 weeks, so she limited the classes to 6 weeks total. She decided that each small group would hold these classes 3 times a year and that the leadership team would take turns teaching each of these classes. By the end of the 6 weeks, everyone would have studied the basics of faith, and read through important stories of Genesis, King David, as well as the books of Luke and Acts. She also printed a plan for new believers to continue reading their Bible while in relationship with their accountability partner. After the 6 weeks, each day they would read some of the New Testament, Proverbs and Psalms. If completed on time, each new believer would have read their entire NT in just 6 months. She realized that this was an integral part of discipleship and preparing people for possible leadership.

The next thing that Sister Feng realized is that people must be given opportunities to participate in the different ministries of the church. Periodically she asked ministry partners of each meeting place to hold training for an hour after the service where they could teach others how to assist in various ministries. She included, worship, prayer, evangelism, and teaching the word. Afterward she made ways for people to participate with the leader in each of these areas. The better they did the more responsibility she gave them – until they were actually able to lead that area without the leader's help. Those individuals that showed particular ability in the word, she asked to begin sharing for a few minutes in the main meeting – these times grew in length until they were able to lead the teaching time themselves.

To make sure all the meeting places were doing well, she met with the leaders of each, two times per month. During these meetings, she shared a leadership principle, then, asked individuals to share how they saw that principle was applicable to their own small group. Then they shared ministry concerns and prayed for each other. Feng was always sure to ask pointed questions about each group, and where their people were in

regards to relationship with the Lord, and as to where the meeting group was on the church planting cycle. She helped each leader to set goals to make sure each of their meeting places would multiply at least once per year.

A goal was set up that each group would prepare two individuals who are able to share the word, either preaching or using the inductive method. As soon as two new individuals were raised up, they started making plans to start a new meeting place. If there were not two new people ready to share leading in the new group, she never started a new one – except in very special circumstances. To do so would put too much pressure on a new leader, and possibly cause them to get proud, or to get burned out.

When the group is large enough, she looks for natural groups of people based on location and relationship to each other to send out a core with the new leaders to start a new group. When this new group is formed, they immediately start doing the same thing that that previous group did, in the same way.

Sister Feng did a great job at setting up systems like this to make sure that each meeting place knew exactly what they needed to do to grow. She found that having a set way of doing discipleship helped her track each group. She also found that when problems arose, it was easier to correct them and make changes across all groups. Even though she feared that setting up systems might take away the feeling of freedom, she found that growth happened much more steadily than before.

On the surface, what Sister Feng is doing is not that much different from what most house churches are doing. However, the keys to multiplying churches is in some of the finer details of how the different components of “church” are done, as well as how they all fit together. Let’s analyze some of these now.

Discuss:

Explain what happens to a new believer in Sister Feng’s church, and how that person could become a new leader.

How does each of these steps produce a healthy church that is ready to multiply?

Are there any key issues you see in what she is doing that may be different from what you are doing?

Which of these concepts can you implement?

What would you change?

IV. CASE STUDIES

CASE STUDY 1

Brother Li started a new church. The people in the church grew rapidly as these excited new believers shared their faith. They grew to 40 people and people started feeling cramped in the small apartment. Feng thought there was no one ready for leadership, so he felt that there were two options: 1) rent a larger place; 2) start a second group that he himself would lead.

Discuss:

What is hindering this church from multiplying in a healthy manner?

What would you do?

CASE STUDY 2

Sister Pu attends a church on the east side of town. She was once involved in a very dynamic church in her home town, and is frustrated with the current group. She doesn’t feel that discipleship is done well, that worship is mechanical and that the teaching is occasionally not true to the Bible. Sister Pu thinks she could lead the group better, but is never given a chance to lead. She feels maybe she should start her own group.

Discuss:

What is hindering this church from multiplying in a healthy manner?

What would you do?

CASE STUDY 3

Brother He leads a church. He is very excited about the Word and spends a lot of time in the word each day. He desires for everyone in his Church to have a deep understanding of the Word. They meet on Sundays, but also meet Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays to study through the Bible. They have a goal to study the entire Bible in 2 years. He does all the teaching, but hopes that through this time, someone else will rise to teach with him. They have decided to stop bringing new people into the group until they all are prepared for growth.

Discuss:

What is hindering this church from multiplying in a healthy manner?

What would you do?

CASE STUDY 4

Sister Xiang leads a group of 30 new people. She has a team of 4 that assist her in leading the group. She wants everything to run smoothly so she is involved in everything that happens. She also desires new leaders to develop so she discipled the believers constantly. However, there never seems to be anyone that is willing to step up into leadership.

Discuss:

What is hindering this church from multiplying in a healthy manner?

What would you do?

CASE STUDY 5

Brother Bai has started 7 new groups. Although he had a systematic plan in the original group, the other 6 groups all seem to be using different discipleship methods. Brother Bai spends all his time visiting each of the groups to help them with their progress, and is very tired. Each group seems to have their own specific problems and now all growth has stopped.

Discuss:

What is hindering this church from multiplying in a healthy manner?

What would you do?

CASE STUDY 6

Sister Gao leads a church that is growing rapidly. She has several people that are able to be leaders, but the relationships in the group are so close that no one wants to start a new group. As a result they just get larger and larger. They are now about 80 people, but she knows that not everyone comes every week. She desires to start a new group with her new leaders, but the people in the church never seem ready to make the change.

Discuss:

What is hindering this church from multiplying in a healthy manner?

What would you do?

CASE STUDY 7

Brother Li has a group of 60 people. He has excellent methods of discipleship and leadership development. There is no shortage of people to help with various ministries within the church. He desires to start another

meeting place, however he is not able to find anyone that has adequate experience, teaching ability and spiritual knowledge to pastor the new church when they multiply.

Discuss:

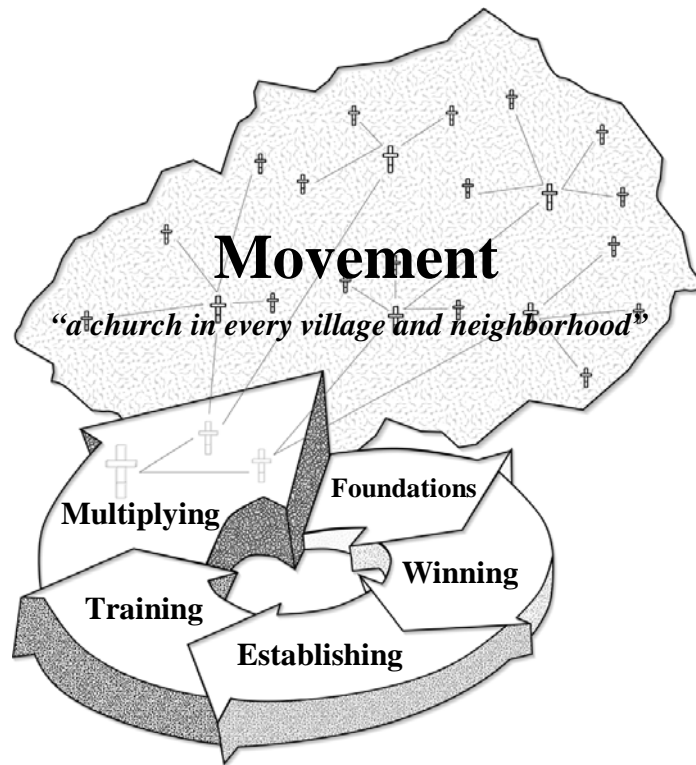
What is hindering this church from multiplying in a healthy manner?

What would you do?

ACTION PLAN
2
LESSON

Writing Your Action Plan

WORKSHEET FOR DEVELOPING A CHURCH MULTIPLICATION PLAN



FOUNDATIONS PHASE:

**WHAT IS YOUR (OR YOUR CHURCH'S) VISION OR GOAL?
(REFER TO THE SECTION ON VISION FOR HELP)**

Habakkuk 2:14 For the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of Jehovah, as the waters cover the sea.

Anything you want to add to this vision?

Examples:

- 1) To see a church in every apartment complex of our city
 - 2) To see a church in every village of our county
 - 3) To see a 100 new churches planted in our area.
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What are some things you must do in the foundations stage to see this happen?

Some things to think about:

1. Prayer Strategy to get a group praying for this vision
2. Sharing the vision of saturation church planting with other people
3. Do Bible studies on the vision of saturation church planting.
4. Envision the leaders in your group to envision others towards saturation church planting.

What will you do to expand develop this vision in the foundations stage?

WINNING PHASE:

HOW WILL YOU WIN SIGNIFICANT NUMBERS OF NEW BELIEVERS? (REFER TO THE EVANGELISM SECTION)

Some things to think about:

1. Make a goal to share with a specific number of people in a specific amount of time and pray for this goal.
2. Make a plan to encourage others in your church to share. Use some of the ideas from the evangelism section and evangelism section appendixes.
3. Think about ways you can share the gospel with these groups of people (not just individually). Pray for these opportunities.

What will you do to win significant numbers of new believers?

ESTABLISHING PHASE:

HOW WILL YOU SIMPLIFY YOUR CHURCH MEETING AND INTEGRATE NEW BELIEVERS? (REFER TO THE CHURCH, BIBLE STUDY METHODS, AND MULTIPLYING CHURCHES SECTIONS)

Some things to think about:

1. Re-read your definition of Church from the Church section.
2. Encourage others in your church to use their gifts and grow in their responsibility
3. Take a brief look at the chapters on Bible Study Methods and Multiplying Churches. Consider the way you currently do church and list the things that could be hindering multiplication or the development of new leadership. Write down 1 or 2 possible changes you can make to simplify your meetings.
4. Examine the culture of your target area and list some ideas of how church forms could change for that culture.

Is there any way you will change your church meetings to follow the principles of SCP?

**Integrating new believers
(please reference the chapter entitled Discipleship Plan):**

What Knowledge must be taught to new believers? (God, Jesus, Man, etc.):

What Skills must be taught to new believers? (Bible study, prayer, evangelism, etc):

What kind of Relationships should new believers be developing? (Prayer partner, study partner, etc) :

Is there any existing curriculum you can pull from to develop a simple set of lessons for the above?

How many lessons are needed for new believers?

How will you use these lessons? One on one or in a group?

Who will teach these lessons?

How will you encourage them to read through the New Testament?

How will you encourage them to witness?

TRAINING PHASE:

**HOW WILL YOU TRAIN PEOPLE TO PARTICIPATE IN MINISTRY AND ALSO NEW LEADERS?
(REFER TO THE DISCIPLESHIP PLAN SECTION)**

Training people for Ministry Development:

What Knowledge must be taught to people participating in various ministries of the church? (this may be specific to each individual ministry):

What skills must be taught to people participating in various ministries of the church? (this may be specific to each individual ministry):

What kinds of relationships must leaders develop with new ministry partners? (this may be specific to each individual ministry):

How will you teach them to participate in these various ministries?

Who will teach them?

How will you give them opportunity to use what they are learning in the church meetings?

Who will meet with them to encourage them in their new ministry?

Will these ministry opportunities take away from their own personal evangelism?

Training New Leaders:

What Knowledge must be taught to new house church leaders?:

What Skills must be taught to new house church leaders?:

What kinds of relationships do these new leaders need to help them grow in this role?:

Will you have any regular leadership meetings with these new leaders? If so, what will you do in these meetings?

MULTIPLYING PHASE:

HOW WILL YOU ENSURE THAT NEW GROUPS ARE STARTED OUT OF YOUR EFFORTS? (REFER TO THE CHURCH MULTIPLICATION SECTION)

Some things to think about:

1. How many people are needed in a house group so it can multiply effectively?
2. Set a date to work towards for the multiplication to happen.
3. Plan for having at least two coworkers to share in leading each new group – plan to release new leaders and start new groups at the same time.
4. Create a prayer plan to pray specifically for the house group to multiply.
5. Refer to Vision, Chapter 3, Appendix, “Church Planting Models” and think about how this house group should multiply.

Use the items above to help develop a preliminary plan for multiplying the house group.
