

# Church Planting Readings

These are notes that I have compiled to discuss church planting. I try to give some material on both sides of the idea. I would love to talk with you about all of this whenever it works for you.

Austin Gardner

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# THE INCOMPARABLE CHURCH-PLANTER

## God Allows Men to Begin His Church

Elmer Towns

*Getting a Church Started in the Face of Insurmountable Odds with Limited resources in Unlikely Circumstances. pp. 11-14*

**The man who desires to build a church is usually motivated by the "impossible dream" and he must accomplish the "unperformable task."** A church is never a human invention nor is it every man's accomplishment. An ecclesia is a people "called out" from sin, beckoned to gather themselves in God's assembly. They are "called out" from normal pursuits to carry out God's commission. The church is established by God, is empowered by God and, ultimately, God is its objective. Those who would start a true church must be motivated by God who is its founder.

The world does not love a church. The system of life is motivated by selfish gains and selfish pleasures. Men obey

their natures or mimic the times. Behind the veneer of American life is a system that hates the intrusion of God into its existence. American business is dominated by both moral and immoral men; neither type is usually motivated by the love of Christ. Even though America may have a superior lifestyle, it still is opposed to the dictates of Christ. A New Testament church convicts the surrounding community by its purity and humility. The world still hates Christian influence. It will not embrace a new church nor will a community naturally support a beginning church. God must perform a miracle each time a new church comes into existence.

**Into this improbable situation steps a man.** As once 'There was a man sent from God whose name was John," (John 1:6), just so God always has a man who will step into the gap (Ez. 22:30) and respond, "Here am I, send me" (Isa. 6:8).

When the human race was threatened by sexual abuses, God worked through his man Noah. When the nations were given over to idolatry, God had his man Abraham. When the world faced seven hard years of famine, God had his man

Joseph. When the people of God were groaning under an oppressive slavery in Egypt, God had his man Moses. God's man always attempts the unattainable, whether his name is Samuel, David, Nehemiah or Paul.

God still uses a man. **One of the greatest tasks a man can do today is start a church.** A man begins by obeying God's call. Next he faces his "unattainable task" and in the power of Christ accomplishes a victory a mere individual could never win. He influences his neighborhood, yet must do so in the spirit of humility. He does not desire self-popularization. **It is God he magnifies.** But when he has successfully accomplished his goal of starting a church, he is both well known and influential. Yet notoriety must never go to his head; to remain influential he must remain humble.

**A church is always built by a man, but is never built on a man.** Churches started by committees never seem to prosper. God's grace and power must be poured into a man-God's servant. Remember, **"A great church is always caused, it never just happens."** God always has his servant

who sacrifices, prays and works.

James Mastin who drove into Milwaukee with all his furniture loaded on a U-Haul truck appeared about as formidable as David standing before Goliath with five stones. But the thesis of this book is that God still uses the unaided man with limited resources against insurmountable obstacles in unlikely circumstances. Mastin knew no one in the city, had little finances and faced deep religious conviction. Yet, God used James Mastin to build a great church.

Although God does not use a modern Gideon to slay an army of Midianites with 300 faithful soldiers, he still uses the same principle. Jim Singleton went to Tempe, Arizona; Danny Smith to Richmond, Virginia; and the other men of this book have accomplished unthinkable feats. God still uses the unaided man as he used Moses against Egypt, Samson against the Philistines and Joseph to feed a famine-infested world.

None of the church-planters in this book are characterized by great education. They are God's servants and he has given them the wisdom of Proverbs. All of them labor in the spirit of



I Corinthians 1:26, 27, "How that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty. not many noble are called: But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty." God uses average men to reveal his power.

This volume believes in the vast potential of God's people. When a man is faithful in a small sphere of service, God promotes him to a higher realm of usefulness. In the parable of talents, when the man with five talents was faithful, the Lord gave him five additional talents. Some of the pastors in this book were green and unsure of themselves. I enjoyed watching Carl Godwin grow as he was put under pressure. Each week he is becoming a better preacher. As each man was faithful, God first increased his ability; secondly, God increased the size of his church.

Following the example of these pastors have come their laymen, growing in ability by faithful service. When Jim Histan at Fairfax Baptist Temple had reached 100 through his bus ministry, it was a result of God's increasing his ability and

rewarding his faithfulness. His pastor inspired him to accomplishment greater than he ever thought possible.

One of the yet-to-be-revealed influences of these churches is the hundreds of boys who weekly watch their pastor take on unbeatable foes and beat them. Perhaps there are a number of boys in these churches who will be called into service (Timothy) and build greater churches in the future. Just as James Mastin was influenced by Verle Ackerman and the great First Baptist Church of West Hollywood, Florida, there may be a small boy in Milwaukee who will one day build a church greater than either of these.

Dr. G. B. Vick, Pastor of Temple Baptist Church, Detroit, has said, "**Great men build great churches while average men serve average churches.**" If a young man wants to start a church that will be influential, he must study great men. A pastor becomes like the minister he patterns himself after. Some mission churches fail or stagnate because their leaders lack well-balanced spiritual leadership. **Simply, the church fails because the leader has not learned the basic steps of Christianity.**

To build a great church, a man must have developed a stem hardheaded tenacity. I'll never give up," Rudy Holland affirmed, banging his fist into the palm of his hand. But the church planter must also nurture the devotional meekness of Puritans. **He must have physical endurance to visit sixty hours a week and emotional endurance not to crack when his young converts deny the faith.** The pastor-leader must have a reverent sense of spiritual things, yet the cold calculating eye of a businessman. He must be quick to acquire knowledge in a thousand areas where he is ignorant, yet must lead authoritatively for no one else in his congregation knows how to build a church. The pastor-founder must speak persuasively in public and listen sympathetically in private counsel. The man who would establish a church must be an extraordinarily equipped man of deep commitment, iron will, wide scholarship and unblemished experience. **If he doesn't have it all when he begins, he must gain it soon and in the acquiring process, he will build a church. If he doesn't personally grow in ratio commensurate to his vision, he will never establish and build the great influential church of his dreams.**

As Daniel stood before the lions ...

As David slew his. ten thousands ...

As Elijah stood alone on Mount Carmel ...

Today, a young man goes forth to establish a church

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# THE ROLE OF A PIONEER-PASTOR

Elmer Towns

*Getting a Church Started in the Face of Insurmountable Odds with Limited resources in Unlikely Circumstances.* pp. 170-175

Throughout the centuries, aggressive churches that have shaken communities for God have been founded by men. Whether it was John Wesley establishing preaching houses throughout England or Dwight Moody beginning Sunday Schools in Chicago, great works were established by God's man who came preaching repentance and regeneration. Two centuries ago, Adoniram Judson established churches in the heathen environment of Burma. In the past few years, Lonnie Smith has established over 30 Baptist churches in the Catholic influence of Monterey, Mexico. These aggressive churches did not grow out of community consensus, nor did they stem from a committee.

However, there have been numberless churches growing from the corporate effort of many, such as a neighborhood of

farmers who felt the need of a church. They sacrificed to construct a building and called a "parson." These churches grew out of the neighborhood and served the religious needs of the community. This book is not written about establishing these community churches even though there remain places where the community church has validity.

**A church should attempt to capture its town for Christ even as the first church "filled Jerusalem with its doctrine"** (Acts 5:28). This volume describes going to an unchristian community, preaching the gospel, teaching young converts and establishing a church. Unchurched and unreached communities need an aggressive church to evangelize the lost and motivate Christians. Determined churches grow out of determined pastors.

**The success of the churches in this book is directly related to, the ability of the pastor.** He is much more involved in the leadership of the church than the typical American pastor is involved in the leadership of his church.

Some have questioned if the pastor should have much to say about the finances of a church. Others have accused the

pastors of aggressive churches of being dictators because he administers the business affairs of the church. This raises the question, what is the biblical role of pastor leadership?

1. **Elder (presbuteros).** As an elder, the pastor's main responsibility is to be an example to the flock by spiritual maturity. An elder denoted "seniority," historically he was a part of the deliberation assembly in Israel. Peter writes, "Likewise ye younger, submit yourselves to the elder" (I Peter 5:5). A careful study of the New Testament reveals the elder gave leadership to the flock because of his spiritual example. His duty to administer (rule) is seen in the exhortation, "Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honor" (I Timothy 5:17). One of the qualifications to rule the house of God was to rule his own home. If a pastor can't lead his family (financially, spiritually, discipline, etc.) he can't lead the church. "For if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God" (I Timothy 3:5).

The Scriptures are abundantly clear that the pastor-elder has an administrative responsibility to the church. Paul called

the elders of Ephesus (Acts 20:17) and challenged them, "Take heed therefore unto yourselves and to all the flock over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers" (Acts 20:28). Overseeing the church began by personal testimony and exercised itself by leadership supervision. Peter reinforces the admonition, "taking the oversight thereof" (I Peter 5:2). Scriptures also speak to the believer to "Remember them which have the rule over you" (Hebrews 13:7), and "Obey them that have the, rule over you" (Hebrews 13:17), and "To know them which labor among you and are over you in the Lord and admonish you; to esteem them very highly in love for their works sake" (I Thess. 5:12,13). The pastor-elder has more authority than is given to (or taken by) the average American pastor. He is to be respected, obeyed, and loved.

**Those who criticize their pastor and refuse to support his leadership need to examine Scripture.**

To balance the picture, the pastor does not have a free hand to dictate his own policy. He is a man under authority. He is a servant of the flock. The scriptures warn the elders, 'Take heed therefore unto yourselves" (Acts 20:28), and "Neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the



flock" (I Peter 5:3). The word elder connotes spiritual maturity and the pastor who must demand allegiance from Christians reveals his lack of it. The pastor-elder elicits cooperating first by his example and second by the biblical office he holds. He must appeal to biblical truth, and display spiritual power. Anything less creates a question regarding his call by the Holy Spirit to pastor the flock.

2. **Bishop (episcopos)**. The word means to oversee or to superintend. Paul's instruction to Titus (Titus 1:5) indicates an elder and bishop were the same office. The word elder implies the pastor's personal qualifications while the word bishop suggests his duties.

When a church-planter desires to be a pastor, he should heed the admonition "If a man desires the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work" (I Timothy 3: 1). Work is the last word in the verse and work is the key to the success of any new church. But hard work alone will not build a church. A church-planter must fulfill the qualifications of a bishop, he must be: (1) blameless, (2) self-controlled, (3) abstainer from alcohol, (4) not seek finances, (5) have a love for souls, (6) be

spiritual, and (7) committed to teach and live doctrine. (These qualifications are found in Titus 1:7-9.)

**3. Spiritual ministry.** Pastoral leadership must be exercised in light of other pastoral functions such as a (1) shepherd (poimen) where he feeds the flock (I Pet. 5:1,2); and (2) preacher (kerux) where he exhorts the congregation (II Tim. 4:2, I Cor. 14:3); and teacher (didaskalus) where he teaches the flock (Matt. 28:20).

Some churches relegate to the pastor only the spiritual duties of preaching, teaching and counseling. The fiscal and business matters are handled by deacons or the board. Such an approach to church administrators is not biblical nor is it practical. Not one verse of Scripture supports a deacon-run church. Their primary duty is service to the cause of Christ, not a legislative body to determine church policy. The criticism is often heard, "We don't want the pastor to be a dictator." I have seen worse dictatorial control of churches by deacons than I have ever seen by a pastor. But the scriptural plan is for neither to dictate policy to the church. The pastor is the leader. The deacons (or board of laymen) serve the cause of Christ

and give support (advice) to the pastor in carrying out the ministry. The congregation is the final seat of authority to determine policy, direction and discipline. Hence, the church has a three-fold system of checks and balances: the pastor, the deacons and the congregation, each depending on the other while mutually supporting one another in the biblical task before them.

**As I have viewed the role of pastors, most church-planters are like the self-made businessman. They are the rugged individualists. However, with time, I have seen them change in their role and self-perception.** As others with the gifts of leadership arise in the congregation, pastor-pioneers have changed. They work with deacons; they work through superintendents, and they work within the organization they have built. **They build organizational structure, giving away some of the authority that was theirs without losing the influence of their leadership.**

When discussing a change in pioneer-pastors, it is really growth we are describing. The man who has a long successful pastorate is a growing Christian. He must grow in status as his

church grows in size and influence. His capacity, ability and compassion must grow as the problems of a larger congregation become more complex.

In the military, the role of leadership changes. The lieutenant who leads an attack up a hill becomes the general who plans strategy behind the lines. The pastor who lays concrete block with his men becomes the manager of a multi-million dollar corporation. What was once a high-structural management changes to a shared-management concept of leadership.

The field of management recognizes the need of a strong personality at the inception of a business. Called high-structural management, or downward cycle, the entrepreneur or businessman is the pioneer, personnel manager, visiting fireman and motivator all wrapped up in one man. The aims, motivations and evaluations reside in the man. The owner and the business are inseparable; he is the company. Usually, the employees work for the boss and have a direct relationship with him.

After the company has existed for a length of time and has grown large, new needs arise that demand a different kind of management. Employees lose contact with the boss, and bureaucracy settles over the organization with its accompanying apathy and sometimes atrophy. Shared-management, goal-setting and an upward cycle of change is necessary for business prosperity.

When a new business is started or a new management moves into an existing industry, he uses a low structural management (the typical American church). The new leader attempts to introduce change from the bottom. With this method, a training program communicates new knowledge which is supposed to change the attitudes of the employees, thus modifying individual behavior, ultimately changing group behavior. This is the upward cycle of leadership where management is shared with employees following the route of "indigenous leadership." The employee is given reasons, motivation, and training to improve his task in the company. As he improves, of course, production improves and profits rise. This is often called an upward cycle in management to curb deteriorating employee-employer relationships. The result

is improved esprit de corps among the entire business.

The high-structured management begins at the top and forces coerced change downward through the system. The manager sets standards for the entire group which may be in regard to goals of production, codes of dress, regulations concerning behavior, etc. The theory of high-structured management is: (1) group behavior is the result of individual conformity to group standards; (2) individual behavior is slowly internalized; (3) the individual begins to assume the attitudes of the corporation and those who work around him. Finally, he takes on (4) the knowledge he needs to improve himself and ultimately the company.

When a pastor takes over a church in existence, he usually must use low-structured management or plan change to make upward improvement in the organization. This involves leadership training classes and education, the upward cycle having a leavening effect on the entire church. Sometimes, a young man comes into an old church with great zeal, yet lacking knowledge and uses a high-structured management trying to enforce group behavior on all church members. This

usually results in (1) a split congregation, (2) the loss of certain members, or (3) the firing of the pastor.

**The young man who begins the church must begin with a high-structured leadership because there is no existing organization.** There must be a downward cycle because he usually personifies the standards of behavior and service in the church. The new church does not have group behavior, so it must be set by the pioneer-pastor. Dr. David Stuffer of Calvary Christian Temple, St. Louis, Missouri justified, "I had a new church with unstructured Christians. I could not let them determine the standards of the church, so I had to crack the whip with love." Stuffer, who understands business management, indicates, "I enforced a coercive style of management realizing I was causing a volatile reaction among some people, but there was no other way to get the church started." Some came and left the young church. Stuffer ultimately wants to reverse the cycle of planned change from a downward cycle to an upward cycle in management.

## CONCLUSION

Therefore, pastoral leadership is seen both from the Scripture and the business community. Its effectiveness is evident by the number of growing churches led by aggressive pastors. My exhortation to bashful pastors is that they become more determined. To the dictators, I suggest they grow in Christian maturity, working with their deacons and people to the glory of God. "Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; Neither as being lord over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock" (I Pet. 5:2,3).

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# Method and Mission

By David J. Hesselgrave

Planting Churches Cross-Culturally, A Guide for Home and Foreign Missions pp. 43-63

## **Planning for the Task**

The churches are "task forces." They have a job to do. But altogether too often the job is undertaken haphazardly and without thinking it through. A missionary once (probably facetiously) objected to planning on the basis that Abraham "went out not knowing whither he went." It was pointed out to the missionary that the analogy breaks down. Abraham didn't know where he was going, but he knew what he was going to do when he got there. If this missionary took his philosophy seriously, he knew where he was going but not what he was going to do when he got there!

The Bible has abundant evidence of God's plan. God is the greatest Planner of all! Before creation He devised a plan for man and history that took every contingency into account. When Christ was ministering on earth, He had a plan for deploying His disciples and getting the kingdom message to the "lost sheep of the house of Israel" (Matt. 10: 1 -42). After His death and resurrection He revealed the basics of His plan for the discipling of the Gentile nations (Matt. 28:18-20; Acts 1:8). During the period covered by the Book of Acts the Holy Spirit had a plan to fulfill the Great Commission even when the apostles didn't, and increasingly that plan became a matter of discussion and deliberation on the part of His people. Finally, Paul presents the Church in which Jew and Gentile participate on an equal basis, not as an afterthought or even a back-up plan, but as part of the eternal plan of God though only now fully revealed (Eph. 3:1-12).

Is it not peculiar that God had a plan for history; that ordered households make budgets, plan weekly schedules, and plan for the education of the children; but that the churches and missions often have no well-thought-out and prayed-about plan for the most important task of all? Is it not sad that, since

God cannot count on obedience and wise stewardship in this matter, He often has to use church splits and ad hoc means to get new congregations of believers started? How much better it would be if we had a plan-His plan!

How does one develop a plan for winning men to Christ and planting growing churches? Experts tell us that there are six steps involved in planning for the accomplishment of any task:

- (1) Understand the task.
- (2) Compare the task with experience and research (identify helpful and useless approaches).
- (3) Make an overall plan to accomplish the task.
- (4) Gather the necessary resources.
- (5) Execute the plan.
- (6) Learn from experience (and use what is learned to modify the plan).' ('Planning and PERT (Program Evaluation and Review Technique) (Monrovia, CA: Communication Center, 1966).

The steps can be better understood if we plot them on a simplified planning chart. The chart helps us understand what is involved in the various steps. It is basically self-explanatory and needs no elaboration at this point. It should be noted that in this book we are primarily concerned with the first three steps of the planning chart. It should be borne in mind, however, that as important as planning is, the exercise will mean little until we go on to gather our resources, execute the plan, and learn from our own experiences so we can modify the plan as new understandings and circumstances may require.

## **Three Sources of Missiology**

Missiology is the study of the mission of the Church. There are three basic sources of information which are important for developing an effective missiology :

- (1) Revelation (Scripture investigation)
- (2) Research (scientific observation).
- (3) Reflection (sound thinking based on experience and knowledge).

## Revelation

Notice that the Scriptures are first in order of importance. They are the only completely authoritative rule of faith and practice. Apart from them our understanding of God would be limited and our knowledge of His plan for the calling out of the Church of Christ would be negligible or nonexistent. If we are to do His work we must give attention to His Word. No true Christian would dispute this.

Of course, to settle the problem of ultimate authority does not of itself produce a defensible hermeneutic. Sound hermeneutical principles must govern the determination of practice even as they govern the determination of doctrine. To adequately discuss those principles would take us far beyond the bounds of the present study. But before we proceed, we should mention three principles which have a bearing on "trouble spots" in missiology.

(1) Scripture must be interpreted within its own context. It is all too easy to fall into the trap of allowing our contemporary culture and experience to determine our understanding of the

biblical text.

For example, recent Church Growth literature has made much of the reference to the *ethne* in the Great Commission. Church Growth proponents have insisted that *ethne* means the "tribes, castes, peoples, and families of mankind"-that is, the homogeneous units which are so important to Church Growth strategy. As Walter Liefeld and others have clearly demonstrated, however, this is to impose current anthropological and sociological understandings upon the Scripture. Of the various Greek terms which could have been used to refer to the tribes, castes, and other homogeneous groupings of mankind, the term *ethne* is the weakest one. In the New Testament context *ethne* clearly means "Gentiles." ('Walter Liefeld, "Theology of Church Growth," in *Theology and Mission*, ed. David J. Hesselgrave (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1978), p. 175.)

(2) The whole of relevant Scripture must be brought to bear upon the question at hand. That is, we are not free to pick and choose certain biblical texts which seem to support our conclusions while ignoring other texts which might

contradict them. Now it is practically impossible to explicitly bring all the relevant passages to bear upon a given issue on each occasion it is discussed. In this volume, for example, only a comparatively small number of Old Testament references will be cited. Nevertheless, what we are about in the task of proclaiming the gospel, converting men to Christ, and building them into local churches rests upon the foundation of Old Testament revelation and is in no way antithetical to it. It is true to Old Testament teachings of creation, the fall of man, the redemptive purposes of God, and the mission of the people of God in the world. Similarly, even though a great number of New Testament texts will be cited, by no means can all of the relevant passages be brought to bear upon any given issue. That being the case, our conclusions are true only to the degree that they are consonant with all relevant texts. They are true only to the degree that we have cited basic representative texts and interpreted these texts correctly. They are true only to the extent that we have not ignored relevant texts that might lead us to modify our conclusions.

(3) The teaching of the Word of God concerning any given question must take precedence over the record of events that

occurred in Bible times. This principle cuts to the heart of a crucial problem in missiology, and indeed, in theology. The issue has to do with distinguishing between that which is normative in Scripture and that which is purely descriptive. It has, and will, come into focus over and over again within these pages, especially in view of the fact that we make numerous references to the Book of Acts.

The problem we face becomes apparent when we press any narrative portion of Scripture too far. For example, if the experience of the disciples on Pentecost is made normative we will be inclined to earnestly seek and wait for one of the gifts of the Spirit (glossolalia) which, according to the teaching of I Corinthians 12-14, is not for all believers and not to be coveted (i.e., eagerly desired).

Again, if we go too far and insist that the description of the Jerusalem church in Acts 2:41-47 be made normative for all churches, then private ownership on the part of Christians becomes suspect. But actually, of course, Christianity does not require communalism of this kind.



The same principle holds true in the case of the church of Antioch and the missionary strategy of Paul to which we will shortly turn. Descriptions of historical events and people furnish us with important information and examples (good and bad), but they yield norms only to the degree to which explicit doctrinal or teaching passages reinforce them.

## **Research**

The word research in this context should not be viewed in the narrow sense of "controlled experiment" but as referring to understandings growing out of the social sciences. When it comes to this second source of missiology, however, many earnest Christians will be tempted to raise an objection. Their commitment to God as the Source of all wisdom and power seems to necessitate a rejection of the world's wisdom and its accomplishments. In a way, it is peculiar that this presents a problem to these Christians because they unhesitatingly utilize the airplanes, radios, and medicines that result from research in aeronautics, electronics, and chemistry. In another way, however, the problem is understandable. Social sciences such as history, management, communication, psychology,

anthropology, sociology, and comparative religion seem to be of quite a different order than engineering and medicine. There is a different "feel" in using a radio wave than there is in using a principle of persuasion! In one case we are manipulating dials. In the other case we may be manipulating people!

The problem is not new to the twentieth century. Many centuries ago Augustine faced the question of whether or not the knowledge that he had learned in the schools of his day (he was a rhetorician) could be used in building the kingdom of God. (3 Augustine, *On Christian Doctrine*, trans. D. W. Robertson, Jr. (New York: The Liberal Arts Press, 1958), Book 11. ) His brilliant mind grappled with this problem, as it did with all the major issues of his day. His conclusion, therefore, is most important for us: All truth belongs to God and can be used for kingdom purposes. He drew an analogy from the experience of the children of Israel who were commanded to take some of the riches of Egypt for their use en route to the Promised Land. Since much of his knowledge of rhetoric had come from Alexandria, his analogy was particularly apt. Gold from Egypt is still gold! It can be utilized during our pilgrim walk with God. Augustine's works are a witness to the

effectiveness with which "Egyptian gold" was utilized by that great scholar and saint.

Augustine did introduce three important cautions (two explicit and one implicit) concerning the use of the world's knowledge, however. First, in this "transfer of Egyptian gold" we should observe the maxim, "Nothing in excess." Second, we should remember that while some pagan knowledge is useful to the Christian, the amount is quantitatively small when compared to that which is derivable from the Scriptures. Third, it is everywhere apparent in Augustine's work in which the problem is treated (On Christian Doctrine) that the Scripture is the standard of truth-Egyptian gold that does not measure up is not real gold but fool's gold!

Augustine's cautions should be taken seriously. Egyptian gold can be fashioned into golden calves! There is a real danger that when we come to understand what is happening on the plain, we will forget what is happening on the mountain! For example, there is real value in understanding what happens psychologically when a person becomes a Christian. But once we understand it, we must exercise care

lest the psychological process involved becomes so absorbing that we forget that the all-important elements in conversion are conviction and illumination by the Third Person of the Trinity. No unsaved psychologist can understand or appreciate that fact. But the Christian can and must!

## **Reflection**

Few would argue that thinking is unchristian! But that fact alone does not assure us that good thinking will occur-much less that it will prevail-in the service of Christ. Our Lord directed His first-century servants to be "shrewd as serpents and innocent as doves" (Matt. 10: 16b). The simile of the dove seems appropriate enough, but why the simile of the serpent? Why, if not to get His point across? The fact of the matter is that those who rely on "Christ's sense" are often tempted to disregard "common sense." How often have I heard successful businessmen comment that if their businesses were run as the business of the Church is sometimes run, they would soon be bankrupt! To the degree that this is so, no credit accrues to the people of God. All shrewdness is not scriptural, but there is a scriptural shrewdness. Common sense mixes well with spiritual

sense!

In his classic work *Planting and Development of Missionary Churches*, John L. Nevius emphasizes two tests of any plan for church-planting: "adaptability to the end in view, and Scripture authority." (4. John L. Nevius, *Planting and Development of Missionary Churches* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1958), p. 8.) He links adaptability to analysis of our past experiences. If we think clearly, history can serve as a guide to the future. Moreover, he insists that any plan which can pass both tests "has a much stronger claim upon our regard and acceptance than a plan which can claim the sanction of one test." (5 Ibid.) In other words, rely on God's revelation but do not neglect to reflect on past successes and failures. Much can be learned from them.

## **The Logical Elements of the Missionary Task**

The missionary task of the Church must be understood in the light of biblical revelation. We have already touched upon this in a preliminary way, noting that the activities involved include witnessing, preaching, discipling, baptizing, and

teaching. Just how these elements fit together in practice can perhaps best be seen in the ministry of the apostle Paul and his colleagues as they planted churches throughout the Roman Empire. Paul was the master builder of the Church in New Testament times (I Cor. 3:10). He was the church-planter par excellence!

## **Pauline Strategy and Methodology**

There can be little doubt that insofar as we have in the New Testament an example of sound strategy for planting growing churches, we have it in the strategy of Paul. After giving us a brief record of the role of Peter and others in taking the gospel beyond the bounds of the Jewish community, Luke devotes the lion's share of his attention to the ministry of Paul and his coworkers. Much of the rest of the New Testament is made up of Paul's correspondence with churches and their leaders. Certain basic questions have been raised concerning Paul's ministry, however.

## Did Paul Actually Have a Strategy?

Our answer to this question will determine how we proceed from this point. If, as Michael Green seems to believe, Paul had little or no strategy, and "the Gospel spread out in an apparently haphazard way as men obeyed the leading of the Spirit, and went through doors he opened " (6 Michael Green, "Evangelism in the Early Church," in *Let the Earth Hear His Voice*, ed. J. D. Douglas (Minneapolis: World Wide Publications, 1975), p. 174.) then all we can learn is dependence upon that same Spirit. If, on the other hand, Donald McGavran is right when he says that while Paul was in Antioch he devised a strategy for reaching a great part of the Mediterranean world with the gospel (7Donald McGavran, *The Bridges of God* (New York: Friendship Press, 1955), pp. 25-35.) then we can learn from Paul's strategy also.

A mediating position seems to square with the data. Green is quite right when he insists that we "must not organize him [Christ] out of the picture" and when he warns against the idea that "efficiency on the evangelistic production line will inevitably produce results." (8. Green, "Evangelism in the Early

Church," p. 174) But he seems to overstate his case. If Paul had no plan, the Holy Spirit could not have changed it (cf. Acts 16:6-10)! On the other hand, McGavran's argument concerning Paul's strategy for reaching "people on the bridge" (people related to believers) is fascinating and instructive. But at times, McGavran too seems to overstate his case.

J. Herbert Kane's words are worth pondering:

*We might begin by asking: Did Paul have a missionary strategy? Some say yes; others say no. Much depends on the definition of strategy. If by strategy is meant a deliberate, well-formulated, duly executed plan of action based on human observation and experience, then Paul had little or no strategy; but if we take the word to mean a flexible modus operandi developed under the guidance of the Holy Spirit and subject to His direction and control, then Paul did have a strategy.*

*Our problem today is that we live in an anthropocentric age. We imagine that nothing of consequence can be*



*accomplished in the Lord's work without a good deal of ecclesiastical machinery--committees, conferences, workshops, seminars; whereas the early Christians depended less on human wisdom and expertise, more on divine initiative and guidance. It is obvious that they didn't do too badly. What the modern missionary movement needs above everything else is to get back to the missionary methods of the early church. (J. Herbert Kane, Christian Missions in Biblical Perspective (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1976), p. 73 )*

We tend to agree with Kane's basic position, but we would modify his statement somewhat. Paul, of course, had comparatively little opportunity to base his strategy on observation and experience. But with two thousand years of mission's history behind us we should have a "deliberate, well-formulated, duly executed plan of action based on human observation and experience." However, to be Christian, that plan should not be based primarily on human observation. It must be "developed under the guidance of the Holy Spirit and subject to His direction and control." As for flexibility, any strategy that is not flexible is simply bad strategy.

Let's agree, then, that "what the modern missionary movement needs above everything else is to get back to the missionary methods of the early church." That is the starting point. It would be as foolhardy for us to disregard the Holy Spirit-inspired record of the way in which the early Christians, and especially Paul and his cohorts, actually built up the churches of their day as it would have been for Paul to disregard the Holy Spirit's guidance received in Arabia and Antioch. At the same time, it would be as unthinkable for us to discount the understanding that has come to us through two thousand years of experience and study as it would have been for Paul to discount the processes of the Hellenization of culture and the religious penetration of Judaism in his own day. Nevertheless, Kane's warning is not to be ignored. If our dependence is on the overall strategy and the method of its implementation rather than on the wisdom and power of the Holy Spirit, we cannot claim to be true to New Testament precedent nor will our witness be as effective as was that of those first-century believers

## **Is Pauline Strategy Applicable Today?**

To say that Paul's missionary labors resulted from thinking as well as praying and working does not end the matter. We must ask whether or not Pauline strategy is applicable today. To that question we answer yes.

In the first place, the first-century world of Paul bears some remarkable similarities to our world of today. Of course, we must admit that the twentieth century is not a carbon copy of the first century, and that, when compared to the situation in which the modern foreign missionary usually finds himself, Paul's situation was quite different. Paul was a citizen of his missionary world. He learned no strange tongue in order to communicate. From the very beginning of his ministry he was familiar with the thought patterns of his audience. At the same time, as E. M. Blaiklock, professor of classics at Auckland University in New Zealand, is reported to have said, "Of all the intervening centuries, the twentieth is most like the first." (10. Quoted in Ray Stedman, *Body Life* (Glendale, CA: Regal Book 1972), p. 129. ) There was considerable intercultural flow of peoples of different races and backgrounds. There was a

widespread bankruptcy of ideas and ideals. And there was a group of people scattered throughout the Roman Empire who, by virtue of their contact with or commitment to Jewish monotheistic and ethical ideas, constituted a "prepared audience" for the gospel.

In the second place, Paul acknowledged that he was a master builder of the Church (I Cor. 3: 10). Now if we do not infer from that fact that we are to slavishly follow every approach employed by the great apostle to the Gentiles, we can at least profit from a careful study of his methodology. After all, modern architects study the works of master architects of the past even though they may not design and build identical buildings.

Just so, we can learn from Paul. As Richard Longenecker has written:

It has often been devotionally said: "The world has yet to see what God can do with a man wholly committed to Him." Paul was such a man, and the world has witnessed the effect. He possessed a firmness of commitment to his

Lord, a fervency of spirit, a compassion of heart, a breadth of outlook, a keenness of perception, and a constant openness to the Spirit. *Such an example of a Christian life and ministry stands as both a paradigm and an inspiration to us today* [italics added]. (11. Richard Longenecker, The Ministry and Message of Paul (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1971), p. 112.)

## **To What Extent Is Paul's Methodology Normative?**

It is clear from the New Testament Scriptures that Paul's message is normative. To the Galatians-troubled as they were by the Judaizers he could say, "But even though we, or an angel from heaven, should preach to you a gospel contrary to that which we preach to you, let him be accursed" (Gal. 1:8). To the Corinthians-plagued as they were with church difficulties-he could write, "For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered to you" (I Cor. 11:23a).

It is also clear from the New Testament that, in a secondary sense, Paul the man was a normative example of what a Christian should be and do. To the Corinthians, who

desperately needed an example of what a Christian should be, he could make that remarkable statement, "Be imitators of me" (I Cor. 11: 1 a). But Paul was not perfect. He knew it. And therefore he added those all-important words, "just as I also am of Christ" (I Cor. 11: 1 b). So Paul's example is normative because it reflects the perfect pattern-that of Jesus Christ Himself.

Then what about Paul's missionary method? As we have said, there seems to be little to indicate that the Holy Spirit expects us to slavishly follow every Pauline procedure in our evangelistic outreach. On the other hand, there is explicit teaching in the Epistles which directs us to carry on the same activities in a similar way-namely, to go where people are, preach the gospel, gain converts, gather them into churches, instruct them in the faith, choose leaders, and commend believers to the grace of God. And where would we find a pattern for these activities that is less likely to lead us into blind alleys than is the apostle Paul's missionary work? As A. R. Hay writes, "Paul's ministry and that of his companions is recorded in detail because he and they provide a typical example for the exceedingly important permanent ministry of

church-planting." (12 A R Hav New Testament Order for Church and Missionary (Audubon NJ: New Testament Missionary Union, 1947), p. 220.)

We conclude, then, that Paul's message was absolutely normative, and that his manner of life and missionary methodology were less normative. It is a matter of degree. There is room for adaptation in each case, but less in the case of his message and more in the cases of his lifestyle and methodology. For those of us who are two thousand years removed from the physical presence of the Master and His apostles, we do well to learn from Paul's preaching, person, and program in dependence on the Word and the Holy Spirit.

## **The Pauline Cycle**

## **The Logical Elements in Paul's Master Plan of Evangelism**

What were the logical elements (steps) in Paul's master plan of evangelism and church development? These elements will be analyzed later. At this point we will simply list them.....

- (1)Missionaries Commissioned-Acts 13:1-4; 15:39, 40.
- (2)Audience Contacted-Acts 13:14-16; 14: 1; 16:13 -15.
- (3)Gospel Communicated-Acts 13:17ff.; 16:31.
- (4)Hearers Converted-Acts 13:48; 16:14, 15.
- (5)Believers Congregated-Acts 13:43.
- (6)Faith Confirmed-Acts 14:21, 22; 15:41.
- (7)Leadership Consecrated-Acts 14:23.
- (8)Believers Commended-Acts 14:23; 16:40.
- (9)Relationships Continued-Acts 15:36; 18:23.
- (10)Sending Churches Convened-Acts 14:26, 27; 15: 1 4.

## **Possible Objections to the Pauline Cycle**

To some the steps in the Pauline Cycle may seem to be almost too obvious to be really important. Our response is that for people who are thoroughly acquainted with a given task, the logical elements which go to make it up should be obvious. Chemists would be hampered in working with hydrochloric acid if its molecular structure were not common knowledge in their laboratories. Once the basic elements of anything are discovered, they are more or less obvious. At that point, the only real expertise that is required is in working with them.



To others, the Pauline Cycle may seem somewhat contrived. Ten steps, alliterative phrases-the whole thing seems too tidy to be true, too programmatic to be practical. Our response is that there is nothing sacrosanct about this particular way of breaking the task down into manageable elements. In this sense, the mission of the Church is not analogous with a molecule of hydrochloric acid. Variation is possible. Nevertheless, we believe that careful analysis of the missionary task will reveal something very similar to the steps in the Pauline Cycle. And it makes little difference to us how those steps are identified.

To still others it may seem that the cycle is not really Pauline. They may grant that Paul engaged in these various activities but not necessarily in every locality. If that is the case, is not the cycle a sort of hybrid or composite inferred from a total ministry rather than the basis for a plan in any given local situation? Our answer is fourfold.

In the first place, Paul did not establish a church in every locality he visited. He did not plan to do so. As far as Paul was concerned (and as far as we know), in Athens, for example,

the cycle went through the contact and communication steps and stopped with the conversion of Dionysius, Damaris, and certain others (Acts 17:34). We know that later on there was a church in Athens. But as far as the biblical record and Paul's ministry are concerned, we have no further information concerning it. Athens was a "layover" for Paul. It was not "his kind" of city.

In the second place, by using the phrase Pauline Cycle we do not mean to imply that Paul himself carried out each step. Paul led a team of men. The record is clear that he delegated responsibilities to other members of the team. For example, Paul wrote to Titus, "The reason I left you in Crete was that you might straighten out what was left unfinished and appoint elders in every town, as I directed you" (Titus 1:5, NIV, italics added).

In the third place, the more complete the biblical record in the case of any given local situation, the more explicit the steps in the cycle become. Take, for example, the case of the church at Ephesus. There the basic steps are made explicit in the biblical record:

Audience contacted-Acts 18:19; 19:1, 8, 9

Gospel communicated-Acts 19:4, 9, 10

Hearers converted-Acts 19:5, 18

Believers congregated-Acts 19:9, 10

Faith confirmed-Acts 20:20, 27

Leadership consecrated-Acts 20:17, 28; I Tim. 1:3, 4; 2:2

Believers commended-Acts 20:1, 25, 32

Relationships continued-Acts 20:17; Eph. 1: 1-3, 15, 16

In the fourth place, while the cycle grows out of Pauline methodology and is not imposed upon it, nevertheless it also grows out of logicality and the larger experience of missions. Given the nature of the task to which we have been commissioned, these steps are practical and reasonable, as we have already said. Look at them again. If any of us as the modern counterparts of Paul, Peter, Thomas, or Timothy, were to go to a designated city to evangelize and establish a church, would we not carry out these very same steps? And would we not carry them out in this order, more or less?

## **Four Important Aspects of the Pauline Cycle**

Before we close this preliminary discussion of the Pauline Cycle, four aspects of it should be especially noted.

First, it has a beginning and an ending. A large number of books in the area of church growth and development have appeared in recent years. Some of them make exceedingly stimulating reading for those concerned about the mission of the Church. Some of the principles discoverable in these books are invaluable. There is a shortcoming in many of them that often proves to be frustrating to the practitioner, however. It is this. The practitioner who is trained in church-growth principles contemplates church-extension evangelism in a new area only to find that he doesn't know how to string these pearls of wisdom on one strand! He doesn't know where to begin! And he has not even thought about how to end. By thinking in terms of a cycle with a beginning and an end and logical steps in between, it may be possible to overcome this weakness.

Second, though we speak of a beginning and an ending to the cycle, there is a sense in which it does not admit of either.

When Paul was recommissioned in Antioch before his second missionary journey (Acts 15:39, 40), he reestablished contact with and continued his ministry to fledgling groups of believers, confirming them in the faith (Acts 15:41). At the same time, he pressed the frontiers of the gospel a little farther from the home bases in Jerusalem and Antioch. To legitimately think of a beginning and an ending, therefore, one must think of the task in relation to one church or one limited area.

Third, the cycle must be viewed synchronically as well as diachronically. That is, while we can think of progressing from the contact stage to communication, to conversion, to congregating believers, and so on, we must also remember that as we proceed through time to the more advanced stages of development, we must still carry on the activities of the initial stages (or see to it that they are carried on). For example, we must always be making new contacts and working for new conversions from the world even as we are confirming the first believers in the faith. Not to do so is to displease the Head of the Church. Therefore, bold lines should not be drawn between the major elements of the cycle. In one

sense they are distinct and sequential. In another sense they impinge upon, and flow into, one another.

Fourth, it is of vital importance that the Pauline Cycle strategy be applied to existing churches as well as to pioneer situations. By evaluating existing churches step by step from "audience contacted" right on through "relationships continued," the pastor and responsible believers in a church can actually analyze where their church is successful and where it is falling down on the job! Then they can make necessary changes in their overall plan, decide on standards, gather the resources, and put promising innovations into operation. In addition, they will constantly gain new insights into the mission of the Church at home and abroad.

Effective missionizing and evangelizing requires careful, prayerful planning and strategy. When God was preparing to lead His people out of Egypt and into the Promised Land, He called Moses and communicated a plan: "Go and gather the elders of Israel together, and say to them. ... And you with the elders of Israel will come to the king of Egypt, and you will say to him.... But I know that the king of Egypt will not permit you

to go.... So I will stretch out My hand, and strike Egypt with all My miracles" (Exod. 3:16-20). When God was ready to bring believing Jews and Gentiles into a new community of faith, He arrested Saul and said, "But arise, and stand on your feet; for this purpose I have appeared to you, to appoint you a minister and a witness" (Acts 26:16). And when Saul-now Paul-had ministered, witnessed, and established groups of believers from Syria in the East to Macedonia and Achaia in the West, he wrote to one church

*I planted, Apollos watered, but God was causing the growth.... We are God's fellow-workers; you are God's field, God's building. According to the grace of God which was given to me, as a wise masterbuilder I laid a foundation, and another is building upon it. But let each man be careful how he builds upon it. (I Cor. 3:6, 9, 10).*

Above all, the accomplishment of God's plans and purpose requires divine wisdom, intervention, and grace. But it also requires that a Moses and the elders, or a Paul and his companions, dedicate themselves-body, heart, and mind-to the task.

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# **The Goal of Missions-a New Testament Church**

By Melvin L. Hodges

*The Indigenous Church, A Complete Handbook on How to Grow Young Churches pp. 9-14*

Today there are more Christian missionaries working in more countries of the world than at any previous period in the history of the church. They are also engaged in more diverse activities. Along with the evangelistic and church-planting ministries are those auxiliary activities of reducing languages to written form, the translating of the Scriptures and training of national pastors and evangelists. There are also a host of other activities not directly related to the evangelistic, church-planting ministry, which include the establishing of hospitals and secular schools, agricultural projects and industrial schools.

It would be logical to suppose that all the different aspects of the outreach of the church in foreign lands would be united by a common goal. Yet, what a variety of answers would be



evoked were we to ask missionaries of the Christian faith throughout the world to define their goal! Some might reply that they are endeavoring to Christianize people and better the social conditions so that everyone will be happier and healthier. Others might answer that their purpose is to save souls, and still others to witness to every creature so that Christ's return will be hastened. All of these are worthy objectives, but none is really adequate. Our ultimate goal and the means which we employ to reach the goal are intricately related. If our goal is not clearly defined we may err in the choice of methods employed and fail to realize the true fruit of our labors.

Jesus announced His purpose: "I will build my church." The apostle Paul states that Jesus loved the church and gave himself for it. He himself throughout his epistles describes his own labors as being for the sake of the church. We can have no better goal than the one set forth in the New Testament. We would therefore define our objective in this way: We desire to establish in the country of our labors a strong church patterned after the New Testament example. Further, **we believe that in order to have a New Testament church,**

## **we must follow New Testament methods.**

The following illustration will emphasize the importance of a well-defined goal. Some years ago certain missionaries were sent to the foreign field by a group interested primarily in giving the Christian witness to all the earth. They based their objective and methods on the statement that Jesus had made that this gospel must be preached to all nations for a witness. Desiring to hasten the return of the Lord and realizing that the Great Commission must be fulfilled before that time, they decided that the missionary should not tarry in any one place for an extended time but rather push on from city to city and give each place the gospel witness. Little effort was made to conserve the results. The converts were not formed into churches nor given the teaching necessary for them to carry on in church life. **As a consequence, after years of effort and laborious toil, very little permanent result their labor remained.** They had preached over a wide area but churches had not been established. They failed to take into consideration, that though evangelism is important, the ultimate objective of evangelism is the calling out of a people for the Lord Jesus Christ. The church itself is God's agent for

evangelism. Later on this missionary group restudied the situation and changed its methods to conform to the long-range objective of the establishing of the church of Jesus Christ.

When the social betterment of the populace has been the principal objective of a mission, the tendency usually has been toward developing institutions such as schools, hospitals, and agricultural projects. These are all worthy projects and the social betterment of a populace is the desire of every Christian. However, according to the New Testament plan these are by-products rather than the heart of the missionary program. When we fail to see this, we build strong institutions but usually the church itself remains weak. Our observation leads us to believe that when the emphasis is primarily on this type of work, the church is left unprepared to meet a crisis, such as a Communist invasion of the country, which forces the withdrawal of foreign funds and personnel. Left without the crutches of foreign aid, on which she has long been accustomed to depend, she cannot stand alone, and the institutions themselves have succumbed to the enemy. It is the indigenous New Testament church that has been better able to

survive under such conditions.

Let us examine the elements in this New Testament church that we propose to establish. **A careful study of the Book of Acts and the epistles reveals the methods employed by the apostles, and particularly by the apostle Paul, the model missionary, as he went forth and preached the gospel to the Jew and to the Gentile.** After preaching the gospel in a city, the converts were brought together in a convenient meeting place, often the home of a believer, and other times in any public location that might be available to them, such as a synagogue or a school. These groups of believers would meet together at regular intervals for worship and instruction in Christian doctrine and conduct. Elders and deacons were chosen from among the number to provide the necessary leadership and ministry as they witnessed to their townspeople and the surrounding area. For example, Paul was in Thessalonica only a few weeks, yet he left a church established in that place. He labored in Ephesus for two years, teaching in the school of Tyrannus. As a result, all the province of Asia in Asia Minor heard the Word of the Lord. His farewell discourse to the Ephesian elders is a classic on the

relationship of a missionary to the church which he has founded (see Acts 19,20). The apostle stayed a limited time in one area but he left behind him a church that could govern itself; that could finance its own expenses and that extended the gospel throughout the region. Paul evidently made no appeals for workers from Jerusalem or Antioch to fill the pastorates of the churches which he raised up. And there is no financial appeal made either to Antioch or Jerusalem for support for workers or for the erection of church buildings as far as the record shows. Rather, we find the apostle taking up offerings among these new missionary churches to help the saints of the mother church in Jerusalem when that region was stricken with famine. What a commentary on the effectiveness of the New Testament methods; how far we have drifted from that ideal in our present procedure!

The New Testament then was first, **self-propagating**; that is, it had within it sufficient vitality so that it could extend throughout the region and neighboring regions by its own efforts. It produced its own workers and the work was spread abroad by the effort of the Christians themselves. Second, it was **self-governing**; that is, it was governed by men who

were raised up by the Holy Spirit from among the converts in the locality. Third, it was **self-supporting**; it did not depend on foreign money in order to meet the expenses of the work.

In view of the fact that the New Testament churches were not dependent on workers or funds from a foreign field but were self-sufficient as local units, what could be said of a church today which must depend upon such foreign help in order to continue to exist? **We have known of churches on a mission field which have been established for more than 20 years, with fairly large congregations, which are still unable to support their own pastors.** We have heard of a church which after several decades of existence, appealed to the mission board for a new missionary pastor when the retiring pastor was forced to leave the work because of the infirmities of old age. It seems evident that a church that must follow such a procedure is far from the New Testament pattern.

**Let us ask ourselves a more searching question. In what condition would we find our work if the mission, because of some emergency, found it necessary to call home its missionaries and cut off funds for the support of our work?** Would it be a mortal blow to our church or

would our church be able to survive? This is not an idle question since in recent years mission fields have been closed to the missionary for one reason or another. Foreign funds have been withdrawn. The church must be built in such a way that the gates of hell shall not prevail against her. In one field the sponsoring mission passed through a financial crisis and was forced to radically cut funds going to the support of pastors. As a result, pastors failed to find means of support and they left their churches and took secular employment. Abandoned chapels and scattered congregations were the result. **It is difficult to escape the conclusion that there was something fundamentally wrong in the life of that church. Surely God does not intend for the church in any country to be so dependent upon a sponsoring foreign mission that when its help is removed the young church sickens and dies.**

It is possible to obtain the ideal of a church patterned after the New Testament model. This is possible because the gospel has not changed. We serve the same God and His Holy Spirit is with us as He was with the church in the New Testament times. We do not propose to introduce a new pattern or

system. We desire simply to return to the New Testament pattern and see a church founded that will bear the characteristics of the apostolic model. We believe that this is possible because the gospel is universal and adaptable to every climate and race, and to every social and economic level. **New Testament preaching and practice will produce a New Testament church in any place where the gospel is preached. People of other lands can be converted and empowered by the Holy Spirit to carry on the work of the church equally as well as Americans or Europeans. The gospel has been designed by God himself, so it fills the need of the African, the Chinese, or the Indian. As a result, there is no place on earth where, if the gospel seed be properly planted, it will not produce an indigenous church.** The Holy Spirit can work in one country as well as in another. To proceed on the assumption that the infant church in any land must always be cared for and provided for by the mother mission is an **unconscious insult** to the people that we endeavor to serve, and is evidence of lack of faith in God and in the power of His gospel.

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# The New Testament Church a Responsible Church

By Melvin L. Hodges

*The Indigenous Church, A Complete Handbook on How to Grow Young Churches pp. 15-21*

We have seen that the New Testament church is a powerful, vital organism with power not only to maintain itself, but to expand and extend itself throughout the country where it has been planted. Yet, we are brought face-to-face with the fact that too often the churches planted by missionaries on foreign fields are not that kind of church. Why the difference? **In some places missionaries have labored for fifty years and still the local congregation is unable to carry on alone.** Why is it that after ten, fifteen, or twenty years of missionary effort in a given area, we must still appeal to the home churches for additional funds and workers?

**One missionary writes as follows:**

"Why, today, do we have still a weak church organization that after years of growth cannot yet stand alone? Why has

this church, after being organized as a Field Council for more than twenty years, not been able to produce the type of national leadership necessary to develop, sustain, and consolidate gains made during periods of revival outpourings? **After studying this question for the past ten years, we have come to the conclusion that our problem lies in the failure to work for an indigenous church.** Unless a church can be taught the necessity of shouldering its own burden and facing its own problems it cannot be expected to develop even with the aid of periodic revival outpourings."

George R. Upton, former Secretary for Missions of the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada, analyzes the problem and places the blame directly at the door of the mission and the missionary:

"Here is a missionary agency sincerely devoted to assuming a creditable share in world evangelism. Missionary candidates are available. Funds are also available for developing the field in question. Land is purchased, and extensive mission buildings erected; missionary homes, churches, schools, hospitals, dormitories, dispensaries, etc.,

begin to appear. Workmen are hired, provision is made for maintenance of the youth who enter the various schools. When native workers have been trained, they are placed on salary from funds available to the mission from its home office across the seas. The missionary, whose time and energies are fully occupied with the business management of the vast community, anticipates that here will probably be his home for years to come, so he provides for those extras which make the plan comfortable and convenient.

"He is the undisputed master over this establishment. Funds for workmen, for native teachers and preachers flow through his hands. He hires or dismisses, at will. If a native church springs up, it is under his direct supervision. He feels impelled to remain as director of this, his sphere of influence and operations, as long as he remains a missionary. When on furlough, he describes the progress made, the buildings erected, and institutions operating; the number of workers and Bible women employed, the number of teachers and scholars in the schools. He presents pictures of the whole project. He may even mention that beyond are other towns and tribes needing the gospel, and may make an appeal for additional

missionaries.

"After fifteen to twenty years of this type of work, he may wonder why the native church does not show some signs of standing on its own feet. **The workers do not manifest any initiative. The people do not show any concern for the salvation of their neighbors, nor manifest a willingness to assume financial responsibility for any phase of the mission work.** He realizes that his removal from the oversight of the mission would bring the whole project to a standstill, unless another missionary took over.

**"What is the reason for this? Simply the plan he has followed. He has treated the people like irresponsible children. He has led them, thought for them, relieved them of all financial responsibility for years. He has unintentionally robbed them of those practical processes which develop strong characters in any walk of life, whether in Canada or China, whether white or yellow-skinned.**

"Actually, he has founded a sort of spiritual hospital, over which he must be chief nurse as long as it remains. His life work has become a liability instead of an asset. He has sown his leadership and domination and provision of every need, and he has reaped the servitude and malnutrition of a community of underdeveloped spiritual children. How difficult to avoid this result in a mission that runs predominantly to institutional development!"

Here is the key to the problem: As missionaries, we have too often trained the converts in dependence upon us, rather than in responsibility. It may be because we have an over-protectiveness for our converts; it may be that unconsciously we desire to be the head and have people look to us as the indispensable man; it may stem from our lack of faith in the Holy Spirit to do His work in maturing the converts. But for whatever reason, the fact remains that weak churches are often the product of the missionaries' wrong approach to their task. How we long to see vigorous converts who will testify fearlessly to their neighbors! How much the spirit of dedication and sacrifice is needed in order that true leadership will develop! There is one "pearl of great price" in building the

church, and that is a sense of responsibility on the part of the converts. With it, other things being equal, the church will prosper. Without it, although we bolster the church with a thousand foreign props, in the end it will succumb to the inertia and resistance of the world around. **Only God can produce this sense of responsibility, but the way in which the missionary approaches his task will open or close the door of possibility to this vigorous aspect of Christian living.** Here are some things that the missionary must watch.

First, the missionary should have a clear concept of his own work as a missionary and of his proper relationship to the converts. He must understand the transitory aspect of the missionary's ministry in any one area. **It has been aptly compared to the scaffolding used in the erection of a building. What would one think of a carpenter if he had to leave the scaffolding up so that the building would not fall down!** A missionary may center the work too completely in his own person, in the money that he brings to the work, and in his own abilities. He becomes the indispensable man. The nationals learn to depend on him for

everything. Consequently they do not develop initiative and the work never reaches the stage where it can be left without missionary supervision. **The successful missionary is one who has done his work so well that he is no longer needed in that area.** He can leave the work to his converts. "A modern missionary ... is not intended to be a permanent factor in the life of an alien people. His work is to make Christ the permanent factor, and himself pass on to other pioneer tasks as quickly as he can. Institutions which tie the foreigner down to permanent work are intrinsically dangerous expedients." **The true measure of success is not that which the missionary accomplishes while on the field, but the work that still stands after he has gone.**

Second, one hindrance may be that the work has been centered in the mission station rather than in the local church. God does not send missionaries out to build mission stations, but to build the church. The modern missionary should free himself from the "mission compound" psychology of the past generation. Of course the missionary must have a residence, but the church should be located apart, in the village or city, not on the "compound," and the activities of the converts

should center around the church. Workers should be sent out to outstations by the church, and these should be considered as branches of the church rather than of the mission station.

Third, the development of the indigenous church may be hindered by a disproportionate number of missionaries in the area. **In order to develop the ability and ministry of the nationals, a missionary should never hold a position which a national is able to fill.** When there are too many missionaries in proportion to the number of national workers, the tendency is to let the missionaries fill all the important posts. Thus the nationals are not given proper responsibilities and so fail to develop. Missionary personnel should be so allocated that the missionary will be performing a task that would be left undone if he were not there, and under circumstances that will require him to make use of the nationals in order to meet the demands of the work.

A fourth reason for the failure to produce an indigenous church may be found in the missionary's failure to adapt himself to native psychology and methods. An understandable but excessive fondness for the "American way" may make him



feel that American methods are the only right methods. The work must be administered according to the American plan, the Bible school patterned after the Bible school program in the United States. Even the chapel must be built according to the American idea of architecture. The nationals find it difficult to fit into this foreign pattern. Therefore, year after year the missionary continues the administration according to his own ideas, and the indigenous church does not develop.

Fifth, a frequent hindrance to the development of the indigenous church has been the introduction of foreign funds into the structure of the work, with the result that the church depends on foreign aid for its support and advancement. This weakens the spiritual and moral fiber of the church, kills the initiative of the converts and dulls their sense of responsibility.

Sixth, the missionary may fail to exercise a vigorous faith in God for the development of the spiritual capabilities of his converts. Like a tropical plant in a northern climate, the convert may be placed in a spiritual greenhouse. Sometimes he is separated from his own people and brought to live on the mission compound so he will not slip back into heathenism.

The missionary may hesitate to place responsibility upon the shoulders of young converts for fear that they will become discouraged. **Perhaps he does not teach them to tithe. Sometimes he fails to take advantage of the new convert's enthusiasm to witness, or has been afraid to allow God-called men to launch out into the ministry, for fear that they would fall into sin.** A missionary once said that we could not expect the church on the mission field to take upon itself the ministry of intercession-the converts were too young and inexperienced to understand it!

We must found a truly indigenous church on the mission field because the church of Jesus Christ in China in Latin America or in Africa, is not, or should not be, a branch of the church in America. It must be a church in its own right. We should plant the gospel seed and cultivate it in such a way that it will produce the Chinese or the African church. We must train the national church in independence rather than dependence. A church that must depend on foreigners for its workers, that must call for additional missionaries to extend the work, that must plead for foreign funds in order to keep going, is not an indigenous church. It is a hothouse plant that

must have artificial atmosphere and receive special care in order to keep alive. When we find ourselves in a situation like this, let us examine the type of work that we are doing. Let us ascertain why we are building a work that cannot progress without artificial help. Surely the weak thing we have produced is not what Jesus meant when He said, "I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."

Not only must the missionary have the right concept of his own ministry, but also **he must have faith in the power of the gospel to do for others what it has done for us.** In the United States, in the early days with hearts aflame, even day laborers went out to preach the gospel. God honored them with ministries and gifts of the Spirit., Now can we have faith in God to do the same for others, regardless of the color of their skin? **Or do we disbelieve in His power to work in this manner among other races and in other lands?**

## RETHINK THIS CHAPTER

1. Why are churches planted by missionaries some times unable to assume their true responsibilities?
2. Show the importance of a "sense of responsibility" in the local church.
3. What might be some of the reasons that a church is too dependent on the missionary?
4. Explain how faith on the part of a missionary is important to the founding of a strong national church.

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# How could Paul start churches so quickly?

By J. Herbert Kane

*Christian Missions in Biblical Perspective*, pp. 30-33

Six characteristics of Jewish religious life in the Diaspora contributed directly to the making of converts and indirectly to the spread of Christianity later on

**1. The institution of the synagogue.** It is difficult to overestimate the importance of the synagogue in the religious life of the Diaspora. Only a handful of Jews could attend the Temple services in Jerusalem, and then only on festive occasions. Without the synagogue it is doubtful if the Jews of the Diaspora could have long retained their religious heritage. Wherever ten male leaders could be found, the Jewish community built a synagogue, which became the religious and social center of the Jewish life. The main service of the week fell on the Sabbath, at which time there was the recitation of the Shema (Deut 6:4-5), prayer, and the reading of Scripture, followed by an exhortation and a benediction.

The synagogue could never be a substitute for the Temple. **It was primarily a teaching institution; hence its leader was a rabbi, not a priest. No sacrifices were ever offered in the synagogue. For that the Jews had to make the pilgrimage to the Temple in Jerusalem. While the Gentiles were excluded from the Temple (Acts 21:29), they had free access to the synagogue. It was there that they received instruction in the Jewish faith. So the synagogue became the chief means of making converts.**

**2. The observance of the Sabbath.** The institution of the Sabbath goes back beyond Moses and Abraham to the very beginning, when God rested on the seventh day of creation and hallowed it. The keeping of the Sabbath was reinforced by its inclusion in the Decalogue. The Jews attached enormous importance to this fourth commandment in the law. Circumcision was the only kind of "work" permitted on the Sabbath (Jn 7:22-23). The Jews would sooner be slaughtered by the thousands than engage in battle on the Sabbath. **Such strict adherence to a public rite must have made a deep and lasting impression on outsiders,**

**for nearly everyone respects a person who takes his religion seriously and is not afraid to practice it in public.**

**3.The translation of the Scriptures into Greek.** After centuries of exile the Jews forgot their Hebrew, in which the Old Testament was written. Instead they spoke Greek, the lingua franca of the Mediterranean world. It was necessary that the Scriptures be translated into Greek for the benefit of the Jews of the Diaspora. This was done sometime in the third century B. C. in Alexandria. The translation came to be known as the Septuagint (LXX) because it was supposed to have been the work of seventy scholars. The LXX soon became a very potent missionary tool in the hands of the Jews of the Diaspora. It was the Bible of Jesus and the apostles, and was read every Sabbath in the synagogues throughout the Greco-Roman world (Acts 15:21). It is doubtful if the Greeks in any large numbers would have frequented the synagogues had the Scriptures and the services been in Hebrew instead of Greek. The LXX and the Wisdom of Solomon and other noncanonical literature, all in the Greek language, were of immense help to Philo of

Alexandria and others who took it on themselves to make the Jewish religion intellectually respectable to the philosophical Greeks.

**4. The concept of monotheism.** The Greco-Roman world was honeycombed with polytheism. The Greeks were reputed to have 30,000 gods, most of them gods of lust. In fact, the gods were more immoral than the men who worshiped them. By the time of Plato the idea of one supreme God was discussed by the philosophers, but the common people continued with their idolatry. **Many a seeking Greek, fed up with the immorality of the Olympian gods and disillusioned with the speculations of the pagan philosophers, turned with a sigh of relief to the ethical monotheism of Judaism, which preached the doctrine of one true God, Creator of heaven and earth, immanent and yet transcendent, mighty and yet merciful, who punishes sin and rewards virtue.** No other religion had such an exalted doctrine. This was an immense stimulus toward attracting converts.



**5.The practice of morality.** Immorality ranked with idolatry as the two great sins of the pagan world. Its large cities were cesspools of iniquity. Divorce was widespread; infanticide was common. Paul's description of pagan society in Romans 1 is an accurate picture of the moral decadence of the Roman Empire. Tenney describes it graphically:

*Paganism was devoid of any power to lift it above itself, and the growing consciousness of its own impotence brought upon it a pessimism and a depression that it could not escape. Corruption in politics, debauchery in pleasure, fraud in business, deceit and superstition in religion made life in Rome depressing for the many and unendurable for the few.*

In contrast to this corruption was **the wholesome domestic life of the Jewish people**. Divorce was a rare occurrence. Children were regarded as a gift from God; consequently family life was sacred. Fathers taught the Law to their families, and every boy became a Son of the Law at thirteen years of age. Fathers also taught their sons a trade. Immorality was frowned on, with adultery punishable by death. Heathen families desirous of escaping the moral

pollution of pagan society found a warm and welcome change in the high moral standards of Judaism. This too was a great drawing card.

**6.The promise of a coming Savior.** In the closing centuries of the pre-Christian era there was in the Greco-Roman world an almost universal longing for a deliverer. The Greeks gave the world its greatest philosophers and Rome provided its greatest statesmen; but neither the lucubrations of the one nor the machinations of the other could solve the problems of society. Plato had suggested in *The Republic* that philosophers should be kings and kings should be philosophers; but there were few takers for his recipe, because as a rule philosophers don't make good kings and kings don't make good philosophers. Confucius tried it and failed. And even the philosophers were unable to live up to their own high standards. Consequently the man in the street, far removed from both philosopher and statesman, looked in vain for someone who could promise-and provide-the abundant life both here and hereafter.

Into this vacuum stepped the Jews with their centuries-old expectation of a coming Messiah. There was nothing vain or vague about this Figure. Both His person and His program were clearly outlined in the Hebrew Scriptures. He would be Prophet, Priest, and King, all in one. He would succeed where others had failed. Possessed of divine power and knowledge, He would establish a kingdom of universal peace based on absolute justice-something the world had dreamed of but never seen.

The Greco-Roman world listened, and liked what it heard. Thus Judaism became a missionary religion and helped prepare the way for Christianity.

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# Missions in the Ministry of Paul

By J. Herbert Kane

*Christian Missions in Biblical Perspective pp. 72-93*

By any definition the apostle Paul was an unusual person. He would stand out in any crowd, not because of his physical stature but because of his intellectual, moral, and spiritual qualities. He ranks with the great personalities of the Old Testament: Abraham, Moses, David, Elijah, Isaiah, Daniel. He did for Christianity what Moses did for Judaism. Indeed, the two men had much in common. Both were carefully reared in the faith of their fathers. Both were familiar with the wisdom of the world. Both were chosen by God to become men of destiny. Both had a dramatic confrontation with God in preparation for their life's work. Both became dynamic leaders, mighty in word and deed.

God saw in Paul qualities not found in any other man of that generation, not even Peter, James, or John. He had the mind of a scholar, the heart of an evangelist, the discipline of a

soldier, the devotion of a lover, the vision of a seer, the zeal of a reformer, and the passion of a prophet. By the grace of God Saul of Tarsus, once the chief of sinners, became Paul, the greatest of all the apostles.

Peter, the prince of the apostles, is the dominant character in Acts 1-12; but he suddenly passes out of the picture and is replaced by Paul in Acts 13-28. This is all the more remarkable when we remember that Paul was not one of the twelve apostles chosen by Christ. Nor was he the only missionary in the early church. At least a score of others are mentioned by Luke; doubtless there were hundreds more. Why then was he singled out by Luke and given such prominence in the Acts of the Apostles?

*The expansion of Christianity under Paul was the fact of chief importance. Luke followed it, not because he was ignorant of others, nor merely because he had been associated with the apostle. It was through Paul's work that Christianity was established in the chief cities of the empire, and thus obtained the significance it had when Luke wrote. This line of progress was historically the most*

*portentous. In Paul's Epistles, moreover, which are the index of his teaching, the Christian system of belief was completely unfolded, so that under him Christianity evolved its content as well as extended its area.* (George T. Purves, *Christianity in the Apostolic Age* (Grand Rapids: Baker Publications, 1975), p. 174.)

It is fair to say that without the immense influence of Paul, Christianity would not have thrown off the swaddling clothes of Judaism and become a truly universal religion.

## **Paul's Missionary Strategy**

We might begin by asking: Did Paul have a missionary strategy? Some say yes; others say no. Much depends on one's definition of strategy. If by strategy is meant a deliberate, well-formulated, duly executed plan of action based on human observation and experience, then Paul had little or no strategy; but if we take the word to mean a flexible *modus operandi* developed under the guidance of the Holy Spirit and subject to His direction and control, then Paul did have a strategy.

Our problem today is that we live in an anthropocentric age. We imagine that nothing of consequence can be accomplished in the Lord's work without a good deal of ecclesiastical machinery--committees, conferences, workshops, seminars; whereas the early Christians depended less on human wisdom and expertise, more on divine initiative and guidance. It is obvious that they didn't do too badly. What the modern missionary movement needs above everything else is to get back to the missionary methods of the early church.

Michael Green at the Lausanne Congress on World Evangelization made a point of saying: "Many of you commented that my paper was thin on the strategy of the early Christians. You are right. You see, I don't believe they had much of a strategy.... The Gospel spread out in an apparently haphazard way as men obeyed the leading of the Spirit, and went through doors he opened" (Let the Earth Hear His Voice, ed. J. D. Douglas (Minneapolis: World Wide Publications, 1975), p 174

Roland Allen took a similar position: "It is quite impossible to maintain that St. Paul deliberately planned his journeys

beforehand, selected certain strategic points at which to establish his churches and then actually carried out his designs." (Roland Allen, *Missionary Methods: St. Paul's or Ours?* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1962), p. 10.)

With these introductory thoughts in mind we will proceed to discuss Paul's missionary strategy.

### **1. He maintained close contact with the home base.**

Paul received his missionary call directly from the Lord at the time of his conversion, but this was later confirmed by action of the church in Antioch where Paul was a teacher. The Holy Spirit directed the church to consecrate Barnabas and Paul for the work to which He had called them. The church concurred, and after prayer and fasting sent the two men away with its blessing.

That Paul attached great importance to this contact is evident from the fact that at the end of his missionary journeys he always returned to Antioch. Luke is careful to remind his readers that Antioch was the church by which Paul and Barnabas had been recommended to the grace of God for



the work which they had now fulfilled, as if there was some necessary connection between the success of the mission and the prayers of the church. On their return the two missionaries called a meeting of the entire church and reported in detail what God had accomplished through them, especially how He had opened the door of faith to the Gentiles. After this they stayed on in Antioch "no little time" (Acts 14:28), during which, we may well conclude, they ministered the Word as they had done in years past.

This had one great advantage. It eliminated the custom in modern missions that obliges the missionary on furlough to travel from Maine to California to pay a week-end visit to scores of churches to thank them for their past support and solicit their continuing support. Furlough, which is supposed to be a time for rest and relaxation, turns out to be a rat race. After an exhausting year of travel and turmoil, the missionary, weary in mind and body, returns to the field with a sigh of relief. In the meantime he has not remained in any one church long enough to do himself or anyone else much good.

Paul was also concerned to maintain contact with the church in Jerusalem, without whose blessing his mission to the Gentiles might have been in jeopardy. For at least two decades the church in that city was regarded as the mother church. Some of the twelve apostles were still there, and so were many of the original elders, who by this time had acquired an influence second only to that of the apostles.

Paul was wise enough to see the importance of maintaining contact with that influential church. On at least five occasions he visited Jerusalem and each time he conferred with the leaders there. This became increasingly crucial as the rift between the Jewish and Gentile branches of the Christian church widened. On his last visit to Jerusalem he took with him a love offering from the Gentile churches of Macedonia and Achaia. The immediate reason for the offering was the depressed economic condition of the poor saints in Jerusalem, but no doubt he hoped the gift would serve another purpose—to bring the two branches of the church together in the bonds of Christian love. In this way he sought to ensure the success of his mission to the Gentiles.

Later on, when his work in the eastern part of the empire was drawing to a close, he wrote to the church in Rome to solicit support for his mission to Spain (Rom 15:15-24). If he was to launch a mission in the western part of the empire he would need a base in Italy. His real reason, then, for writing his Epistle to the Romans was missiological rather than theological. He was convinced that the worldwide Christian mission must have a strong support base at home.

**2. He confined his efforts to four provinces.** Any one missionary has only so much time and energy. He cannot cover all the ground. If he tries he will surely meet with failure or frustration or both. Paul's original commission called on him to take the gospel "far away to the Gentiles" (Acts 22:21). How far is "far away"? Mesopotamia.? Egypt? India? China? Africa? Obviously he could not visit all these places; so under the leading of the Holy Spirit he ended up by concentrating on four of the most populous, prosperous provinces: Galatia, Asia, Macedonia, and Achaia. The first two were in Asia, the other two in Europe. Rather than wandering all over the world and scattering the seed in great profusion, Paul preferred to labor in a much smaller field, where he and others could water the

seed, cultivate the soil, and produce a harvest (I Cor 3:6). His aim was not simply to cover territory but to plant churches. To accomplish this it was necessary not only to sow the seed but also to reap a harvest. This could best be done by confining his efforts to a fairly restricted area.

It is interesting to note in this connection that Paul and Luke thought in terms of provinces rather than cities. Reference is made to the churches in Judea, Galilee, and Samaria (Acts 9:31), Syria and Cilicia (Acts 15:23), Macedonia and Achaia (2 Cor 9:2). Seldom is a church identified with a city.

Paul's active missionary career lasted twelve to fifteen years; yet in that comparatively short time he succeeded in planting strong, thriving, autonomous churches in all four of the provinces mentioned. So thorough was his work that at the end of this period he could write to the Christians in Rome: "From Jerusalem and as far round as Illyricum I have fully preached the gospel of Christ.... But now, since I no longer have any room in these regions, and since I have longed for many years to come to you, I hope to see you in passing as I

go to Spain" (Rom 15:19-24).

Modern missions could learn from Paul at this point. Many boards, instead of placing thirty missionaries in one country and leaving them there until the job is done, have spread their missionaries over twenty or thirty countries, with not enough in any one to raise up a strong indigenous church.

Proliferation, not concentration, seems to be the name of the game. In Japan there are ninety-seven North American mission agencies. Fifty-seven of them have fewer than ten workers in the country! One wonders if there isn't a certain amount of spiritual pride in some forms of missionary work which prompts a board to do what looks good on paper but what in reality makes for weakness rather than strength. We can easily spread ourselves so thin that there is little or no depth to our work. Paul did not make that mistake. He was content to confine his labors to four major regions, in all of which he did a solid piece of work.

**3. He concentrated on the large cities.** Paul chose to work in the cities of the empire, not because they afforded more comforts or larger crowds, but because they were

strategic centers from which the light of the gospel could spread to the surrounding regions. He began in Antioch, where he and Barnabas spent a whole year teaching the disciples (Acts 11:26). A glance at the map will immediately indicate the strategic importance of Antioch for the Christian missionary.

*The third city of the empire, outranked in size only by Rome and Alexandria, crowded with a mixed population and connected commercially with both East and West, Antioch was the most important place for the faith, advancing from Jerusalem, to occupy. From it the new religion would be carried by report in every direction. It lay just beyond the confines of Palestine, and thus was not so far from the original center as to lose touch with the mother church. At the same time it was the door from Palestine to the Graeco-Roman world. No place was so well suited to be the base of operations for the progress of Christianity into the empire. ( Purves, Christianity in the Apostolic Age, p. 102.)*

In his three missionary journeys Paul kept pretty well to the famous Roman roads built and maintained by the state. Along these roads were situated the most important cities of the

empire. All of them were the centers of Roman administration and Greek civilization. Some of them, such as Philippi, were Roman colonies; others, such as Thessalonica, were busy commercial centers. All except Philippi had a sizable Jewish population. Athens was the cultural center and Ephesus the religious center of the empire.

Paul did not preach in all the cities along the way. He chose those which, for one reason or another, were important to his plan for the speedy evangelization of the empire. He passed through-but evidently did not preach in-Amphipolis and Apollonia on his way from Philippi to Thessalonica (Acts 17: 1 ). Nor was his stay in each city of equal duration. In some he remained only a few weeks; in others he stayed two or three years.

Without doubt Ephesus was the most important of all the cities in which Paul labored. It was not only the capital of the province of Asia but, being the site of the famous temple of Diana, it was the religious center of the empire. Every year tens of thousands of pilgrims visited the city. Indeed, the merchants derived much of their wealth from the tourist trade

(Acts 19:25-27). So important was Ephesus that Paul remained there for the best part of three years (Acts 20:31 ), longer than in any other city. On his departure he left Timothy in charge of the work (I Tim 1:3). Priscilla, Aquila, and Apollos all labored in Ephesus (Acts 18:24-26). Later on the apostle John took up residence there. In the Acts of the Apostles Luke records four major addresses given by Paul. One of these was his farewell address to the elders of the church in Ephesus (Acts 20), which affords valuable insights into his missionary methods. Paul spent the first three months in Ephesus preaching in the synagogue, "arguing and pleading about the kingdom of God" (Acts 19:8). When opposition drove him from the synagogue he moved to the hall of Tyrannus, where he carried on a daily dialogue with all who would listen.

Some idea of the effectiveness of Paul's ministry there can be seen from Luke's comment: "This continued for two years so that all the residents of Asia heard the word of the Lord, both Jews and Greeks" (Acts 19:10). This is one of the most remarkable statements in the book of Acts. It shows clearly the enormous influence that Paul was able to exercise when situated in a strategic center. When Luke says that "all the



residents of Asia heard the word of the Lord," we need not assume that it refers only to a widespread sowing of the seed with no concerted effort to secure a harvest. We know from Revelation 2 and 3 that later on there were seven well-established churches in the province of Asia, each one identified by name. How, when, and by whom were they founded? Is it not reasonable to suppose that they were the result of Paul's three-year stay in the capital?

Did Paul confine his personal ministry during that time to the city of Ephesus, or did he make short visits to other cities nearby? Luke does not tell us, nor is it necessary for us to know. It is, of course, possible that Paul himself did make brief trips into the province, but there is nothing to confirm the suggestion.

How then were the churches in Asia founded? Two possibilities are open. Paul had many fellow workers who came and went constantly. Some of these were probably with him in Ephesus. If so, he doubtless sent them to the outlying cities and towns while he supervised the total operation from the capital. In the second place, Ephesus would attract a large

number of merchants, officials, soldiers, and others from the surrounding territory. Many of these would have heard the Word from Paul in the hall of Tyrannus, and on their return home they would have carried the gospel with them. In time churches sprang up in all parts of the province. This is church planting by multiplication, not by addition.

That the above is not altogether conjecture can be seen by a glance at Paul's Epistle to the Colossians. Colossae, just ninety miles east of Ephesus, had a church. Two of its leaders are identified by name, Epaphras and Tychicus. Epaphras was a native of Colossae and the founder of the work there (Col 1: 7). He became one of Paul's fellow workers. But Paul had never been to Colossae (Col 2: 1 ). How then did they meet? If Paul didn't go to Colossae, Epaphras must have gone to Ephesus. The suggestion is not only intriguing but highly probable. On his return home he went to work and started a church there.

**4. He made the synagogue the scene of his chief labors.** Although he was chosen by God to be the apostle to the Gentiles (Gal 2:8) and took special pride in the office (Rom 11:13), Paul followed the principle "to the Jew first" (Rom

1:16). When he entered a city he made a beeline for the synagogue. Only in Philippi did he fail to find such an institution. There he had to settle for a "place of prayer" because it was a Roman colony. Still regarding himself as belonging to the seed of Abraham and an heir of the promises (Gal 3:29), Paul on entering the synagogue immediately felt at home. Its order of service and mode of worship were familiar to him. In the synagogue he found three distinct classes: Jews, proselytes, and God-fearing Gentiles, all of whom already had a knowledge of the one true God, an acquaintance with the Old Testament, and an expectation of the coming Messiah.

Moreover, it was the custom in the synagogue to invite a visiting rabbi to give a "word of exhortation" to the assembled worshipers (Acts 13:15). This meant that wherever Paul went he had an opportunity to give his witness to an attentive, devout, intelligent audience in a made-to-order situation. And he took full advantage of it every time.

Only when expelled from the synagogue did he go elsewhere (Acts 18:7; 19:9); and when he moved on to the next city, back he went to the synagogue. Most of Paul's opposition came

from the synagogue; nevertheless it afforded the very best opportunity for the proclamation of the gospel in the Roman world. If the Jews turned against him, and they usually did, he always found a ready response on the part of the proselytes and the God-fearing Gentiles. If his epistles are any criterion, most of his converts came from these two classes. It is difficult to exaggerate the strategic importance of the synagogue to the spread of the Christian faith in the first century. Paul was exceedingly wise to avail himself of this unique opportunity.

**5. He preferred to preach to responsive peoples.** Not all peoples are equally responsive to the gospel. This was made clear by Christ in the parable of the Sower in Matthew 13. In that parable there were four kinds of soil and four kinds of harvest. In each case the harvest did not depend on the sower or the seed, for both were the same in all four cases, but on the soil. Good soil produced a good harvest, poor soil produced a poor harvest or none at all. And even in the case of the good soil the harvest was not uniformly good. In one case it was a hundredfold, in another sixtyfold, and in still another only thirtyfold.

Paul was interested in results. He was very conscious of the fact that he had been "entrusted with a commission" (1 Cor 9:17) and would one day have to account for the manner in which he carried out his commission (1 Cor 3:10-15). The Christian worker is required to be faithful (1 Cor 4:2), and he is also required to be fruitful (Jn 15:2). Some missionaries who are not very fruitful take comfort from the fact that they are faithful. Others are so enamored of fruitfulness that they care little about faithfulness. Paul was determined to be both faithful and fruitful.

Most of Paul's preaching was done in the synagogues of the Roman world, where he soon discovered that every congregation was divided into two parts: those who accepted the Word and followed him, and those who opposed the truth and fought him. The former were made up mostly of the proselytes and God-fearing Gentiles. The latter were Jews who listened most attentively as long as Paul spoke of Israel's glorious history, but the moment he tried to prove that Jesus of Nazareth was Israel's long-promised Messiah they turned against him and raised a riot in an attempt to destroy him. More than once the timely intervention of his followers saved

him from a violent death. On one occasion he was actually left for dead (Acts 14:19).

After that incident Paul took decisive action. It occurred first in Antioch in Pisidia. Paul and Barnabas spoke out boldly, saying: "It was necessary that the word of God should be spoken first to you. Since you thrust it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life, behold, we turn to the Gentiles" (Acts 13:46). And to prove his case Paul quoted from Isaiah 49:6. The performance was repeated, with even harsher words, in Corinth. When the Jews opposed and reviled him, Paul shook out his garments and said to them: "Your blood be upon your heads! I am innocent. From now on I will go to the Gentiles" (Acts 18:6).

This must have been an agonizing decision on Paul's part; for he loved his own people with a passion rare, if not unique, in missionary annals. On one occasion he said: "I have great sorrow and unceasing anguish in my heart. For I could wish that I myself were accursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my brethren, my kinsmen by race" (Rom 9:2-3). But the spread of the gospel and the extension of the kingdom

were of paramount importance; and so nothing, not even his love for his own people, could be permitted to stand in the way. He believed that every ethnic group has the right to hear the gospel and he would gladly preach it to them; but if they adamantly and consistently refused the message and persecuted the messenger, no further purpose could be served by continuing to preach to them. Better far to move on to another group who would respond. Only in this way could the command to "make disciples of all nations" be fulfilled.

All too often has this principle been denied or ignored by the modern missionary movement. Burdened with land, buildings, and institutions of one kind and another, we have stayed year after year in places where there has been no visible fruit, while other areas ready to harvest are neglected for lack of suitable manpower. We have lacked the moral courage to pull up our stakes and move on to more fruitful fields. Roland Allen has a pertinent comment on this matter:

*The possibility of rejection was ever present. St. Paul did not establish himself in a place and go on preaching for years to men who refused to act on his preaching. When once he had*

*brought them to a point where decision was clear, he demanded that they should make their choice. If they rejected him, he rejected them.... It is a question which needs serious consideration whether the Gospel can be truly presented if this element is left out. Can there be true teaching which does not involve the refusal to go on teaching? The teaching of the Gospel is not a mere intellectual instruction; it is a moral process, and involves a moral response. If we go on teaching where that moral response is refused, we cease to preach the Gospel; we make the teaching a mere education of the intellect. (Allen, *Missionary Methods*, p. 75.)*

## **6. He baptized converts on confession of their faith.**

There are many differences between first century and twentieth century missions. One of the greatest is the matter of baptism. In modern missions we have usually required a fairly long period of probation during which the convert undergoes religious indoctrination. Only when he has acquired some degree of understanding of Christian doctrine and achieved a certain degree of sanctification is the candidate "ready" for baptism. In some parts of the world social customs



and religious practices were a major stumbling block. In India it was caste; in China, ancestral worship; in Africa, polygamy. Only when all vegetarian vows were broken and all fetishes burned was the convert accepted for baptism.

There is no evidence in the New Testament that the early church required a waiting period, long or short, between conversion and baptism. The three thousand Jews and proselytes who responded to Peter's message at Pentecost appear to have been baptized immediately without additional instruction of any kind. The Philippian jailer, who must have come from a heathen background, was baptized on the spot (Acts 16:33). Moreover, his entire household, which almost certainly included slaves as well as children, were baptized with him. This does not mean that Paul was interested in numbers at the expense of quality. No one acquainted with Paul's epistles could possibly accuse the apostle of that kind of folly. It is, however, a matter of record that Paul and the other apostles baptized their converts immediately on confession of their faith in Christ (Acts 8:12; 8:36-38; 9:18).

One important factor must be borne in mind, however, before we throw all caution to the winds and baptize every Tom, Dick, and Harry who applies. The preaching of the gospel in the apostolic age was always accompanied by the power of the Holy Spirit (I Cor 2:1-5; I Thess 1:5), and that made all the difference in the world. Only when the Holy Spirit is present in power is it possible for the sinner to pass from death to life (Jn 5:24). He alone has the power to regenerate the human soul (Jn 3:5-6; Tit 3:5). Paul's entire ministry was carried out in the power of the Holy Spirit (Rom 15:19); hence his converts were really converted. Under these conditions the risk of the new believer reverting to his old manner of life was small indeed. Paul had good reason to believe that God who began the good work in his converts would "bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ" (Phil 1:6).

It was not until the post-apostolic period, when the church was beginning to substitute ecclesiastical power for spiritual power, that candidates for baptism were required to undergo a period of probation and instruction. It is fair to ask: Was there any connection between the diminution of spiritual power and the addition of extrabiblical safeguards?

**7. He remained long enough in one place to establish a church.** Like every good missionary, Paul had two goals in mind. His immediate goal was the speedy evangelization of the world. His ultimate goal was the establishing of local churches. The latter could not be accomplished by a ten-day crusade; so Paul made a practice of remaining in each city long enough to establish a church.

In most cities his stay was cut short when the unbelieving Jews stirred up the populace to drive him out of town. Doubtless Paul would have remained longer had it not been for this kind of opposition. In spite of the difficulties and dangers, however, he usually managed to remain for at least two or three months. In some cases, such as Corinth and Ephesus, he stayed much longer. But in every city, with the possible exception of Athens, he left behind a strong and growing church that could carry on after his departure.

The churches founded by Paul were not only self-governing and self-supporting, they were self-propagating as well. In other words, they were missionary-minded churches, concerned-as Paul was-for the evangelization of the world.

They could not move about as Paul did, but they could and did make themselves responsible for the total evangelization of their own regions. In his earliest epistle, written to a young, persecuted mission church, Paul congratulated the new Christians on becoming an example to all the believers. "For not only has the word of the Lord sounded forth from you in Macedonia and Achaia, but your faith in God has gone forth everywhere, so that we need not say anything" (I Thess 1:8).

Paul's strategy paid off handsomely. After only fifteen years of missionary work he could say: "From Jerusalem and as far round as Illyricum I have fully preached the gospel of Christ.... But now, since I have no longer any room for work in these regions . . . I hope to see you in passing as I go to Spain" (Rom 15:19-24). Does Paul mean that he himself had preached in every city in the eastern part of the empire? Certainly not. It was never Paul's intention to preach in every city. That was neither possible nor desirable. He established missionary churches in the major centers of population and they in turn engaged in "saturation evangelism" in their own areas. The eastern part of the empire could safely be left to them. He would head for Spain to begin the evangelization of

the western half of the empire.

Here again the modern missionary has failed to follow Paul's example. We establish churches that are supposed to be self-supporting, self-governing, and self-propagating. The missions stress self-support while the churches demand self-government. Neither the churches nor the missions pay much attention to self-propagation. Consequently in countries where missions have operated for well over a hundred years there are still large areas that are completely unevangelized. In a word, we have failed to establish missionary churches.

**8. He made ample use of fellow workers.** Paul was no lone eagle. He had no desire to go his own way or do his own thing. He believed wholeheartedly in teamwork.

Before he began his missionary work he was associated with Barnabas in a team-teaching ministry in Antioch. On his first missionary journey he had Barnabas and John Mark as his companions. After his falling out with Barnabas over John Mark, he chose another partner, Silas. In Lystra he picked up Timothy. Luke joined the party in Troas. Other fellow workers

included Sopater, Aristarchus, Secundus, Gaius, Tychicus, and Trophimus (Acts 20:4). In his epistles reference is made to others: Epaphras, Demas, Epaphroditus, Archippus, Priscilla, Aquila, Apollos, Titus, and Phoebe among others. In Romans 16 he sends greetings to twenty-seven persons he mentions by name, many of whom had been fellow workers.

We tend to think of Paul as a strong, courageous, dynamic, self-sufficient personality who could fight and fend for himself; but such was not the case. Paul had a great capacity for friendship and did his best work in association with others. When he arrived in Athens he sent word back to Berea for Timothy and Silas to join him with all haste (Acts 17:15). When he sent Timothy back from Athens to Thessalonica he spoke of being "left alone" in Athens (I Thess 3:1). He wrote to the Corinthians: "When I came to Troas to preach the gospel of Christ, a door was opened for me in the Lord; but my mind could not rest because I did not find my brother Titus there. So I took leave of them and went on to Macedonia" (II Cor 2:12-13)..

But Paul's preference for fellow workers was not dictated solely by his desire for companionship. It was part of his strategy as a "skilled master builder" (I Cor 3:10). He heartily agreed with the Old Testament dictum that if five can chase a hundred, a hundred can put ten thousand to flight (Lev 26:8). Also, he remembered that Jesus sent out His disciples two by two. In any event, Paul was a confirmed believer in teamwork, and by temperament and training he was marked for leadership. "He [Paul] was not a solitary evangelist, but rather the commanding officer of a large circle of missionaries; and the number of his co-laborers increased with the progress of the work." (Purves, Christianity in the Apostolic Age, p. 177.)

It is obvious that Paul in his capacity of "commanding officer" was in full charge of the operation. Under the leading of the Holy Spirit he moved his workers around as occasion required. Some, like Luke and Timothy, were associated with him over a long period of time. Others, like Priscilla and Aquila, worked with him sporadically. Still others came and went, some of their own accord (I Cor 16:17) and others at his behest (Phil 2:23). They brought him news from the churches (I Thess 3:6) and took back his instructions to the churches

(Col 4:7). In this way Paul was able to multiply himself many times, thereby increasing his effectiveness as an apostle to the Gentile world. Of all his fellow workers, Timothy served him longest and loved him best (II Tim 4:9; Phil 2:19-23).

**9. He became all things to all men.** When it came to the content of the gospel message Paul was both adamant and dogmatic. The message could never be changed, not even by an angel from heaven (Gal 1:6-9). But in everything else he was flexible. To the Jews he became as a Jew, to the Gentiles he became as a Gentile. And all this for one supreme purpose—that by all means he might win men to Christ (I Cor 9:19-23).

This appears all the more remarkable when Paul's background and training are taken into consideration. At one time he had been "a Hebrew born of Hebrews" (Phil 3:5), "a Pharisee, a son of Pharisees" (Acts 23:6), and "extremely zealous ... for the traditions" of his fathers (Gal 1: 14). But his lofty religious pedigree he counted "as loss for the sake of Christ" (Phil 3:7). Indeed, he counted everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus the Lord. Thereafter it was his inestimable privilege to "preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ" (Eph 3:8). In



order to fulfill that high and holy calling he was willing to become all things to all men that by all means he might win some.

The church in Paul's day was divided into two distinct camps: the Jewish Christians who wanted to retain their Jewish culture, and the Gentile Christians who wanted to develop a Christian culture. The cleavage between these two groups was so great that a special council had to be called in Jerusalem to discuss and define the status of the Gentile believers in the Christian church (Acts 15). Paul, the apostle to the Gentiles, was caught in the crossfire of this controversy.

The burning issue among Jewish believers was circumcision (Acts 15:1). Paul's own position on the matter was clear. "In Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision is of any avail, but faith working through love" (Gal 5:6). Again he wrote: "For he is not a real Jew who is one outwardly, nor is true circumcision something external and physical. He is a Jew who is one inwardly, and real circumcision is a matter of the heart, spiritual and not literal" (Rom 2:28-29).

How then do we explain Paul's decision to circumcise Timothy (Acts 16:3) and his refusal to do the same for Titus (Gal 2:3-4)? The answer is: the good of the work. Paul knew that not everyone shared his lofty views regarding circumcision; therefore he would gladly go along with them in their ignorance or prejudice. He was prepared to fight the world, the flesh, and the devil; but he refused to fight his brothers in Christ over matters which, to him at least, were not a fundamental part of the gospel. He even rejoiced over those who preached Christ "from envy and rivalry," thinking to afflict him in his imprisonment (Phil 1: 15-17). Paul's understanding of the gospel in Galatians 1 should not be divorced from his attitude toward the gospel preachers in Philippians 1.

In the Gentile church the major issue was idolatry, in particular food offered to idols (I Cor 8). Paul's knowledge that an idol has no real existence solved the problem for him, but he realized that not all believers possessed his knowledge. Therefore he advised sympathy and understanding on the part of the strong. For himself, he was willing to go the whole way for the sake of the weaker brother and not touch the stuff. "If food is a cause of my brother's falling, I will never eat meat,

lest I cause my brother to fall" (I Cor 8:13).

Does that mean that if Paul was a missionary to the Muslims he would not eat pork, and if he was a missionary to the Hindus he would not eat beef? What else could it mean? How many present-day missionaries are that flexible? Some American missionaries feel obliged to defend capitalism and the free enterprise system in a socialist country, even though they know they will alienate the very people they are seeking to win. Others give the impression that the kingdom of God is to be equated with the American way of life. The missionary movement of our day operates in a highly complex international situation whose political, economic, social, and racial problems defy solution. The Christian missionary, especially the American missionary, should be as wise as a serpent and as harmless as a dove (Mt 10:16), and as far as possible give no offense to the Jews or the Gentiles or the church of God (I Cor 10:32).

## Factors in Paul's Success

Few missionaries have been as successful as the apostle Paul. Whatever he did, the blessing of God rested on his labors. Everywhere, the gospel proved to be the power of God unto salvation. Souls were saved, believers were edified, churches were founded, entire communities were changed. But not all reaction was positive. Some people followed him, while others fought him tooth and nail and ran him out of town. At least he had the satisfaction of not being ignored. As a matter of fact, his reputation for causing excitement was such that he and his companions were known as men who "turned the world upside down" (Acts 17:6).

Paul was a success-oriented person in the best sense of the term. He played to win (I Cor 9:26-27), and he played for keeps (II Cor 5:9-10). He was a high-minded person (Phil 4:8) with the purest of motives (I Cor 13:1-3) and the noblest of goals (Phil 1:21). He sought nothing for himself (I Thess 2:5-9) but wanted everything for Christ (Phil 1:20). For him, success involved two things-the glory of God (I Cor 10:31) and the good of his fellow men (Rom 15:1-2). He brings both ideas

together in one passage: "He who serves Christ is acceptable to God and approved by men" (Rom 14:18). He believed in success (II Cor 2:14), he prayed for success (Rom 1:10), he expected success (Rom 15:29), and he achieved success (II Tim 4:6-8).

## **How are we to account for his amazing success?**

1. **His deep conviction regarding his call.** In this postcolonial period many missionaries have an identity crisis. They are not quite sure who they are or how they are to fit into the new scheme of things on the mission field. Paul had no such problem. He knew himself to be an apostle and frequently referred to himself as such. He was many other things as well: author, preacher, teacher, traveler, organizer, tentmaker; but these were incidental to his main calling, that of an apostle.

He refers to himself as having been "called" to be an apostle (Rom 1:1; I Cor 1:1) "by the will of God" (II Cor 1:1; Eph 1:1; Col 1:1; I Tim 1:1; II Tim 1:1). He speaks of having been "set apart" to the gospel ministry before he was born (Gal 1: 15).

At the time of his conversion God referred to him as a "chosen instrument of mine to carry my name before the Gentiles and kings and the sons of Israel" (Acts 9:15).

Following his conversion he "did not confer with flesh and blood," nor did he go up to Jerusalem to those who had been apostles before him. Instead he went into Arabia for a time of reflection and orientation (Gal 1: 16-17).

More specifically, he was called to be an apostle to the Gentiles (Eph 3:7-8). This too was not his doing. Given a choice, Paul doubtless would have preferred to be an apostle to his own beloved people, for whose salvation he so ardently longed (Rom 9:1-5). On at least one occasion God had to remind him of his mission to the Gentiles and order him out of Jerusalem (Acts 22:17-21).

One thing Paul never doubted or forgot was his relationship to Jesus Christ. If he was a prisoner, he was not a prisoner of Rome but of Jesus Christ (Eph 3: 1). Rome might immobilize him, neutralize him, victimize him, but even in chains he remained an ambassador for Christ (Eph 6:20). He might lose

his Roman citizenship but never his apostolic credentials. These remained intact, quite beyond the reach of hostile forces, political or religious. Nothing could dampen his spirits or blur his vision. Even from his prison cell in Rome he could write: "I rejoice. Yes, and I shall rejoice. For I know that through your prayers and the help of the Spirit of Jesus Christ this will turn out for my deliverance, as it is my eager expectation and hope that I shall not be at all ashamed, but that with full courage now as always Christ will be honored in my body, whether by life or by death. For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain" (Phil 1:18-21).

**2. His complete dedication to the will of God.** To many people the will of God is something to be avoided; if not avoided, then endured. Not so with Paul. Like his Master before him, he had a high regard for the will of God and could say: "Lo, I have come to do thy will, O God" (Heb 10:7). Just as David served his generation by the will of God, so did Paul.

From the day he first acknowledged the lordship of Christ on the Damascus road to the end of his long and fruitful career, Paul's chief concern was to do the will of God. All his plans

were focused on that one great goal. He desired greatly to see Rome, and prayed to that end; but he would proceed there only if God prospered him (Rom 1:10). When pressed to remain in Ephesus he declined, saying: "I will return to you if God wills" (Acts 18:21). On his last visit to Jerusalem his friends did their best to dissuade him from exposing himself to danger. When he refused to take their advice, they desisted, saying, "The will of the Lord be done" (Acts 21:14). Some expositors have thought Paul was wrong at that point and should have heeded their advice and thus avoided imprisonment, but there is no hint of this in Paul's writings. When referring to the matter later on he said: "I want you to know, brethren, that what has happened to me has really served to advance the gospel" (Phil 1:12). There is no suggestion that his imprisonment, which began in Jerusalem, had taken him out of the will of God.

Paul's thorn in the flesh must have been exceedingly bothersome. Three times he requested that it be removed; but when he discovered that such was not God's will for him, he acquiesced, saying: "I will all the more gladly boast of my weakness, that the power of Christ may rest upon me" (II Cor



12:9). It never entered Paul's mind to question the will of God once he knew it. He would have said a hearty amen to the words of the hymn writer:

He always wins who sides with God,  
To him no chance is lost;  
God's will is sweetest to him  
When it triumphs at his cost.  
Ill that He blesses is our good,  
And unblest good is ill;  
And all is right that seems most wrong  
If it be His sweet will.

**3. His complete dependence on the Holy Spirit.** Paul was an unusual man with great natural gifts, and the temptation to depend on those gifts must have been a perennial problem. Did he succumb to that temptation in Athens? If so he corrected the situation when he got to Corinth, for he said: "When I came to you, brethren, I did not come proclaiming to you the testimony of God in lofty words or wisdom. For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified. And I was with you in weakness, and in much

fear and trembling; and my speech and my message were not in plausible words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and power, that your faith might not rest in the wisdom of men but in the power of God" (I Cor 2:1-5).

This power is variously referred to as the power of God (Rom 1:16), the power of Christ (II Cor 12:9), and the power of the Spirit (Rom 15:19). These are not three kinds of power, but one divine power communicated to (Rom 8:11), and mediated through, the believer (Rom 15:18-19).

The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of life (Rom 8:2), the Spirit of truth (Jn 14:17), and the Spirit of power (Acts 1:8). In this threefold capacity He is quite indispensable to God's total scheme of redemption. It is the Holy Spirit who imparts the life of God to the soul dead in trespasses and sins (Eph 2:1; Rom 8:11). It is the Holy Spirit who reveals the truth of God to the mind darkened by sin and Satan (I Cor 2:11-15; II Cor 4:4). It is the Holy Spirit who communicates the power of God to the life dedicated to the service of God (Rom 15:15-20). Without the presence and power of the Holy Spirit the Christian worker labors in vain. All his best efforts are doomed to abject failure.

It is not by might nor by power, but by the Holy Spirit that the work of God is accomplished (Zech 4:6). For the missionary (or anyone else for that matter), to try to live and work in the energy of the flesh, without the power of the Holy Spirit, is an act of consummate folly. No one knew this better than the apostle Paul.

**4. His fearless presentation of the gospel.** If today's missionary in his presentation of the gospel thinks he has problems with paganism, humanism, nationalism, communism, syncretism, or universalism, he should remember the predicament in which Paul found himself in the first century.

The world of Paul's day was divided into three major groups: Jews, Greeks, and Romans. Paul preached to all three groups, and they all found his message offensive. The Jews demanded signs, the Greeks sought after wisdom, the Romans were interested only in power.

The Jews listened politely as long as Paul preached from the Old Testament; but the moment he shifted gears and declared that Jesus, the despised carpenter of Nazareth, was their

Messiah they were ready to stone him (Acts 14:19).

The Greeks were an intellectual people who loved nothing more than philosophical debate. They equated civilization with wisdom. The mind, not the body, was important. For them salvation would come at death when the nous (mind) would be liberated from the prison house of the body. Consequently they had no interest whatever in the Resurrection and laughed Paul to scorn when he mentioned it (Acts 17:32).

The Romans were the great empire builders of the day. Their cities, roads, libraries, palaces, and coliseums were symbols of imperial might. They equated civilization with power. Imagine their reaction when they were asked to believe that a Jewish criminal, crucified in weakness on a Roman cross, was the Sovereign and Savior of the world.

Obviously Paul had his problems. But never once did he flinch in his proclamation of the gospel. Regardless of who was in his audience-Jews, Greeks, Romans, or all three-he never failed to declare the whole counsel of God. It is true that his approach was different with different groups, and with each he

endeavored to build bridges of understanding. He was considerate and conciliatory. He always began with what was familiar to his audience and from there proceeded to the new and unfamiliar truths of the gospel, knowing that some of those truths were totally unacceptable to them.

This took both faith and courage, but Paul had his full share of both. He really believed in both the truth (Col 1:5) and the power (Rom 1:16) of the gospel. He likewise believed in the ability of the Holy Spirit to apply the gospel to the minds and hearts of the hearers (Jn 16:8).

As for courage, Paul was living proof that when God becomes real, others become shadows. And to Paul, God was real. The fear of man was the least of his worries; his chief concern was to please God (Gal 1:10). He was persuaded that nothing could separate him from the love of God (Rom 8:39) or the life of Christ (Phil 1:21-23). He believed, as John Wesley did, that he was immortal till his work was done. To live or die was all the same to him (Phil 1:20). And if perchance his enemies succeeded one day in killing him, he would simply go home to heaven in a blaze of glory!

## 5. **His emphasis on the autonomy of the local church.**

No where were Paul's methods and ours so far apart as in the matter of church planting. Roland Allen says:

*If there is a striking difference between St. Paul's preaching and ours there is a still greater difference between his method of dealing with his converts and that common among us today. Indeed, I think we may say that it is in his dealing with his converts that we come to the heart of the matter and may hope to find one secret of his amazing success. (Allen, Missionary Methods, p. 82.)*

How do we treat our converts? Allen goes on to say:

*We have done everything for them. We have taught them, baptized them, shepherded them. We have managed their funds, ordered their services, built their churches, provided their teachers. We have nursed them, fed them, doctored them. We have trained them, and have even ordained some of them. We have done everything for them except acknowledge any equality. We have done everything for them, but very little with them. We have done everything for*

*them except give place to them. We have treated them as "dear children," but not as "brethren." (Ibid., p. 143.)*

Many changes have come about since those words were written, but not always with our approval and seldom with our initiative. We dragged our feet until we became the unwilling allies of the historical unfolding of history or, worse still, the unfortunate victims of the upheaval of politics. Our greatest single blunder was to hold on to power too long. Much of the church-mission tension today is due to that melancholy fact.

How did Paul treat his converts? Each local church was a part of the universal church, but each was expected to stand on its own feet and administer its own affairs without any control from him or anyone else. It was to be independent of all outside influence, relying solely on the Holy Spirit. To get the church established Paul appointed the first group of elders. After that they appointed their own elders. From then on everything was under their control-baptism, the Lord's Supper, teaching, training, discipline, finances, and so forth.

Paul did not leave his converts to fend for themselves alone. He committed them to the tender ministry of the Holy Spirit, knowing that He could take care of His own. After all, it was the Holy Spirit who consecrated the first group of elders (Acts 20:28), and He would not desert them. In the case of the church in Ephesus, Paul knew that after his departure "fierce wolves" would attack the flock; but he did not delay his departure on that account. He simply commended them to God and the Word of His grace (Acts 20:32). God, who had purchased the church with His own blood, was well able to protect His own property in the face of all potential enemies, within or without.

To the apostle Paul the Holy Spirit was a living, bright reality, a person as well as a power. He possessed all the prerogatives of Godhead, along with the Father and the Son. He had become incarnate in the church at Pentecost. Throughout this entire dispensation He would be the Executive Director of the Triune God in full charge of the church's affairs. He would guide the church into all truth. He would energize the church for witness and service. He would control, teach, purify, and protect the church. Paul taught his converts to depend on the



Holy Spirit. If they followed that course, they would have no need to depend on anyone else.

**6. His wise Policy regarding money.** Money is the sine qua non of modern missions-or so it would seem. Probably no other one thing has done so much harm to the Christian cause. And the problem is still with us.

Money did not loom very large in the thinking of Jesus or the practice of the early church. It is true that Jesus and His disciples paid for their food (Jn 4:8), and Judas acted as treasurer for the Twelve (Jn 12:6). Nevertheless, neither Jesus nor the apostles attached much importance to money. Jesus warned against laying up treasures on earth (Mt 6:19) and stated clearly that it is impossible to serve God and mammon (Mt 6:24). He also taught that a man's life does not consist in the abundance of things that he possesses (Lk 12:15). When He sent out the Twelve He told them: "Take no gold, nor silver, nor copper in your belts, no bag for your journey, nor two tunics, nor sandals, nor a staff; for the laborer is worthy of his hire" (Mt 10:9-10).

It would seem that the apostles followed Jesus' instructions; for on one occasion, when asked for alms, Peter was obliged to say: "I have no silver and gold, but I give you what I have; in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk" (Acts 3:6). Apparently lack of money didn't hamper Peter. He had something that money could not buy.

Paul's policy with regard to money was threefold. (1) He supported himself and his colleagues by working with his own hands. (2) He expected the churches founded by him to be self-supporting from the beginning. (3) He encouraged those churches, poor though they were, to contribute to the needs of others.

As an apostle, Paul had every right to expect his converts to support him. It was a recognized principle laid down by the Lord Himself that those who "proclaim the gospel should get their living by the gospel" (I Cor 9:14). This was the general practice among the apostles (I Cor 9:1-7). Paul, however, refused to assert his right in this matter. He preferred to pay his own way, thus making the gospel "free of charge" (I Cor 9:18). He reminded the Thessalonians that he worked "night

and day" that he might not be a "burden" to any of them (I Thess 2:9), and he reminded the Ephesian elders that he had "coveted no one's silver or gold or apparel" (Acts 20:33).

This was important for both the reputation of the preacher and the success of the gospel, for the Roman world of that day was full of peripatetic teachers who lived off the "offerings" of gullible listeners whose ears it was not difficult to tickle. Paul would do everything in his power to avoid the charge of money-making, thus bringing the gospel into disrepute.

On the other hand Paul did not refuse to accept personal gifts when they were an expression of Christian love. Several such gifts were received from the church at Philippi, and Paul's Epistle to the Philippians is a beautiful and tactful acknowledgment of those gifts. He was grateful for the gifts, not only because they met his need but also because they represented fruit that increased to their credit (Phil 4:17).

Even more important was Paul's practice of establishing self-supporting churches. There is no mention of Paul giving money to the churches. He expected them to manage their own

affairs and pay their own way even though many of them were extremely poor (II Cor 8:2). Poverty was no hindrance to progress. They were to live within their means and support the local work, including works of charity. They bought no land, erected no buildings, and endowed no institutions. Hence their annual budget was modest enough to be sustained by local means.

All this is in stark contrast to the methods employed by modern missions. Missionaries from the affluent West had plenty of money but didn't always use it wisely. They bought valuable property and proceeded to erect costly buildings that the national churches were unable to maintain. Pastors, teachers, evangelists, and others were hired by the missionaries and paid with foreign funds. Once the pattern was established it was almost impossible to change it. Some of the oldest churches on the mission field have been the last to achieve self-support. Paul not only taught the Gentile churches to stand on their own feet, he encouraged them on at least one important occasion to take up a special offering for the poor saints in Jerusalem. So important was this task that he and his colleagues devoted several years to the project. This

gesture was much more than an act of charity; it was, at least in Paul's mind, an expression of Christian love and a demonstration of Christian unity. Doubtless Paul entertained the hope that this generous gift, given out of deep poverty, would help to cement relations between the Jewish and Gentile segments of the Christian church.

**7. The example of his life. In all Christian work the character of the messenger is as important as the content of the message.** There are two dimensions to Christian work-the divine and the human. Nobody knew this better than Paul. In explaining his success in Thessalonica he mentioned both dimensions. The divine was equated with the power of the Holy Spirit. The human had to do with the character of the messengers, including Timothy and Silas. Paul declared: "For our gospel came to you not only in word, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction. You know what kind of men we proved to be among you for your sake" (I Thess 1:5). Then he devoted the first twelve verses of the second chapter to a description of the three men. "You are witnesses, and God also, how holy and righteous and

blameless was our behavior to you believers" (I Thess 2:10).

He also reminded them: "You became imitators of us and of the Lord" (I Thess 1:6). The order here is important. They were won first to Paul, then to Christ. Paul's converts were attracted to him because he was a living example of the loveliness of Christ, and through him they came to know the Lord. Modern pedagogy has shown how important the character of the teacher is. If the student is "turned off" by the teacher, he is not likely to accept his teaching.

Time and again in his epistles, especially in his Second Epistle to the Corinthians, Paul, in all honesty and modesty, reminds his converts of the kind of life he lived among them. To an unusual degree he exemplified in his own character the virtues he tried to inculcate in them. There is no doubt this had much to do with his phenomenal success.

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# Defining Phase-out

By Tom A. Steffen

*Passing the Baton, Church Planting that Empowers pp. 12-19*

My former mission agency began church planting in the Philippines in 1951 and presently works among 19 tribal groups. After almost 40 years of dedicated missionary effort, only one tribal work has been completely phased out because its objectives were met. Why? Because neither the mission agency nor the church planters started with a clear definition of and plan for phase-out.

Without such a definition of phase-out, the church planters had no way to identify their necessary role changes, much less work through them. Furthermore, the agency did not include a phase-out philosophy in its recruiting, selection and training of church planters. Consequently, most of its church planters stayed on as evangelists and teachers, rather than becoming partners; they emphasized phase-in rather than phase-out.

The Philippine field would wait almost two decades before communities of faith were completed according to proposed objectives. We desperately needed a definition of responsible phase-out.

Of course, church planters who leave prematurely may harm the church. But they can also harm it by staying too long. In the following pages I will discuss ways to maintain the delicate balance between these two extremes by: (1) surveying various perspectives of phase-out; (2) isolating its components; and (3) defining responsible phase-out.

## **Surveying Various Perspectives of Phase-out**

This section looks at phase-out from three perspectives. The first briefly reviews the missiological roots pertaining to exit strategies. The second perspective considers some current thinking in relation to phase-out, while the last examines a New Testament perspective of departure.



## Reviewing Exit Strategy Roots

The debate over when church planters should leave a group of believers is not new. Rufus Anderson and Henry Venn, both late nineteenth century mission strategists, were the first to expound the three-told formula: self-government, self-support and self-propagation. (See: Williams 1990 for a helpful discussion.) They argued: missionaries who followed this formula would develop national led churches. While not everyone agreed with them, their formula stimulated phase-out thinking.

John Nevius (1829-1893) built on the "three-self formula" from a pragmatic perspective. Nevius used the three-selves in China because they worked. Roland Allen (1868-1947) concluded that the formula was not only practical, but biblical. Allen argued the church expands spontaneously as the Holy Spirit is allowed freedom to work in the missionary (as he did in the life of Paul) and the converts. Much later, Alan Tippett added self-image, self-functioning and self-giving to the formula.

Others - William Read, Victor Monterroso, and Harmon Johnson - promoted the idea of churches reaching autonomy by having missionaries change their roles over time from apostolate to administrator to partner to servant to consultant. C. Peter Wagner argued no mission should be content to go out of business after a church is established. Rather, missionary work should move through four phases: (1) going to non-Christians, (2) church development, (3) becoming a consultant and (4) launching another mission. Harold Fuller saw mission-church relationships advancing through four stages: (a) pioneer, (b) parent, (c) partner and (d) participant. While these writers may not totally agree with Anderson, Venn or Allen, they nevertheless are not content to control a new church, or remain in a maintenance role.

## **Current Perspectives**

A mission executive recently told me his leaders continue to struggle with responsible phase-out. While they often talk about turning things over to local Christians, much of their work continues as it has for 20 to 50 years. This executive, however, wants to empower local believers to take control

within a much shorter time.

Another mission leader laments his organization's failure to focus on a church planting exit strategy as opposed to an entry strategy. He recognizes there is no way the church will keep pace with burgeoning world population if church planters are reluctant to release power swiftly to those they have come to reach. Like the first executive, he seeks to change the worldwide dependency patterns being instituted by his organization's people.

Doubtless the time is ripe for a new look at our inherited departure strategies. We must correct and modify them if local believers are to receive and reproduce a church planting model that responsively empowers others. It is time we move beyond the cliché, "Our goal is to work ourselves out of a job," and start to make it happen.

## **The New Testament Perspective**

The book of Acts records a number of different reasons Paul and his team left cities in which they ministered.

Obviously, sometimes they left for their own safety (e.g., Pisidian Antioch, 13:50; Iconium, 14:6; Lystra, 14:19; Thessalonica, 17:10; and perhaps Ephesus, 20:1). But, more importantly for our purposes, they also departed because of their desire and plan to reach as many people as possible with the gospel. After residing briefly in certain cities, they returned to previously visited areas to strengthen the believers and appoint elders (Acts 9:32; 14:21-22; 15:36, 41). See Table 1 for time periods. In some cases, Paul sent his team members to do this (e.g., he left Priscilla and Aquila in Ephesus [Acts 18:19]; later he sent Timothy to Ephesus before sending him on to Corinth and Thessalonica [I & II Tim.; I Cor. 4:17; I Thess. 3:2], and sent Titus to Crete [Titus 1:5]). When revisits were delayed or inconvenient, he wrote letters of instruction and encouragement to the new communities of faith.

Paul and his team also left places of ministry when they had completed their work for a particular visit, i.e., evangelism, discipleship, or both (13:13; 18:1,18,21,23; 19:21) because their objectives had been met.

So, departure occurred for a number of reasons: Satanic hindrances, completed objectives and designation of local leaders. As we plan our own phase-out strategies, we should take into account not only planned, but also unplanned withdrawals due to political and economic necessities. We should also take into account Paul's genuine care and concern for all the churches he left (II Cor. 11:28). Paul believed in responsible disengagement

## **Key Components Surrounding Responsible Phase-out**

For an accurate definition of responsible phase-out, a church planter should isolate all related components of the ministry, including: (1) a definition of a local church; (2) the number of local churches to be planted in a given area; (3) the generational cycle of a local church; (4) the roles of team members, local believers and God; (5) theological training for leaders; (6) when to begin phase-out; and (7) ways of maintaining relationships after phase-out. We begin with a definition of a local church.

How one defines a local church determines the product one looks for. What takes place in worship, instruction, sociality, evangelism - and the written and taped curricula to support these activities - all help determine when phase-out begins. For me, a local church consists of a group of people who trust Christ as their Savior and organize their corporate life (defines leadership and followership) according to indigenous and biblical principles. Their purpose is to glorify the Triune God through worship, instruction, sociality and evangelism, which leads to new churches. They try through the power of the Holy Spirit to reproduce themselves in unreached areas, locally and at a distance.

Another component is the total number of churches required for the entire people group to hear the gospel. Several factors determine this number, one being demographic studies. These studies should indicate: (1) the route Christianity most likely will spread; (2) the number of church plantings required to place churches strategically in the entire people group; (3) the number of church leaders required on the local and itinerant levels; (4) whether an association of churches and/or a missionary training center is necessary; and

(5) the ties the target community has to other subcultures and communities.

Discovering what constitutes a significant group within the target people will tell us how many churches we ought to project for the future. This requires cultural analysis. Add to this the demographic studies and your definition of a local church, and you establish the broad parameters for a church planting strategy that leads to responsible phase-out.

Cycles of vitality, lukewarmness, and sterility in the local church are important for church planters to identify. Like all institutions, churches go through various stages. First-generation believers often pay an unusually high price when they switch allegiance to Christ, but their strong commitment makes taking such a risk possible. But when second-generation believers join the church passivism tends to set in. They do not face the same burning issues their parents did, nor are the lines drawn that differentiate believers from unbelievers so clearly defined. While their parents often experienced a sudden, dramatic conversion, second generation conversions tend to be more gradual and less emotional.

Structure often replaces spontaneity. Third-generation Christians often face theological and ethical breakdowns. Nominalism tends to set in while this generation of believers seeks its cultural roots.

Church planters must be alert to generational issues when they define phase-out, i.e., by placing second generation expectations on first generation believers, or vice versa. Therefore, church planters must be adept at recognizing church cycles, and define their phase-outs accordingly.

The fourth component of phase-out calls for church planters to isolate the different roles played by team members, the national believers and God. As church planters move through social concerns, evangelism, discipleship, leadership development, organizing the church, and church reproduction, their roles change as national believers participate in the same things, imitating the models set by the expatriates (see Figure 2). The church planters' roles include: learner, evangelist, teacher, resident advisor, itinerant advisor and absent advisor.



When the newly established church reproduces another church close to home ("Jerusalem"), or cross culturally ("Judea, Samaria, ends of the earth"), phase-out should be underway. National believers demonstrate their abilities in addressing social concerns, evangelism, teaching, meeting felt needs, giving, administering church ordinances, implementing church discipline, and developing leaders for both local and itinerant ministries. Their role changes include accompanying, participating, leading, and training. In all these activities both expatriates and national believers must recognize God's sovereign hand on themselves and those whom they are reaching.

The Trinity is committed to spreading the Kingdom of God around the world. The Holy Spirit's role is to convict unbelievers of sin, righteousness, and judgment (John 16:8). As for believers, the Holy Spirit provides power and comfort while residing within them. Jesus Christ paid the ultimate price to secure salvation for all who believe in him and for the physical universe. He promises to build his Church from "every nation, tribe, people and language" (Matt. 16:18; Rev. 7:9). The Father represents a true father figure who loves and

disciplines his sons and daughters. The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, promise to fulfill their roles. The Trinity expects teams and national believers to do likewise.

The fifth phase-out component is theological training. To be successful, it should provide a solid foundation for the gospel, be comprehensive (Acts 20:27), focus on the material as well as the spiritual world, and address cultural themes, cults, and political ideologies relevant to the community.

Theological training must move from the simple to the complex, from the known to the unknown and be presented through viable cultural means. From the perspective of phase-out, it should include everyone from the start, emphasize church planting evangelism rather than simply individual evangelism, be owned by the national churches, and be reproducible. The aim is to train theologically oriented church leaders who will model to their flocks the importance of starting new churches.

Sixth, church planters must decide when to begin their phase-outs. They start by setting realistic timetables for the

new community of faith to reach its goals. This is critical because it gives the team a specific goal.

Of course, one must be flexible. We set an eight-year goal knowing that health, subversive elements, or stony hearts could change our projection. The timetable, like the strategy statement, must regularly be updated to allow for new developments and understandings. Phase-out begins when the stated objectives are met, not when the prescribed time arrives.

The seventh and final component is determining how church planters can maintain good relationships after the phase-out. They work themselves out of a job, but not out of a relationship. Continued fellowship includes prayer, visits, letters of challenge and encouragement, sending other people to visit, and cautious financial assistance.

## **Defining Responsible Phase-out**

First, let me say what I do not mean by phase-out. I do not mean abruptly abandoning maturing believers, even when

they reach a certain level of maturity and Bible knowledge. Or when they appoint their own leaders. Or when things seem to be going well, with problems at a minimum.

Phase-out oriented church planters build in their absences over time, so they can have interaction with the church throughout the disengagement process. They plan their disengagement. They start with short absences and move toward longer and longer ones until they completely withdraw physically, but not relationally.

Church planters normally begin phase-out by stepping back from active leadership. By this time the believers are doing evangelism, discipleship, and leadership development and organizing the church, as well as starting new churches. The seven components surrounding phase-out begin to converge. It is now time for the church planters to distance themselves geographically from the believers.

Of course, any phase-out strategy has to start long before the church planters enter the ministry context. Closure must be designed before their ministry starts, because a planned

phaseout affects all the steps in church planting: preentry, preevangelism, evangelism and postevangelism. Such planning provides team members a global picture, direction and a checklist toward closure. Just as a blueprint illustrates to construction workers the finished building and the steps to get there, so a planned phase-out strategy helps a church planting team. Without such a prefield plan, phase-out will be continually delayed, or, in all too many cases, never achieved.

Phase-out must be integral to the entire mission agency strategy. It is a comprehensive organizational approach that starts with the end product and works back to those who are responsible for producing it. It affects everything: how candidates are recruited, selected and trained, how they plan, form teams, handle social programs, evangelize, develop leaders and curricula. When a mission agency works with such a definition of phase-out, it is not likely to wait 40 years to achieve its first phase-out from a new group of believers.

## Conclusion

Responsible phase-out does not mean abrupt pull-out. Rather, it is the planned absences of church planters, protracted over time, so that national believers can immediately strengthen their spiritual roots and wings, as responsibility for the church shifts as quickly as possible to them from the church planters. In time, the exploring believers will provide the universal body of Christ new insights for understanding the Christian faith. Responsible exit strategies do not typically call for abandonment.

Responsible phase-out begins with a strategy of closure for the overall people group, and for each subculture within that community. The strategy includes: (1) the definition of a local church; (2) the number of churches required to finish the task in that area; (3) the cycles of a local church; (4) the different roles of the church planting team, the churches and God; (5) theological training; (6) the timing of the phase-out; and (7) maintaining relationships after phase-out.

Well-honed phase-out strategies call for planting clusters of churches that have a contagious enthusiasm for reproducing themselves. Moreover, it encourages the national believers immediate freedom to execute this. While the expatriate team members transition through various roles which lead to their physical departure, individual members maintain personal relationships through prayer, visits, limited financial assistance, letters, and pictures. Responsible phase-out strategies create believers whose allegiance remains on the Holy Spirit, not team members.

Such a strategy of closure, crafted over time and seasoned with prayer, determines to a great extent whether the team will accomplish its goal in a realistic time. Such an effective strategy will also produce believers whose reliance remains on the Holy Spirit, not on team members. If we are to move beyond phase-in to phase-out, our agencies must be permeated from top to bottom with this kind of thinking and action.

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# Preparing For Role Changes

By Tom A. Steffen

*Passing the Baton, Church Planting that Empowers pp. 20-37*

If church planting is to become a way of life within and without a particular people, national believers must own this vision and be trained to accomplish it. To facilitate this objective, church planters must be prepared for a series of changing roles that will swiftly propel national leaders into ministry roles, hence allowing them to become proficient. I will now consider the various roles expatriate church planters pass through as they advance toward phase-out, and the stress and conflict surrounding such role changes. Key issues pertaining to preparation for role changes are raised through an analysis of my role changes among the Antipolo / Amduntug Ifugao church plants.



## **Role Changes leading to Phase-out**

Phase-out oriented church planting requires church planters to engage in planned role changes. The first role, that of "Learner," begins in the Preentry Stage and continues through Phase-out. During the Preentry Stage, church planters spend significant time learning and practicing biblical truths, missions, the social sciences and studying the host country. Through language and culture analysis (Preevangelism Stage), they learn to view life from the host people's perspective. Participating in cultural events enables them to gain first-hand insights, the results of which can be compared to previous studies done during the Preentry Stage. By being willing to learn during the Evangelism Stage, expatriates may avoid syncretism, and find ways to communicate the gospel so that the nationals can in turn relate it easily to others. An attitude of learning during the Postevangelism Stage provides ways to equip trainers, facilitate biblical functional substitutes and develop relevant curricula. Even during Phase-out the attitude of learning must continue. The fast changing conditions of a people and different generational needs all demand a learner role. Effective church planters never allow themselves to be

lulled into believing they know their target audience; they remain hungry learners.

The church planter takes on the role of evangelist in the Preevangelism Stage through practicing Christianity in daily life and asking penetrating questions that cause the listeners to reflect upon their worldview. Once fluency in language and culture is gained, the expatriate launches the Evangelism Stage ministry. By verbalizing the gospel message in a culturally relevant way, yet without compromising the gospel, the objective of winning key members of the target people to Christ can be met, establishing a solid foundation upon which to build a church.

The church planter must adapt his role in evangelism from doing to modeling to releasing national Christians. The modeling phase takes place during the Postevangelism Stage as the evangelist no longer just wins nationals to Christ, but rather models evangelism in such a way that new believers feel comfortable in imitating this aspect of ministry. Therefore, the church planter always takes others along, encourages their participation, and provides time for debriefing.

***Effective church planters never allow themselves to be lulled into believing they know their target audience; they remain hungry learners.***

During the release phase of evangelism the church planter encourages the local Christians to evangelize on their own. Rather than accompanying them, he or she anxiously awaits their return to see how it went and to offer advice and inspiration.

The active work of the church planter shifts in emphasis. As he or she becomes more successful in modeling evangelism to others, the expatriate begins a teaching role, initiating the Postevangelism Stage ministry. As with the evangelism role, the teacher role involves a process of doing, modeling, and releasing national teachers.

The emphasis on doing finds the church planter actively teaching a holistic curricula developed with the target audience. Following the church planter's example, and being encouraged to do so immediately, local teachers begin to expand their comfort zone in the area of teaching. Written

curricula and visual aids assist them. As the teachers gain experience it is again time for the church planter to release the ministry of teaching to nationals; he or she now becomes a "resident advisor."

The resident advisor is one of the most difficult roles a church planter must pass through. During this time the church planter becomes a coach on the sideline rather than a player on the field. The goal for this role is to allow local Christians to win or lose the game on the basis of their own efforts, not enter the game to save it for them. When the team is winning, coaching is fun. But remaining on the sideline when the team is losing is much more difficult. Nevertheless, the church planter must never do for the national believers what they can do for themselves. Rather, he must provide advice and encouragement. The lessons learned through mistakes encourage the spiritual and ministerial skill development of local leaders much more effectively than the intervention by a church planter, even with the right answers.

During the resident advisor role the local leaders take the lead. They decide what subjects to teach, who evangelizes

where, how to institute various biblical functional substitutes, who assists in the development and dissemination of curricula, who should be baptized, who handles the ordinances, how the collections are dispersed, who should become deacons or elders, and other church-related activities. The church planter simply remains available to offer encouragement and advice, not to control the game through manipulating the players.

The effective resident advisor will now begin programmed absences, becoming an "itinerant advisor." Allowing for intermittent contact between the two parties over ever-expanding periods of time, these programmed absences empower national believers to march ahead in their respective ministries, depending on the Holy Spirit. Periodic visits provide church planters opportunities to discuss pertinent issues and offer encouragement.

The itinerant advisor role frees the church planter to enter a new ministry on a part-time basis. To affect this, the mission agency must be prepared to provide ministry opportunities for itinerant advisors, ministries that allow for periodic absences

so they can periodically revisit the fledging churches.

The mission agency should base new ministry assignments on an individual's gifts and skills. For example, evangelists and teachers could be placed in other church plants (where language and culture permits). This cross-fertilization of ideas should be beneficial for both parties. Some may qualify as consultants for field activities, or trainers of other nationals to reach other people groups within their own country. Curriculum writers and literacy specialists could also serve as field consultants, training new personnel and nationals and assisting veterans. Some could continue working on curricula with the people they left. Team members heading for furlough should be challenged to take studies related to the type of ministry to which they will return.

Effective mission agencies prepare relevant part-time ministries for itinerant church planters because this fulfills their goals in several ways: (1) National churches are encouraged to grow on their own; (2) ministry vacancies are filled, expanding the agency's influence; and (3) the new ministries often take less time because previous mistakes are corrected. They also

protect family relationships by taking into consideration the concerns of spouses and children.

In the final role change, the church planter becomes an "absent advisor." This role usually takes place when geography makes consistent return visits virtually impossible. But physical separation does not necessarily mean spiritual separation. The absent advisor's periodic contact through letters, tapes, videos, pictures, or visits does much to encourage the nationals' continued growth.

As in the itinerant advisor role, the mission agency must be prepared to offer absent advisors ministries that will challenge these experienced veterans. Should an agency fail in this area, it will lose one of its most valuable commodities, seasoned combatants. The absent advisor pool of personnel provides mission agencies area leaders, field leaders, team leaders, and veteran team players.

In sum, phase-out oriented church planters pass through six role changes. Using an American football analogy, one assumes the learner role before his rookie year, yet continues

throughout his entire football career. The church planter begins ministry as "evangelist" and "teacher," playing all the positions on a team. But as new believers mature, the church planter becomes the leader or quarterback, calling the offensive and defensive plays. After the team has gained experience and developed leadership, the church planter retires as a player and takes up a coaching role or becomes the resident advisor. While the coach provides direction, criticism, and encouragement, the win / loss column is decided for the most part by the players on the field. Even as coach, he is not content to remain forever, but distances himself as he trains coaching assistants, until he can turn that role over to a new coach and become the "general manager." In this role he helps with tough personnel decisions and team planning, but is absent periodically (itinerant advisor), and aloof from day-to-day operations. Finally, he moves on to a new team. As absent advisor, the church planter's role remains to be a friend and prayer partner in ministry, but his interests are refocused to another ministry.



## Contrasting Proposed Role Changes

As noted in the first chapter, Read et al. (1969) and Fuller (1980) have discussed the problem of departure and suggested various solutions. The phase-out oriented model presented below differs from their suggestions in several significant ways. (See Figure 3.) First, it begins with emphasis upon the role of "learner" which continues until the church planter completes the work and departs. This role enables the church planter to earn the right to be heard through demonstrating his acceptance of others; it begins by living among the target audience rather than making periodic visits.

In contrast to the learner approach, Read et al. (1969) begin with "apostolate", painting the picture of a person in authority with the answers to life's questions, the exact opposite role of a learner; the apostolate role focuses on "answer-theology" rather than "life theology".

Secondly, the phase-out oriented model avoids the errors of colonialism by starting partnership very early in the church planting process, and gradually withdrawing. Read et al. call

for an "administrator" ("outside control") role while Fuller prefers "parent", both of which carry colonial overtones. While these writers seek a common outcome (i.e., independent, indigenous churches), my proposed model prepares national believers for departure much earlier, a process facilitated by intentional, planned phase-out rather than a politically precipitated pull-out, created by mission/church tensions.

Finally, the learner, partner, advisor roles emphasized in the phase-out model avoid the struggle of major role redefinition required by the other two models. Individuals serving first as apostolates and administrators often experience personal identity crisis when they transition to partner, servant, or consultant, and many, if not most, fail to make the transitions. The same dilemma faces church planters who see themselves as parents and are later forced to become mere participants. The phase-out oriented model keeps church planters in a servant model throughout, learning, modeling, partnering, in the early evangelism and discipling stages of ministry. The Advisor Role begins very early, as will be evident in the following case study.

## **Stress and Conflict In Role Changes**

In this section I reflect over the role changes I experienced in the Antipolo / Amduntug church plants, the first churches my former agency phased-out in the Philippines because of met objectives. The role changes were not always easy. Stress and conflict were a natural result. Using the analogy of American football I will now recount some of those difficult times when my ministry role changed.

### **From "Rookie" To "Recruiter"**

In our first week of residence among the Ifugao in 1972 I learned a very valuable lesson - be a learner. It was very late in the evening, and I was extremely tired. My mind was now numb from the barrage of a new language. But I was not sure how to excuse myself from the group deeply involved in conversation, so I just left. The next morning our landlord calmly strolled over to our house and informed me of the proper Ifugao way to exit a group. From that day on he became my teacher, and I his student.

To demonstrate to the Ifugao my learner role, I studied their language and culture full time for ten months. After the ten months of study I continued expanding my vocabulary and cultural understanding, but on a briefer schedule.

Taking the learner role enabled me to receive invitations to attend a number of functions, some never witnessed by other expatriates. At these events I heard new phrases, observed nonverbal behavior cues, handled paraphernalia, and watched different leaders perform in a number of social settings. For example, as I observed one sacrifice I asked various participants to explain the events transpiring. They eagerly explained the intricate nuances of the sacrifice and volunteered why certain individuals were selected to oversee the sacrifice. Their explanations often challenged my hypotheses, which caused continual juggling of my church planting strategy. My participation also enabled me to develop close relationships with influential individuals.

Discussion. My willingness to become a learner of Ifugao language and culture, and continually adjust my church planting strategy accordingly, opened the door for the Ifugao

to learn from me. Becoming a student resulted in having students.

But taking the learner role also raised a number of problems. For example, the tools I received for language and culture study were not well integrated, nor ministry directed. Our study efforts resulted in a description of the culture, unconnected to ministry, and not integrated to language study.

In that neither the language nor culture study approaches related directly to ministry in a tangible way, I often became spiritually dry. My time was consumed with study but without a familiar ministry role. With the added stress resulting from the newness of the situation, not always being understood by the Ifugao, or understanding them, I struggled to find balance in my learning role and my spiritual walk. The triad of ministry, spirituality, and acceptance presented a number of problems to me.

Another area that provided me problems was relating animism, decision-making, and leadership structure to ministry. I lacked models to analyze these events, and relate

them to evangelism and church development. As I reflected on the ethnographic data I had gathered I wondered what insights this information held for effective evangelism, discipleship, and leadership development. Whom should I target? How are decisions made? What aspects of animism could serve as stepping stones for the gospel? for the Christian life? Which would have to go?

Lastly, I realized church planters must possess a certain type of attitude. They must be willing to learn and continually recraft their church planting strategy. Mission agencies must therefore select personnel who possess a learner attitude and are willing to take judicial risks, deviating from traditional approaches to ministry while not neglecting the lessons of history.

## **From Playing "All Positions" To Becoming "Quarterback"**

My foundational teaching for the gospel began in early January 1973. I asked key individuals in the village where, when, and how we should begin evangelism. I did this because I wanted the Ifugao to know from the beginning I highly

valued their input. They were my teachers. Their input, however, caused me to rewrite my strategy statement numerous times. Even though I often felt my ideas were better than theirs, I backed off, often reluctantly.

Our evangelistic meetings included singing, teaching, and lengthy dialogue, all of which I led. Once the Ifugao learned the songs, I invited different individuals to lead them. Following the traditional Ifugao meeting patterns I encouraged dialogue during all our evangelistic meetings.

After several weeks of teaching lessons about God from a topical study approach, I made a startling discovery. I noticed the Ifugao's interest level jump dramatically when I inadvertently added an Old Testament story. While I preferred a more analytical approach to Bible study, I had to make adjustments if the Ifugao were to comprehend my message and tell it to others. Changing teaching styles resulted in increased comprehension, instant evangelists and a new appreciation of the effectiveness of stories in evangelism.

It is customary for Ifugao to review the discussion in a meeting for latecomers so they feel included. To facilitate the Ifugao's learning and leadership skills, I asked key individuals who had heard the discussion to update the latecomer rather than do it myself. This encouraged participation, revealed future leaders while at the same time providing feedback. While this approach proved effective, it was not an easy step for me to take. Rather than waiting for someone to stumble through a summary of the lesson it seemed so much easier and faster to provide the latecomer a concise, accurate version of my view of the subject. I had to consciously repress this urge.

Written curricula also facilitated the Ifugao's comprehension of the gospel. The Ifugao requested written copies of the lessons prepared for evangelism so they could study in their own homes and show to their friends.

Recruiting several of the Ifugao to work with me in the production of these studies, together we incorporated in the curricula questions raised by the Ifugao during evangelism. These joint productions were the first step in reaching one of



our long range goals - the Ifugao producing their own curricula. But this joint adventure proved to be time-consuming. It took a concerted effort on my part to put aside my bent towards time efficiency so that these individuals would have sufficient opportunity to develop their own skills in this area.

In November 1973, we began the meetings for new believers as we had for evangelism, by asking the Christians where, when, and how, we should meet. During the meetings the Ifugao led all the singing, read the Scripture, and gave the announcements. I continued to encourage dialogue during all teaching sessions. As for praying, I handled this for approximately two months until several Ifugao felt comfortable praying in public. After that I seldom prayed publicly. When the Ifugao asked me to pray I would always suggest that someone else pray unless special occasions dictated otherwise. I felt sadness as another one of my roles ended abruptly.

In February 1974, a number of the Ifugao believers requested baptism. So we (expatriates) invited an Ifugao Christian leader from a distant northern Ifugao tribe to oversee

the baptisms. By having another Ifugao (from an acceptable area) conduct the baptisms we felt a precedent could be set - Ifugao can, and should, handle their own baptisms.

When the second group of Christians requested baptism in September 1974, some of the male leaders who were baptized by the visiting Ifugao oversaw the ordinance. Since that time, the local Ifugao have performed all baptisms, including two of our daughters. While this approach accomplished our objective, it was not easy to stand by and watch someone else baptize the converts you had prayed for, and labored over for months.

Before our first communion service in July 1974, we corporately discussed for several weeks what we would do and which elements to use. I led the first communion service with a number of Ifugao assisting. During our debriefing sessions we addressed any questions the service surfaced. By our first furlough the Ifugao handled everything by themselves. I once again found myself on the sideline, observing rather than leading. The transition from major player to quarterback

resulted in a bittersweet feeling.

One of the older believers died during our absence on a brief trip to Manila in March 1974. I had covered little teaching on the subject of death so the Ifugao were virtually on their own to figure out how to conduct a Christian funeral. The resulting funeral was a mixture of traditional Ifugao beliefs and Christianity; they prayed God would take the dead person's spirit to heaven so that it would not roam aimlessly around the village looking for a life to claim as their worldview taught them. Prayers to God replaced appeasement sacrifices.

Upon our return from Manila, villagers informed us about the funeral. We gathered to discuss death and the Christian's response to it. We also talked about other areas of life in need of biblical functional substitutes. During each of these discussions there was always a strong urge to say, "The best way to handle this is..." I had to make great effort not to control the discussion.

Harvest time in July 1974 became another critical time for Ifugao believers. They desired to demonstrate a Christian

perspective of harvest but were not quite sure how to go about it. Long meetings were held to work out the details. The believers decided that all harvesters would meet early at the home of the family who planned to harvest. They celebrated harvest by singing Christian harvest songs, reading Scriptures relating to harvest, and offering corporate prayer to God.

During another one of our absences in 1977, an Ifugao Christian couple moved into a newly constructed home. The young family held an open house to thank God for his provision. A number of the Christian guests prayed, asking God to bless the resident family, and all who might stop by or spend the night. They then sang a number of hymns. Another biblical functional substitute had replaced traditional Ifugao custom, this time without any assistance from us. I struggled with the fact my presence was no longer required.

My evangelist role continued but now emphasized modeling so the Ifugao Christians could eventually become evangelists. In June 1974, we received an invitation (necessary for a formal visit) to present the gospel in a village to the south, so around a dozen of us went weekly to begin

laying a firm foundation for the gospel. We spent significant time developing basic themes related to the gospel so that the message would be understood as restoration of a relationship broken because of practiced and inherited sin.

In the beginning my companions would only answer questions posed by the host village. I handled everything else. I wondered if the Ifugao would ever become effective evangelists; I often lacked needed patience. But by the time of our first furlough in May 1975, approximately three years of residence among the Ifugao, the believers advanced beyond accompanying me, to participating confidently with me; they sang, gave testimonies, and handled some of the evangelism. During our furlough they continued this outreach which eventually resulted in the birth of the second church in the tribe.

A major concern I had nine months before our first furlough was who would take over my teaching role during our absence? I offered to work with any of the men during the week so they could handle the Sunday services. Six months before furlough around a dozen men took up the challenge.

Five of these were young (15-20 years of age) who just came to listen. Today, most of them are active leaders in the churches.

I met with the prospective teachers every Saturday night for study. Afterwards, they decided who would handle the bulk of the work on Sunday, and who would assist. Two were always involved. After the service we would meet again for debriefing. This enabled us to provide constructive critique without public shame. Nevertheless, I found it especially hard to wait for the debriefing times when I heard totally erroneous statements being made by one of the teachers during a service.

The young Christian leaders experienced tremendous criticism in their inability to find certain passages quickly, and their lack of formal Bible training, but they persevered. We left for furlough wondering what we would find upon our return. Could they make it on their own? Would the believers accept homegrown leaders? How long would it take the young leaders to become comfortable with their new role? With no replacements for us during furlough they would have to. We hoped the Bible study materials produced would encourage

and direct them during our absence.

When we returned from furlough in 1976 we found a number of the Ifugao men doing an excellent job in leading church activities and outreach. They were ready for ordination. Traditional Ifugao villages are led by a number of part-time practitioners, so we followed that model for the churches. During our Saturday meetings with the teachers we discussed the appointment of church leaders. The Ifugao suggested we do it the traditional way, i.e., after much discussion we just point the finger ("lindeng mi") at the chosen individual. During the next four weeks I lead studies on church leadership, their duties and qualifications. We set July 3, 1977 as the date to appoint the first Ifugao church leaders.

As the day for appointment drew near my co-worker argued that six leaders should be appointed by ballot. After several hours of discussion, I left for home, unable to persuade him differently. The next morning when I returned for the service my co-worker informed me there would be no ballot. During the night one of the Ifugao leaders, who had heard about the voting proposal, convinced him this would conflict

with Ifugao culture.

On ordination Sunday, and after lengthy discussion, the believers chose six men to lead them. While I had deep reservations about one of those selected I was able to keep quiet. After I prayed for the newly appointed leaders, we all went to the river where they baptized a number of new Christians. Their duties as recognized leaders began immediately, and publicly. After the baptisms a celebration feast followed.

My public leadership role changed drastically with this ordination. From that time on the majority of my time was spent with the elected and potential leaders attending the Saturday meetings. I began to feel the isolation from public ministry as I took on the coaching role.

Discussion. My learning role intensified as I progressed in the Evangelism and Postevangelism Stages. In that Christianity is a way of life I had to learn about all aspects of Ifugao life. For example, how the Ifugao selects leaders; how their religion relates to death, harvest, and house construction; how to



conduct various types of meetings; how they learn. In some of these areas my training provided excellent direction. For example, my U.S. teachers encouraged us to train nationals immediately to take over every aspect of the ministry: evangelism, prayer, baptism, communion, and leadership. My teachers also taught me to provide a firm foundation for the gospel so that the good news becomes interpreted as Jesus' efforts to restore our broken relationship with God because of sin (supracultural need) not some other pressing need being met, such as health or protection from spirits (felt needs).

My training also had some shortcomings, among which were the lack of tools to communicate an accurate gospel so that the hearers could communicate it effectively to others. Without exposure to principles of cross-cultural education, I never questioned a topical teaching approach for the Ifugao. What is the best teaching approach for concrete relational thinkers (approximately 70 percent of the world)? Can they reproduce what they hear? If they can not, evangelism, and more importantly, Ifugao evangelists, will be stifled.

My training also failed me in the area of curriculum development, even though this became one of my first tasks upon gaining fluency in the dialect. Should the oral and print mediums be integrated? How shall I train national writers? What curricula should be produced? Who decides this? How should this material be disseminated? Do I need an overall teaching curricula that builds upon a solid foundation for the gospel? I was left on my own to find the answers to these questions.

The idea of biblical functional substitutes was also foreign to me. Forced to discover for myself, I struggled to discern biblical issues from cultural issues. I remember no models being presented during my training in this vital area of church development.

Directed training in a team approach to ministry proved to be another weak area of my training. While in the case of ordaining Ifugao leaders, my co-worker and myself worked out the situation without conflict, not all situations went as smoothly. The impact of differing expectations and ministry philosophies was never discussed as possible sources of

conflict prior to forming our partnership. If I did not understand the process of team development within my own culture, how could I be expected to effectively train national teams to replace us?

## **From "Quarterback" To "Coach"**

Periodically during our first term I took the role of a coach or resident advisor so that the Ifugao could stretch their gifts and skills. They did quite well.

By 1978, six years after entering the Ifugao community, I became a full-time coach, pacing the sideline as I observed the Ifugao believers create their own church history. When the Ifugao played well, I liked to coach. But when the Ifugao did not play well I wanted to suit up and bench the quarterback so I could replace him. But whether the team played poorly or well, it was hard and lonely remaining on the sideline. It always seemed so much easier and faster to just do it myself and in my way.

The Ifugao leaders had advanced from accompanying me, to participating with me, to leading effectively, to training others, without much outside assistance. While we continued the leadership meetings on Saturday night I noticed on Sundays the teachers adding substantial material not covered Saturday night. They became confident in their teaching role. And the believers were accepting them.

When we left on trips the Ifugao continued teaching in our absence. They met on their own before Sunday, decided who would lead the service, and discussed the chapter or topic under study. Some became effective trainers of younger teachers, encouraging them to take small parts of the Sunday service.

In the area of outreach the Ifugao decided where to go and who would participate. They always tried to include young believers. The believers made all decisions concerning the collections, handled the ordinances of baptism and communion, oversaw all functional substitutes, mediated disputes, and continued to assist me in the development of curricula.

While I continued to receive requests to administer the ordinances, handle the Sunday services, or accompany them on evangelistic trips, I seldom participated in such activities. I did accompany them numerous times on evangelism trips to the north because my presence opened a door that was socially difficult for them to open. I became a lonely Resident Advisor.

During the construction of the church building in October 1977, I mistakenly returned to the quarterback role. The increase in the number of Ifugao believers called for a central meeting place, especially since rainy season was just around the corner. Since we could no longer fit under a house, I challenged the men to cut lumber before the arrival of rainy season. But dry season did not inspire the Ifugao to hurry to cut wood.

Rainy season arrived with only a few pieces of lumber sawed, consequently, we spent an uncomfortable wet season worshipping together. I let the leadership know what I thought about their delay, even though I knew the construction of an Ifugao home or granary may take a decade to complete.

Speaking for several of the leaders, one individual politely informed me to ease up, the church building would be built when the church was built. My goal orientation came through too strongly.

From 1978 -1979, I focused almost 100 percent of my time on equipping the Ifugao leaders so they could move beyond leading to become trainers. I encouraged evangelists to not only evangelize, but also develop evangelists.

When the leaders returned from the church plant in the south I would always ask how the trip went, how potential leaders for the church were developing, and what they personally learned from the trip. I encouraged them to include potential leaders in the activities whenever possible.

Because of the Ifugao's continual visits to the church in the south, the local leaders matured quickly. It was time for their ordination. This event took place in December 1980, following the pattern of the first ordination service. While I attended all the preparatory meetings for this event, they did not ask for my advice. Even though this is what we had prayed for for

years, it hurt nevertheless. The Ifugao no longer found necessary the advice of the "father of our faith", as they affectionately called me.

The two churches joined together to begin a church plant in the southwest in early 1978, and one in the north by June of the same year (completing our overall church planting strategy). The church plant to the north became the toughest but they never gave up, and today there are over 40 believers, having their own ordained leadership. They also began a church in a neighboring tribe in the southwest. In July 1989, the Ifugao informed me they planned to ordain a number of church leaders there. The number of Christian leaders continued to grow, developing as effective church leaders / planters, dependent upon the Holy Spirit rather than upon me.

We made a concerted effort to be out of the tribe for two to three week periods of time during our resident advisor role. This enabled the Christian leaders time to function without us. When we returned we spent considerable time answering questions that arose during our absence.

*While I attended all the preparatory meetings for this event, they did not ask for my advice. Even though this is what we had prayed for for years, it hurt nevertheless.*

Discussion. During this very difficult role change I came to realize several important things. The first had to do with the extreme difficulty I felt in releasing a national team to handle their own affairs. I had to work through my own reasons for being reluctant to release the Ifugao. I had to be willing to leave the quarterback uniform behind no matter what the score. I had to realize my stepping in to complete a ministry more quickly and efficiently did not really save time in the long run, nor did it contribute to the maturity of leaders. I had to realize they could lose games, but remain strong contenders in the league through the power of the Holy Spirit. Nevertheless, I was totally unprepared for this lonely role.

Secondly, I realized the importance of knowing my own leadership style preference and that of my Ifugao friends. What type of leadership style did I prefer? The Ifugao? When did they match? When did they conflict? What adaptations were necessary? Once I reached a coaching role in a certain



area, should I ever return to quarterbacking in the same? I needed some tools to answer these questions so that Ifugao leadership could be developed, capable of addressing all aspects of church life and multiplication.

## **From "Coach" To "General Manager",**

By mid-1978, due to the increased maturity of the Ifugao church leaders, and the planting of new churches, I discussed phasing out of the Ifugao ministry with our mission leaders. We felt our continued residence among the Ifugao fostered dependence on us rather than on the Holy Spirit. Our presence allowed the Ifugao to look to us for solutions, even though they could adequately solve the problem themselves. We were told to continue living among Ifugao for another year.

When the year passed I again discussed an itinerant role with our mission leadership. They sent the following prerequisites for departure: (1) the believers should stop serving rice wine or other intoxicating drinks; (2) the believers must be able to deal clearly with the cults in the area; (3)

establish a schedule for outreach; and (3) complete the curricula.

*I had to realize my stepping in to complete a ministry more quickly and efficiently did not really save time in the long run, nor did it contribute to the maturity of leaders.*

While not wishing to address the merits of the four prerequisites here, it became very apparent they defined leaving a people quite differently than we did. We began a continuing dialogue as to the appropriate time for church planters to phaseout of a church plant.

In May 1979, we moved out of the area to become itinerant advisors. During this time I divided my time equally between the Ifugao and service to other church planting teams. My work among the Ifugao called for periodical visits to see how things were going and conduct various seminars. During each of our visits, I repeatedly challenged them to think about developing new leaders. From these visits requests came for new curriculum. I worked on their requests when I returned home. Ifugao would visit us periodically to work on

the same. This role continued until we returned to the States in May 1986.

Regarding service to the mission, I spent most of my time consulting with other church planting teams working in Luzon, Palawan, and Mindanao. My travels eventually took me to Papua New Guinea, Thailand, and Indonesia. I later chaired a committee that provided direction and training of all the agency's church planting teams in the Philippines.

Discussion. Because the mission agency lacked a sharply honed definition of responsible phase-out, a lot of avoidable stress occurred between us. What are the necessary components of a definition of phase-out? Should only one church be planted in each people group? Should the expatriates plant churches in all key areas of a people group so that a church is geographically available to all? What are the roles of expatriate? Nationals? The mission agency? God's? Can expatriates begin phase-out in five years? Seven years? How does an agency create a phase-out mentality? How does it protect the family while providing legitimate part-time ministries for absent advisors?

## **From "Current General Manager" To "New General Manager"**

The church plants among the Antipolo / Amduntug Ifugao, from the Preevangelism Stage to Phase-out, spanned approximately seven years (1972 - 1979). During these seven years we resided outside the community around twenty-eight months. See Table 2 for specific dates.

Phase-out began in May 1979, with periodic visits continuing until our departure from the Philippines in 1986. In our Absent Advisor role we have maintained our relationship through written correspondence, pictures, and personal visits in 1989 and 1993. It took a total of 14 years to plant the three churches within the tribe, providing a church within walking distance for the total population. Presently there are eight churches.

My visits to Ifugao in 1989 and 1993 highlighted three areas in relation to phase-out. The first was the necessity of repeating the basic truths of Christianity. After years in the Absent Advisor role, the Ifugao continued to ask the same

questions they asked during my Itinerant Advisor period. One reason for this was the impressive work of the Ifunao believers as evangelists. When a number of new believers met with us, the veterans asked questions for the benefit of someone in the audience (Ifugao custom). I concluded phase-out calls for continuous repetition of the basics of Christianity by a respected teacher.

Another area that caught my attention was the Ifugao Christians' desire for consistent contact with itinerant church leaders from outside their dialect. While this is no longer possible for me, this need can be met in several ways. One is through the Association of Evangelical Churches of Ifugao. Leaders from the association visit the different areas several times a year. Another way is to have mission agencies working in the area include them as guests and/or speakers in seminars and conferences. The Ifugao believers desire continual association with believers from outside their territorial boundaries.

A final area that impressed me was the renewed spiritual motivation stimulated by a set of pictures for the Gospel / Acts

curriculum which I presented to the three churches. The periodical introduction of new materials during phase-out may be instrumental in rejuvenating spiritual motivation (as it did during the Postevangelism Stage). New materials introduced over time may play a major role in rekindling local believers. It also makes it possible to address second generation needs.

Discussion. Perhaps most crucial to the Absent Advisor role is the agency's need to provide new ministry opportunities that will challenge seasoned team members. Without such a challenge the veterans are likely to become attrition statistics. How should agencies utilize the gifts and skills of veteran church planters? What specialized training should individuals receive to enhance their abilities? What arrangements can be made that would allow veterans to visit the churches they helped flourish? Phase-out oriented mission agencies should do all they can to retain their tested veterans by offering them ministries that challenge their gifts and skills.

## Conclusion

Responsible phase-out oriented church planters pass through a number of role changes. These transitions call for relinquishing one's own power so that others are empowered to mature in character and ministry skills. Such role changes facilitates the church planting cycle in that local leaders are encouraged to mature under the power of the Holy Spirit.

***Church planters must be willing to die to self-serving ambitions so that national believers can live up to their full potential.***

But these role changes come with a high price, as evidenced by my own experiences. Role changes call for cuffing the umbilical cord. They call for separation of the parents from the maturing adolescents so that one day the two can meet as peers. It is only natural for the team members who helped birth the various ministries to want to continue controlling them. But this approach cripples the development of young believers. Church planters must be willing to die to self-serving ambitions so that national believers can live up to

their full potential. They must be willing to move beyond phase-in to phase-out. This requires a certain type of individual.

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# The Man God Uses in Church Planting

Roger N. McNamara, Editor

*A Practical Guide to Church Planting*, pp11-16

God can use anyone to establish a new church, but there are certain characteristics which stand out in the lives of those He does use for this purpose. Each church planter has strengths and weaknesses which will determine his effectiveness.

- A church planter needs to be spiritually mature.

This obviously requires a personal relationship with Jesus Christ and the assurance of salvation. If you are unsure of your own salvation, you will have a difficult time convincing others to accept the Savior you yourself have not fully trusted.

Spiritual maturity is the result of studying and applying God's Word to your life. There must be a time of daily communion with Christ which nourishes and strengthens you and your family. Set aside time each day for personal and

family devotions. Without this time of Bible study and prayer, you will be powerless and frustrated.

Maturity will express itself in a number of ways in your life. You will have firmly held beliefs which you are able to communicate to others; you will have learned to look to God for your financial, family and ministry-related needs; you will be confident God is leading you to start the new church. Through faith you envision God's raising up a new congregation through you and are willing to go wherever He leads. You will not be easily discouraged by slow progress or the prospect of failure.

Having set your hand to the plow, you must not look back and wonder if you have made a mistake. Rather, keep your eye on the goal and press forward in the place of God's choosing.

God is just as big as you allow Him to be. You will find that He will bless your efforts in direct proportion to your expectations. If you expect God to do little through you, God will do little. But if you look to God for great things, He honors your faith and does as you expect (Matthew 9:29).

- A church planter needs to be a soul winner.

You must be motivated by love and compassion for those without Christ and seek to win them to the Savior. The ability to win people to Christ is essential to the church planter's ministry. If you do not win people, you will never build a church or train others to win souls.

A burden and vision for reaching people with the gospel will stimulate you to spend hours witnessing in the community you hope to reach. Initially, you should spend the majority of your time soul winning. A minimum of twenty-five to thirty hours a week should be dedicated to this pursuit in the early stages of the church-planting process. After the church is established, time must still be reserved for soul winning if you hope to see continued growth and your people becoming soul winners. After all, soul winning is not taught, it's caught.

- A church planter needs to be a lover of people

The world in which we live is filled with people who are lonely, unhappy and without a friend. They can be hostile, they

may be repulsive, they may not want anything to do with a church. But they can be reached with the gospel if you simply love them. People want to be loved and they will respond to it.

As a church planter, you must learn to express love to people. Go out of your way to be friendly. Wave to folks, speak to your neighbors. Offer a helping hand when you see someone in need. Love is not expressed in words, but in deeds. People will not believe you, until you show them in a tangible way that you really love them just as they are.

If you love people, they will listen to what you have to say and will respond to it. As D.L. Moody once said: "You catch more flies with honey than with vinegar

- A church planter needs to be a leader.

Be a self-starter. Don't wait for others to tell you what to do. Produce the ideas, plans and programs and then motivate people to become involved. Willingly accept the spiritual and administrative oversight of the flock. Since God has led you to establish a new church, exercise the leadership necessary to

ensure its success. The church will go only as far as you lead it.

As the spiritual leader of the church, set the standard through your words, deeds, dress and attitude. You cannot demand that others do what you are unwilling to do. You must set the example for them to follow.

This does not mean you do everything for the people. Your Biblical role is not to do all the work yourself. but to prepare the people to do the work of the ministry (Ephesians 4:11). Leadership involves delegating responsibility. Refrain from doing anything the people are able to do for themselves. If capable helpers are not available, train them. This is part of your "equipping" ministry. Initially you may have to do many things yourself, but plan to turn that work over to someone else as soon as possible. When delegating responsibility for a job, also grant the authority and freedom to fulfill the task.

Inspect what you delegate. Inform workers that you will be meeting with them at regular intervals to review progress and

to make plans for the future. This time of accounting will develop responsible leaders among your people.

- A church planter needs to be a disciplined person.

The man who gets a lot done, gets it done because he plans to. He plans his work and then works his plan. He has definite goals. He concentrates his time and efforts on reaching them. Employment, education and ecclesiastical responsibilities are not allowed to divert him. His goal is the development of a new church. By setting daily, weekly, monthly and annual objectives, he is able to keep this goal in sight.

To achieve your goal, keep your priorities in order. Many church planters find it helpful to make a list of things to do each day, arranging them in order of importance. Begin with the first thing on the list, sticking with it until finished. Then move on to each succeeding item on the list. Anything left over at the end of the day is added to the next day's list. Not only does this help keep your priorities in order, but enables you to accomplish more than would otherwise be possible.

The church planter must control his time. Since you punch no time clock, it is easy to waste time. You must guard against sleeping late, puttering around the house or spending too much time watching sports or television. It is easy to spend an hour chatting with a fellow pastor or listening to "Aunt Matilda's" latest aches and pains.

- A church planter needs to be flexible.

Flexibility implies the courage to change, to discard that which does not work and replace it with something better. It may be necessary to meet in a variety of locations under less than ideal circumstances. The janitor may not show up to unlock the school door, a teacher may be absent or roads will be impassable due to a snowstorm. The church planter must be able to adjust and go on. You must improvise, using whatever and whoever is available.

Being flexible enables you as a church planter to work with people who are different from you. Not everyone is used to doing things your way. You may have to adjust to people from different cultures, with different languages and lifestyles. In

spite of all your planning and discipline, there will be times when things will not go as expected. If you love people and can make the necessary adjustments, you will find it much easier to develop the church.

- A church planter needs to be financially responsible.

Before starting a church, eliminate any outstanding debts. Raise adequate financial backing so you can give full time to the work. This will eliminate much frustration.

Live within your means, do not incur debts you cannot pay or that place you in a financial bind. It is important to maintain a good credit rating in the community. You can establish credit with local banks by taking out small loans and repaying them. Larger loans are then more readily available when you have a good name and good credit. Do not "poor mouth" or complain about financial difficulties to your people. Instead set an example of trusting God for your needs.

Knowledge of bookkeeping and budgeting procedures is extremely helpful. This is especially true in the early days of



the church when you may have to set up the church books and make many of the financial decisions yourself. The ability to keep accurate records, establish a workable budget and properly manage the church's finances will instill confidence in your leadership while eliminating many of the false concepts people have about church finances.

- A church planter needs to be a family man.

The Bible places great emphasis on the church planter's family. A man who has been divorced or who cannot control his children is unqualified to pastor a church, much less start one (I Timothy 3:2,3).

It is important your wife and children understand and support your efforts to start a new church. Otherwise, you will find your ministry undermined by those at home as resentment and bitterness grow.

God does not expect a man to sacrifice his family to build a church. You must not become so busy tending the "vineyards" of others that you neglect your own. Take your wife out to

lunch or go shopping with her. A "family night" will provide time to play with the children or go places with them. Be careful not to cancel family plans, except in cases of genuine emergency. Even then, reschedule the time with your family as soon as possible. A man who cares more for his church than his family is in danger of losing both.

The church planter must provide for the spiritual needs of his family. It is not enough for them to attend the services. God holds you responsible as the spiritual head of the home. As such, you must take the responsibility of leading your family in daily devotions. This should not be pushed off onto your wife. The spiritual vitality of your home is important to your success as a church planter. A strong home will produce a strong church.

- A church planter needs to be educated and experienced.

God does not place a premium on ignorance. Your education will affect your ministry. The more tools you are able to place at the Holy Spirits disposal, the more effective you will be.

Regardless of your education, you should be well versed in three areas: the Scriptures, methods of church planting and growth methods, and the culture of the people among whom you will be working. Keep abreast of current trends and developments in church planting through the many publications and seminars available to you.

Pastoral experience is highly recommended for anyone who plans to be a church planter. It is important to understand the inner workings of a church and how to develop lay leadership. Spend two or three years as a pastor or working in an established church before you try to establish a new one. Better yet, work with an experienced church planter and learn from him. This is not lost time, it is time invested that will pay rich dividends. The experience gained will enable you to avoid many mistakes, much frustration and possible failure.

If God has led you to plant a new church, you will experience an inner peace in doing so. This does not mean there will not be times of discouragement. There will be. But if God has called you, He has equipped you for a special ministry and will use you as you yield yourself to the Spirit's control. Your

positive attitude will help your family be happy in their new surroundings and will go a long way toward inspiring people to follow your leadership.

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# ACCORDING TO THE RULE

By Timothy Starr

*Church Planting, Always in Season p. 13-23*

A prominent evangelist came to Toronto, Canada. Within a few years he had built up a congregation of about 1700 people. Resigning his pastorate to return to school, he remarked to a fellow pastor: "I am fearful that I am leaving behind a crowd but not a church." There is a difference!

It is not hard to draw a crowd. Many have tried it with success. You may feed them doughnuts. You may treat them to fried chicken. You may even have the world's largest banana split. Do this week after week and you will soon have a crowd. But what happens when the feeding stops?

There is truth to the expression that how a movement starts it will probably end. Although this does not apply to every church it certainly should be given serious consideration.

Jesus Christ mentioned about building on a rock in Matthew 7:25. Too many build upon the quick sands of expediency. A church needs the right foundation if it is going to stand the test of time.

The first thing in building a church is to understand what it is. This leads us to seek out the definition of a church. What is the first thought that comes to your mind when you hear the word church? Pews? Organ? Pulpit? Those who respond with a similar answer are thinking in terms of a visible building. Actually the word church in the Greek is ECCLESIA. It is found 115 times in the New Testament. The vast majority of the references are to a local assembly of believers in Jesus Christ. Buildings and equipment are secondary. They do not have any bearing on the meaning of a church.

Many definitions have been given for a church. One of the best is that of Dr. Elmer Towns: "A church is an assembly of baptized believers, in whom Christ dwells, under the discipline of the Word of God, organized for evangelism, education, fellowship and worship; administering the ordinances and reflecting the spiritual gifts (73:157)." This definition covers

four important truths in the perspective of a church. Follow these and you will build "According to the rule".

## I. The Authority of the Word of God

This is primary in the New Testament. The church is seen as a type in the Old Testament. Our Lord promised He would build His church (Matt. 16:18). The actual birth of the church took place on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:41-47). The Epistles furnish the doctrine and order for churches (I Tim. 3:14, 15). The Book of Revelation reveals the culmination.

The implications of building a church according to the New Testament are far reaching. It means that you look to the New Testament for guidance as to the organization and procedure. It means that those who unite with such a church are recognizing the moral and ethical teaching of the New Testament and are willing to subject themselves to the discipline of a local church (Gal. 6: 1).

Following the New Testament teaching saves the church members many problems. Take for an example the

qualifications for a pastor. Can a pastor be a divorced man? Several denominations have debated this in the past five years. The New Testament speaks of the pastor and marriage and answers this question in I Tim. 3:1-7.

## II. The Assembly of Believers

Many churches have a mixed membership of both saved and unsaved people. This comes about through carelessness or through rushing people into membership. The description of the Karen Church in Burma is a fine example of how one church went about the manner of receiving members:

*Does anyone get the idea that church membership was easy to come by in these early days? We need only to pay attention to the requirements made. Each candidate was expected to give evidence of a new life in Christ that would satisfy the Karen Church itself. In its decision its vote had to be unanimous. Once his language was reduced to writing the candidate had to know how to read. He had to abstain from liquor, a common weakness of the Karens and had to promise to follow the morality revealed in the Bible. Exclusion from the*



*church for such as did not keep the faith was not a rare occurrence.*

*The above shows the type of requirements followed by the Karen Church of Burma in the early days under the ministry of Adoniram Judson and George Boardman (13:77,78).*

You may recognize that some of the requirements are not New Testament, such as the ability to read. However, there is a sense in which the Karen Church sought to maintain a membership of believers. It is interesting to note that this church experienced

excellent growth. After all that is said and done, it is His church, and God's work done in God's way is going to have the favour of God.

### III. The Administration of the Ordinances

To multitudes of church people there is a mysterious aspect of salvation attached to baptism and the Lord's Supper. Actually, these were given to believers and have no saving

merit. It is better to refer to them as "ordinances in place of the commonly used word "sacrament". Dr. Gordon J. Johnson has rightly said:

*Many churches use the term 'sacrament' in place of ordinance. We as Baptists do not. We use the term 'ordinance' because these are actually outward rites symbolizing inner spiritual experiences 'ordained' by the Lord Himself. The words 'sacrament', as it is used by other groups, indicates that God does something to the individual who participates no matter what his spiritual condition may be. We as Baptists believe the ordinances bring blessing in response to faith and obedience to the Lords command (45:39).*

Baptism is the initial ordinance for believers. It naturally follows conversion. It is an outward sign of that which has taken place within the heart. It might be likened to photography. Snap your picture, the image is transferred to the film. This is conversion. When the picture is developed you see what has taken place. This is baptism.

Although there are three methods commonly used to baptize today: pouring, sprinkling and immersion, only the latter portrays Romans 6:1-6. Historian Kohannes talks about the early meaning of baptism and quotes Professor A. Deissmann:

*The earliest generations of Christians were easily able to understand the mystical significance of the separate stages of baptism as becoming dead, buried, and risen with Christ, because having been baptized as adults they had an indestructible living recollection of their baptism performed by immersion (78:27).*

The word baptize is in Greek, BAPTIZO, which means to dip, immerse, submerge or overwhelm. Baptizing believers by immersion is following the New Testament pattern and as such is the only method acceptable.

The question has been often asked if there should be a waiting period before a believer is baptized. Edwin Anderson gives a fine answer.

*Baptism is the first command of Christ to the new-born believer. No other obligation stands between conversion and baptism. That is why converts in the New Testament were baptized immediately after they accepted Christ, and before they partook of the Lord's Supper. As good soldiers of the Lord, they did not hesitate to put on His uniform. Faithful pastors and evangelists ought to keep their congregation always informed as to the prerequisites, meanings, and obligations of baptism so that their converts will be prepared at the time of conversion for the ordinance. Then lengthy waiting periods of instruction will not be needed (2:56).*

Should a person be baptized? Yes, if the individual was not immersed as a believer. One of my classmates at the Northern Baptist Theological Seminary, Chicago, Freeman Schmidt, accepted a call to his first church. He was planning his first baptismal service. He thought back to his own experience of baptism. He recalled how as a boy he responded to an invitation along with several others in his Sunday School class. He remembered how several years later he realized that he had not been born again. During a series of special meetings he came to a realization of his need and confessed Jesus Christ

as His Saviour. It occurred to him that he was going to baptize believers although he himself had not been immersed as a believer. The following Sunday, before baptizing others, he himself after giving a word of testimony, was baptized by a guest pastor. You can imagine the spiritual impact of the service.

Many pastors have been faced with the following problem. A fine Christian presents himself for membership. He explains that, after conversion, he was baptized by pouring or sprinkling. That is to say, he submitted to a form of baptism as a public confession of his faith in Jesus Christ. Before receiving him into membership, we would have the individual immersed. That is being consistent with the New Testament. We cannot accept any other form of baptism if the New Testament is going to be our guide.

Why do we not recognize pouring or sprinkling? There are several reasons. These modes of baptism are not biblical. They do not carry out the symbol of believer's baptism (Romans 6:3,4). They do not represent the way our Lord was baptized (Matthew 3:13-17). They do not represent the method used in

the Book of Acts (Acts 8:38,39).

While baptism by immersion is the initial ordinance to be administered once for each believer, the Lord's Supper is the recurring ordinance. It is carried on by the local church. It is for believers who are walking in obedience to Jesus Christ and in Christian fellowship. This is why Paul calls for personal examination before the Lord's Supper (I Cor. 11: 28). Thus it has nothing to do with bringing us salvation. It has much to do with our personal walk before God and fellow believers.

How often should a church observe the Lord's Supper? The New Testament does not lay down a set formula. However, it gives the spirit of the service (I Cor. 11:26). The question is not the number of times but the manner and spirit with which we partake of the elements.

The bread reminds us of His body given for us. The cup is a symbol of His blood, shed on the cross, for the remission of our sins. Jesus Christ has given wholly of Himself for our salvation. He held nothing back.

Andrew Murray in commenting on the passage: "Take eat; this is my body which is given for you (Luke 22:9)" says:

*When the Lord says, this, He points out to us that His body is not so much His as it is ours, since He received it and suffered it to be broken on the cross, not for His own sake, but for ours; and that He now also desires that we should look upon it and appropriate it as our own possession. Thus, with His body, He gives Himself to us, and desires that we should take Him. The fellowship of the Lord's Supper is a fellowship of giving and taking. Blessed giving, blessed taking (54.61).*

Charles H. Spurgeon has given real significance to the table of our Lord with the verses of his hymn:

**Amidst us our Beloved stands,  
And bids us view His pierced hands;  
Points to the wounded feet and side,  
Blest emblem of the crucified.  
What food luxurious loads the board,  
When, at His table, sits the Lord!  
The wine how rich, the bread how sweet,**

**When Jesus deigns the guests to meet!  
If now, with eyes defiled and dim,  
We see the signs, but see not Him;  
O, now His love the scales displace,  
And bid us see Him face to face!  
Thou glorious Bridegroom of our hearts,  
Thy present smile a heaven Imparts!  
O, lift the veil, If veil there be,  
Let every saint Thy glory see.**

#### IV. The Association of Believers

This aspect of a New Testament Church involves the whole field of interpersonal relationships and world evangelization.

The theme of the Epistle to the Philippians is fellowship in action. Paul describes two types of fellowship: negative and positive. Negative fellowship ought not to be a part of a local church. An illustration of a negative fellowship is given in Phil. 4:2. It would appear that Euodia and Syntyche were not in accord, though both were active in the church. "I beseech Euodia, and beseech Syntyche." They were so far apart that



the Apostle Paul used a verb. Many times this type of negative relationship has hindered the work of a local church.

A positive type of fellowship is illustrated in Phil. 2:19. J.B. Phillips has given the following on this verse: "But I hope in the Lord Jesus that it will not be long before I can send Timothy to you. . . I have nobody else with a genuine interest in your wellbeing." What a commentary on the life of a fellow believer! Actually, this is what the local church is for; - believers reinforcing believers; each believer ministering to his brethren.

A church must likewise have a vision of the harvest field. Acts 1:8 gives the perspective for missions, at home and abroad. It has been well stated that "The light that shines farthest shines brightest nearest home." A church without a vision will soon have no mission. Dr. Medford Jones has phrased it well:

*There is a possibility that the classical great commissions have served, in a sense, to be self-defeating. Few people seem to get excited over 'going into all of the world'. This is because*

*the grand commission is difficult to emotionalize and grasp by the individual 'work-a-day' member of the church. However, the great commission can become very real and very significant to any member of the church when it is translated into terms of local church growth and church multiplication. Paul's ministry illustrated this. Any one can understand how the growth of church "A" in locality "D" is actually accomplishing God's purpose. . . thus God purposed from the very beginning that local churches are to be His means of discipling the nations. Let us face the fact, that, if discipling is done, it will be done at the level of the local congregation. The church is Gods primary strategic weapon. Every church from its beginning should be focused toward outreach and self-reproduction (100:4,5).*

Now it is one thing to know the "rule" but another thing to follow it. Some pastors are timid to declare it from the beginning. Pastor George Bell of Oakwood Baptist Church, Toronto, Canada, in his church planting course at Central Baptist Seminary, tells his students:: "Some church planters, in the interests of short-term gains, try a non-denominational approach. The compromise required sets like cement and when

eventually a biblical position is taken, the work suffers a serious set-back."

## **An Example of a Church Planter with a Right Perspective**

Dr. Jack H. Watt is a prime example of a church planter with the right perspective. He moved to the City of Windsor in 1944. The war clouds were still hanging over the world although the Allies were well on their way to a total victory. The City of Windsor was bursting at its seams geared up for the national war effort. Hundreds of new homes had been erected to house the war plant workers. The auto industry and related shops were dedicated to winning the war.

Three small churches had come together to form the Campbell Baptist Church. Total membership was forty. Almost half of these were children. It was a challenge. Knowing the perspective of a New Testament Church, Jack Watt set out to establish the same to the glory of God.

His first step was to organize the Sunday School. He put to work all who could possibly teach a class. The young people

were organized with programs that challenged them to serve the Lord and live for Him.

He next set up a visitation program. At first it included just two, Jack and his wife. They started knocking on doors and following up prospects. Others saw their example and joined them in the task. Soon, men and women and youth from different social strata were visiting throughout the community.

A new building was soon needed. The 200 seats had been filled and extra chairs were used in the aisles. Enthusiasm was running high, but there was no money for a building.

Attending a board meeting in Toronto, Jack Watt was inspired by advice given to another brother: "You can do anything You want to do if God is leading you to do it." The task seemed small from that day onward. The people approved plans for a building.

Property was, purchased. Financing was prepared by arranging a first mortgage bond issue. The Lord performed miracles and

the church got all that was needed.

Attendances in the new building rose. Soon the church had to begin thinking of extra space. The building now had 600 seats in the auditorium with extra rooms on the first and second floors besides a full basement. All possible areas were overflowing. A record attendance of 1,141 was registered in the Sunday School. The key to such growth was the Pastor's Adult Bible Class which regularly had between 350 and 400 in attendance.

The church recognized the necessity of getting more room or losing a lot of children as well as adults. A legion hall across the street was rented. Here the Junior Department met with 175 in attendance. Later a gas station next door to the church was secured for a parking lot. This was followed by the purchase of an eight family apartment building. This became a Christian Education building. Soon the church filled it too!

What are some of the results of such a growth? Some 700 to 800 were baptized during the ministry of Jack Watt at Campbell Baptist Church. Others were called into the ministry.

Mrs. Linda Watson is serving in Japan under the Foreign Board of the Fellowship of Evangelical Baptist Churches in Canada. Rev. John Turanksy is an Instructor in Christian Education and Practical Ministries at the Western Conservative Baptist Seminary, Portland, Oregon. Miss Emily Turanksy is Dean of Women and Professor of Religious Education at Central Baptist Seminary, Toronto, Canada. Rev. Robert Baker is pastor of the Harriston Baptist Church, Harriston, Ontario. These and others are in active service.

This type of ministry results from the blessing of God upon a pastor who builds "According to the Rule". Jack Watt, responding to the question, What is a church? replied:

*A New Testament church according to the Scriptures, is a body of believers who have been immersed (baptized) and who have voluntarily banded themselves together to worship the Lord, to observe the two New Testament ordinances of baptism and the Lords Supper and to carry out, as the Holy Spirit enables them, the injunctions of the great commission.*

*Please note, they are believers. Through faith in Christ they have been made new creatures in Him. In their being baptized they have given witness to their position in Christ, dead to sin and alive unto God.*

*Note further, they have banded together. This, voluntarily and by agreement, and have made themselves a responsible body for the tasks outlined.*

This led to a second question dealing with authority. To this Jack Watt said: "There is no authority recognized by the members of a Baptist Church except the Headship of Christ. He is the great Head of the Church. We recognize the Holy Spirit as the Administrator, for He guides each one and fills each one for the tasks assigned."

In dealing with a basic organization, he says: "Once a church has been brought into being by the voluntary banding together of some baptized believers, an organizational structure should be agreed upon for the initial period of the church's existence and ministry."

The two main officers of a local church are spelled out in I Tim. 3. The opening seven verses deal with the role of a pastor. It is helpful to note the description of a pastor and his role, according to Jack Watt, from his study of the Word

*Scripturally the pastor is the undershepherd of the flock. He is responsible for caring for them in their spiritual lives. His task involves feeding the flock with the Word, that they may grow thereby. He should see to their training in spiritual things.*

*The pastor is a leader and should know the way God would have His people go and lead them in it. He should not abdicate this responsibility to any other.*

*The pastor is not a driver. The people should follow readily where he leads, if indeed it is apparent he is in the will of God. To attempt to drive them without going before is to ask for trouble.*

*The pastor should lead all business meetings of the church and see to it that all things are done decently and in order.*



Taking up the role of deacons, Jack Watt suggests:

*A deacon is planned by the great Head of the Church to be a help at all times to the pastor. His assistance to the pastor is invaluable if they work together in their God-given task.*

*Deacons will help in visitation of the sick and needy. They can and should be soul winners who visit the homes of prospects for salvation and point those prospects to Jesus Christ. They should bring forward, at the invitation, any they have led to the Lord and introduce them to the pastor. The deacons of the church sitting as an advisory council to the pastor can make their service a source of strength and comfort to him.*

Churches differ as to the method used in welcoming new members into their fellowship. Jack Watt suggests the following:

*It is the accepted custom to have every prospective new member interviewed by a deacon or two or by all together. This is satisfactory in many cases but it is not necessarily the Scriptural method.*

*The pastor should satisfy himself that the candidate for baptism and/or membership is truly born again before he baptizes that one or recommends him to the church for membership. This should be so, even though deacons or others have interviewed him. If the pastor has been in his task long enough to have gained the confidence of people they are often quite willing to accept his recommendation alone. A born again baptized believer who has moved into the area from a New Testament church may be received into membership by giving the pastor or deacons the story of his/her conversion and Christian experience. On this the individual may be recommended for membership.*

*A baptized believer may ask the church to write for a letter of recommendation and dismissal from his former Baptist Church and thus be received.*

God is honouring pastors who are near to His heart and precious in His sight. My first pastor, Dr. T. T. Shie1ds, for many years, pastor of the historic Jarvis Street Baptist Church, Toronto, has given an excellent description of the church of God:

*The church of God may be described as the Lord's masterpiece in which He delights to display His greatest skill. 'The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth His handy work.' The whole universe is the work of His fingers. He has ordained the things that are. And yet of all the things that God has made that which is nearest to His heart, and upon which He has displayed His greatest skill, is His own church (95).*

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# Conclusions about the Will of God

By Charles Brock

*Indigenous Church Planting A Practical Journey p. 20*

- 1.The greatest joy and contentment are found in the center of God's will.
- 2.The safest place on earth is the center of God's will.
- 3.Our children will always be under God's watch care if we, the parents, are in His will.
- 4.God will not call us to do anything for which He will not give sufficient strength.
- 5.Life is too short and eternity too long to live for self
- 6.My wife realized a joy from sharing in our sons' education that she would never have known had we stayed in the

States. In the task God made her more than able, even to the point of enjoying it.

7. Only the continuing, clear call of God would keep us on the mission field.

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# Our Motivation for starting churches

By Charles Brock

*Indigenous Church Planting A Practical Journey pp 22-27*

We have the necessary tools-all the tools Paul had-to plant big and little churches, both rural and urban. May our faith propel us to lose ourselves in getting the job done. We do not have time for the frustration of getting involved with denominational political bureaucracy and infighting. The hour is urgent; men are lost; our time at the task is as fleeting as the dew at sunrise. Through God's grace we have the Word and the Holy Spirit. What more could we want? Our only viable option is to be confident and courageous in spreading His Kingdom through the birth of new churches. Tomorrow is ours because we are His. Let's begin the journey now.

1. Motivation comes from knowing where and how one fits into a winning team.

2. Motivation comes from knowing that people without Christ are eternally lost.
3. Motivation comes from knowing God's Word is sharp enough to do the job.
4. Motivation comes from knowing that the Holy Spirit is more than theory.
5. Motivation comes from knowing that one is called by God.

## **Index**

# Qualifications For Success

By Grant G. Rice

*Church Planting Primer*, pp 13-19

"Church Planting" is the magic word today. We read it in school catalogs, missionary literature, and frequently in various publications. It is evident that church planting is being done, for which we should rejoice and praise the Lord.

While it is true that many new churches are being planted, it is also a fact that the "failure rate" is much higher that it should be. We ask the question, "why?"

There are many reasons, but one very obvious one is that some men are not qualified. There are eleven very basic qualifications needed for success in church planting.

1. BE ABSOLUTELY CERTAIN THAT THIS IS THE WILL OF GOD FOR YOU!



Psalms 37:23 tells us "The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord. " Every decision we make is important, but new church work is so difficult and beset with so many problem situations, a decision to start a new church must be made only after prayer and careful consideration.

## 2. MAKE CERTAIN YOU ARE WILLING TO BE A LEADER!

To start and pastor a new church successfully, you need to have proven leadership ability and be willing to be in the place of leadership always and in every situation. In the local church the pastor is the shepherd of the sheep. The sheep are not expected to lead, but to follow. Pastors often complain their members do not move out in visitation, finances, and other areas, but it is not up to the people to "move out" ... they are to follow a competent and proven leader.

It requires physical ambition to plan carefully so that your leadership is wise. It requires mature faith to lead people into that which seems to be impossible. It takes common sense to lead in such a way that people will follow you a second time.

People may follow you up an alley once, but the second time you will go by yourself.

### 3. BE PREPARED TO SACRIFICE!

If you have not learned to handle money and have never practiced sacrificial living, it would seem doubtful that you would be successful in starting and pastoring a new church. The first few months in a new church will be a financial struggle and you could not afford to have debts and monthly payments.

You will have to know, or learn, how to pray in money for every area of the new work. To look to some church or person for your finances is not faith and will hurt the new church you are starting. Sacrificial living is not popular today, but it is a **MUST** in new church work.

Learn to eat simple foods and stay on a fixed budget. Shop carefully, taking advantage of sales, day old bread, thrift shops, cut rate gas, etc. Be willing to use second hand furniture and get by with what you have for the first year. An

older model car will do for the first year for your visitation because you will be wise to spend at least the first year staying home and engaging in extensive house to house soul winning. Walk or ride a bike wherever you can. Take a vacation before you start a new church and forget about another one for a couple of years.

#### 4. NEVER GIVE UP!

If you are prone to give up, new church work is not for you! Once you put your hand to the plow, you can't even look back, let alone think of quitting. Starting and pastoring a church is a lifetime proposition.

Naturally, there will be trials, problems, and you may come close to starvation at times and be in financial straits. Every good thing in life is worth paying a price. It is unfair and dishonest to encourage and lead a group of people to organize a new church and then "run out", using the excuse that you have accomplished what you could and have been "led of the Lord" to go somewhere else.

Don't allow yourself to be lazy. Plan carefully and balance your time. Study and pray at night. Visit at least five days a week ... eight to ten hours a day! Forget about your "day off" and don't fall into the snare of "going to meetings." Quarantine yourself to your idea for at least the first year and determine to redeem the time.

## 5. KNOW HOW TO ORGANIZE AND TRAIN, INSPIRE AND PUT PEOPLE TO WORK!

A. ORGANIZE: A local church has to be organized and it should be done according to New Testament principles. Learn these and be careful to be thorough in them. Don't follow traditional organizers. Train people carefully so they will know how to elect men for deacons. Don't have a haphazard Sunday school. Plan and organize it thoroughly. It takes an organized morning and evening service. Do not be guilty of using the excuse, "I do not want to be formal." Be sure the hymns have been prayerfully selected by Thursday. Plan music a month at a time, have them practice thoroughly and know what they are going to sing. Be satisfied with what you have and train and encourage

them to be better. Put as many qualified men to work as possible through Scripture reading, prayer, offering, song leading, ushering, etc. Be sure they are notified during the week and take time to train them. Many of your men will have more ability than you, if properly trained.

B. **INSPIRE:** A leader knows how to inspire others. Trained people will have confidence. Encourage those who do a good job. Love them, pray for them, thank them and praise them for that which is done. A leader sets the example by what he does and how he does it. Be an example!

C. **PUT PEOPLE TO WORK:** Experience has proved that qualified, trained and inspired people like to work. Do not expect people to do work they do not understand, are not qualified for, have not had proper training, have not been inspired, and are not appreciated. In time, your people will be what you made them. Be honest and face your responsibility. Be careful about selfishness in not wanting to share the glory of a good job by effective teamwork. Common sense will tell that ten men can do more than one

man. God's program is the local church. In the local church God uses men. The pastor is the shepherd and leader. But strong and lasting local churches are built by having many good men working together.

## 6. BE A HOUSE TO HOUSE SOUL WINNER!

The pastor must set the example and train the members in the matter of soul winning. The local church is where believers are taught, encouraged, challenged, trained, inspired, and then put to work. The end result will be effective soul winners.

A wise pastor will plan Sunday School lessons, messages, and prayer meetings with a goal of having many effective soul winners. If you are going to depend upon your evangelistic preaching and special meetings to win souls, you will have a meager number won. If you have been called just to "preach" or be a "Bible teacher" your work is not that of starting and pastoring a new church.

## 7. UNDERSTAND THE IMPORTANCE OF FOLLOW-UP WORK!

It is foolish to think that you have finished the job when a person is saved or born again. Really, it is only the beginning. This person is just a spiritual baby. He needs to be baptized and taught carefully and thoroughly to observe all things (Matthew 28:19,20). This will require sacrificial giving of time, kindness, persevering spirit, a shepherd's love and patience. Churches are built one member at a time and if you have a strong church it will be because you understand the importance of and take the time to do effective follow-up work with each convert (John 15:16).

## 8. BE A PREACHER

God's program is the local church and the leader is the pastor. The scriptural pastor is a preacher. God's method to get his message out is through a preacher preaching. Study what the Bible says about preachers and preaching. Paul was not a Youth for Christ director. He did not spend his time with Child evangelism. He was not a youth worker, he was not a camp director. He did not spend his time in literature distribution. He

did not use a medical and hospital ministry. He did not have any deeper life conference grounds. He just simply preached the word publicly to win souls and then planted local churches for the believers. If you want members who are genuinely saved, have assurance, be Bible students, know how to pray, live separated lives, give generously and be soul winners ... be a preacher and preach the Word of God! Be careful about who else you let preach.

## 9. DEVELOP A PASTOR'S HEART!

Peter makes it clear that a pastor is a shepherd of sheep. (I Peter 5:1-4) You should know the difference between sheep, goats, lions, and bears. A shepherd's life is lonely and requires 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Sheep cannot think, so the shepherd must make every decision. A shepherd must be a trained dietician, understand the importance of water and where it is, be observant about enemies such as lions, bears, snakes, robbers, poison grasses, etc. A shepherd may have a trained dog, good staff, but he is not really going to put his confidence in these alone. You must love the sheep and they can tell if you do not. Your people must be the most wonderful



in the world. Some sheep need the discipline of a broken leg, but only in love. Know a goat when you see it and get rid of it.

## 10. COMMUNICATE WITH YOUR PEOPLE!

Informed people are happy and contented people, but uninformed people have questions which, if not answered, will lead to doubts and divisions. Buy a good typewriter, mimeograph machine and some supplies and keep, your people informed.

Weekly Bulletin. Be sure your excuse for not having a bulletin is not just plain laziness. A well planned, well written, and neatly produced bulletin can be the information sheet. It should include today's events; this weeks events; statistics such as attendance, finances, etc; coming events at least six months in advance; appreciation; etc. A thorough financial report will always increase the giving. Members are entitled to know how much money came in and exactly how it was spent.

## 11. PLANNING AS AN ADMINISTRATOR!

A good administrator knows how to plan day to day and also several years in advance. Plan in areas of Sunday school, youth work, visitation, special meetings, building projects and finances. Get competent counsel where it is needed and be certain that your plans are well thought through before you present them to the church for a final vote.

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# **The Overseas Church and Missionary Finance**

Melvin L. Hodges

The Indigenous Church and the Missionary pp. 54-60

The matter of church finance is closely related to the previous chapter on the missionaries' partnership with the national church. The case for a church which supports its own ministry and depends upon its own financial resources has been presented in detail in the author's books. (The Indigenous Church and Build My Church (Gospel Publishing House), and Growing Young Churches (Moody Press). Here we will merely summarize the dangers of depending on foreign funds and the benefits of self-support for the purpose of providing a proper background for decisions that must be made in the present situation.

## **IMPORTANCE OF SELF-SUPPORT**

The danger of depending on foreign support for salaries of pastors and the maintenance of the work may be itemized as follows:

There is a danger to the church itself. Sometimes instead of helping, subsidy often destroys the very principle that will produce a strong vital church. It has been amply demonstrated that for a church to depend upon foreign sources for its finances kills its initiative and deadens the sense of responsibility.

We might draw a comparison from those wild animals that have been found in time of infancy by nature-loving people and raised in the shelter of their home. The animal is deprived of the hardships of the struggle for existence, and if it must revert to its natural state, it may perish either from lack of sufficient food, or because it has not learned to defend itself against its natural enemies. Or, like the sea gulls of the Gulf coast that learned to depend upon the shrimp boats to provide them food from the refuse of the catch, they finally became so dependent upon the fishing fleet that when it was removed, the gulls did not know how to fend for themselves and perished. An old proverb says, "Give a man a fish and you help him for a day; teach him to fish and you help him for the rest of his life."

One has only to look at the strong indigenous evangelical churches in certain sections of the world to see a demonstration of the fact that churches do better when they learn to depend upon their own resources. In some cities missions are struggling with small congregations with mission-paid pastors, and the congregations have had their churches built for them with foreign funds. In those same cities, there are large congregations that in the midst of the same poverty, usually without foreign help from abroad, have built large church buildings and are carrying on a vital and rapidly expanding evangelistic program. Surely this should say something to us.

The second danger is to the worker himself. We develop when our faith is put to the test. Struggle and sacrifice have their part in the development of every man of God. God has His own way of maturing workers which is often thwarted when we supply artificial help from foreign funds. The worker learns to depend upon the mission instead of upon God. This is also a cause of deep conflicts between missionaries and national workers since rarely does the mission have enough funds at its disposal to actually pay the worker an adequate

salary. Tensions that are produced result in anti missionary feeling.

This brings us to another vital point. If the church in a given country is dependent upon mission funds, it goes without saying that the work cannot advance any further than the supply line will permit. The limit to expansion is imposed by the limitation of funds. This is an impossible situation for the Church of Jesus Christ. In this day when the nations of the world are demanding to exercise complete freedom from foreign domination, it is an anachronism for the church to be placed in a situation where the possibility of its advance is dictated by the amount of foreign funds available.

Also the subsidizing of a church by a foreign mission projects the public image of a foreign-dominated work. If the church is to grow, it must be seen as something that, by its inherent nature, can grow in any culture. Foreign missions support will project the opposite image. The Church is seen in such cases as the introduction of a foreign religion, and often related to imperial domination. No matter how earnestly and honestly the mission may desire that the church expand in its

own right, the fact that the money for the support of the church comes from the foreign mission carries with it the idea of control. The nationals realize that the mission could cut off its support at any time. The church does not have true freedom to make its own decisions when its very existence depends on foreign funds.

A somewhat subtle argument for foreign support of overseas churches has been brought forward and emphasized recently. The Church is one, it is said, and the Church in different areas has different needs. If one country needs personnel, then perhaps a teacher or an evangelist could be sent. The church that has such individuals should share them with the church that does not have them. In some countries the church has personnel but does not have the finances to support them. The church that has the finances should supply funds to the church that is lacking them. We cannot accept this argument without qualifications. To do so would be to overlook other important factors.

It is true that the Church is one and what is lacking in one area may be supplied from another part of the body. However,

we do violence to the concept of the responsibility of the members of the body of Christ if we interpret this to mean that certain members are thereby excused from doing what they rightfully should do. For example, the fact that one church in one country may have a good evangelist, and can supply an evangelistic ministry to another church, does not relieve the receiving church from evangelizing. It must still carry its own responsibility in soul winning. Likewise, the fact that one church may have more financial resources than another church does not mean that the poorer church is relieved of its responsibility of paying tithes and supporting its own minister. The generosity of one church should not be an excuse for another church to fail to fulfill its responsibilities. Louis King at the Green Lake Missions Executive Conference said, "No church can successfully assume another church's obligation to Biblical faith, life and mission" (Wagner 1972).

The benefits to a church that finds its own resources for its maintenance and expansion are thus evident. The church is likely to be more vital, more alive, and more responsible. Further, there is no limit to the amount of expansion that can be experienced. The minister can enjoy the freedom of



exercising faith in God for his support rather than depending on a mission.

## A SENSE OF RESPONSIBILITY

All of this does not mean that there is never a time that foreign funds should be used to stimulate or help the work of God overseas. There are times and places where outside money can be helpful. It is the missionaries' task to determine when financial aid will strengthen or weaken the church. A sense of responsibility is a "pearl of great price" in the overseas church and its ministry. The overseas church must be a church in its own right, never a second class church that can not govern itself, support itself, or develop its own ministries. Anything that a missionary does to help this church to realize its true mission is in order. Everything that he does that diminishes this sense of responsibility and makes the church more dependent upon him or his organization is a sin against the church. So, if he will ask himself the question, "Will this gift make this church more dependent on me or the mission, or will it help the church to realize its own identity under God and function as a true church?", then this will serve as a

criterion to determine where and how help should be given. A word of warning; let us not reach the conclusion too quickly that the church is unable to assume financial responsibility. The church when thrown back on its own resources will often do that which missionaries have thought could not be done.

Basically, mission help should be given to help the church attain its goals. Mission help should never be a substitute for self-help. The mission should not do for a church what it is unwilling to do for itself. This is why self-support and self-government are so closely aligned. The process of decision-making is important to the assuming of responsibility.

Further, the missionary must distinguish between short-term and long-term benefits. It is entirely possible that a gift of money may prove to be of temporary benefit, but may in the long run tend to make the church dependent. For example: the construction of a church building with foreign funds may result in immediate growth and increase, but at the cost of engendering expectations on the part of other congregations that their building will also be provided for them. Why should they struggle and sacrifice, if by patiently waiting the

missionary will arrange to have it built for them?

It would seem to be in order for financial help to be given in the training program to prepare ministers for the fulfilling of their vocation. Also, it is logical to help provide a building as a base for a church in a large city where the cost of property is so high that it is completely beyond the reach of the local congregation. Even so, this help should be given in such a way that it will not become a "missions project". The local congregation should be expected to assume its responsibility and make the sacrifices to construct the building, understanding that the mission is giving them a boost to help them on their way, but is not doing the job for them.

## CHURCH PROPERTIES

The question of how properties will be held becomes an important question. In these days when most countries have restrictions about foreign-held properties, it would seem to be the part of wisdom to turn as many church properties over to the national organization as possible. Probably Bible institute properties will be the last to be transferred to the national

organization. However, there is no reason that this should not be done once the national organization has reached a state of maturity and experience in fiscal matters to insure proper handling. In some cases because of local laws, the national organization has become the owner of these properties from the very beginning, and this has not usually resulted in problems.

Missions would do well to hold loosely to the material aspects of their missionary endeavor. Properties, like individuals, are expendable. It is the Church that must go on.

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# **Bible Principles for the Ministry of Church Planting**

**Matthew 28:19-20**

**Ephesians 4:11-16**

**II Timothy 2:2**

Abuses of the Indigenous Church Principle

- leaving too soon
- giving too little help
- staying too long

“There’s a new blowing, and it’s wafting our way, soon to turn into a gale. Its theme is reflected in this simple little epigram: If you want to grow something to last a season—plant flowers. If you want to grow something to last a lifetime—plant trees. If you want to grow something to last through eternity—plant churches.”<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> David J. Hesselgrave, *Planting Churches Cross-Culturally, A Guide for Home and Foreign Missions* (Grand Rapids, Baker House, 1980), p. 38.

# **How do I get my church to become an indigenous church?**

1. Start right. They must learn from day one to tithe, attend faithfully, clean the building, etc.
2. Do not set their leader or leaders up to fail, by doing things that they will never be able to do. (Using materials that they can't get, spending money that they can't spend, etc.)
3. Place Nationals in places of leadership from day one and let them fail -- that is how they are going to learn. Do not expect to find leaders that are already ready. Do not expect perfection.
4. Practice Church Discipline, do not throw them away when they fall, restore them and help them to get on with life and the ministry.

5. Plan trips away and place more and more responsibility on their shoulders.
6. Have business meetings, men's meetings, etc to get them used to deciding what should be done.
7. Preach mission's messages and soulwinning messages to get them excited and involved in reaching souls.
8. Remind them that God can and will do through them what He has done in other places. Let them know about the heroes of the faith from the past and tell them you are looking for those people in Peru. A Peruvian Charles Spurgeon, etc.
9. Allow them to think for themselves.
10. Force them to take on more and more responsibility as the days and years go by.
11. Hold them to a high standard.

12. Let them see in your life, everything that you want them to practice and do.
13. Accept things that are not American, but are from their country and are not necessarily wrong.
14. Never do anything alone and when you are with them you must constantly be teaching them.
15. Always have more to do than you can do without their help.
16. Be a leader of leaders. Always be training leaders. Give the majority of your time and investment to leaders, so that the people can see that you believe in them and what they are doing
17. Respect the national leader as a real leader and not your peon, especially in public, because the people will catch your attitude.



18. Remember that serving God and doing the work of God is more caught than taught.
19. Teach them to do the work and have them produce and get more of the credit than you do.
20. Practice good Church building and church work from the best churches in the states.
21. Never quit studying and analyzing your work and that of others.
22. Help them to get their lions and bears so that they can be prepared to kill Goliath.

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# The Lifestyle of the Church Planter

By Charles Brock

*Indigenous Church Planting A Practical Journey pp 68-73*

The lifestyle of the church planter is an inevitable topic to be faced on most mission fields. This often is a critical issue when missionaries from advanced, industrialized nations are working in third-world nations. The sending bodies expect their missionaries to live on a level somewhat comparable to that of their native land. The physical and mental well-being of the missionary should be respected. Missionaries find it natural to continue living on a level similar to the one they are accustomed to if it is possible. This may be a level above many of the people in underdeveloped nations. There are those who live in such a luxurious fashion that it is right that the national Christians complain about it. There should be a happy medium that will not hinder the ministry of the church planter.

It is not in the best of taste for a missionary to seek to live like a king in any land. But it may be just as detrimental for one to

intentionally make himself live like a pauper. In being accepted, the inner heart and attitudes are more important than the lifestyle. If an average American went to Manila to plant churches, he would be expected to be himself. He is seen as an American, therefore is expected by Filipinos to live on an American economic level. For the planter to consciously and conspicuously cease to be an American would be artificial. If his heart is right with God and filled with love for the Filipino people, he will be able to minister effectively and maintain his own identity. If he decides to "acculturate" fully as one in a lower economic level, he may choose to sell his car, move into a house without screens, and eat rice three times a day. What will the people think about him? They will think he is crazy and a person of poor judgment. For him to give up what everyone strives for doesn't make sense. He becomes artificial and condescending.

When thinking of becoming "acculturated," the tendency is to forget that in many places such as Manila and other cities in third-world countries, there are masses of people who are not poor and homeless. The giant city of Manila is jammed with automobiles, most as nice as the ones driven by missionaries,

and many much nicer. There are multitudes who live on the level of the average pastor in the United States. I have worked in affluent subdivisions where, for economic reasons, I could never consider renting or buying. These, too, are Filipinos with whom we must be able to identify. Southeast Asian countries are filled with the latest electronic inventions and gadgets. Many of such items have either been brought in from America, Japan, or other nations or are being produced in the local economy.

Acculturation should not automatically be thought of as doing without or living on a low economic level. There are those who say one must become fully un-Americanized. It is not wrong to be a healthy American. It is not something to be ashamed of.

But what about Jesus? Didn't He empty Himself? For sure He did, but you can count on this: He never forgot who He was and where He came from and who His Father was. He did not sever ties with His Homeland and Father. As a matter of fact, I have a hunch He was longing to go back to the Father. He came to a foreign and different land; He adapted. He lived within the culture, but He kept in touch with His Heavenly base

and Father.

There are extremes which must be avoided. One extreme is seeking to over-identify. To seek to become fully one with the strange culture is not normal. Several years ago an anthropologist from the University of the Philippines spoke at our annual church planters' conference. He told about the missionary in the far northern part of Luzon who felt he must fully identify if he was to be effective. He removed his western clothing, put on a g-string and proceeded to be one of the people. They thought he had lost his mind. He was forced to leave the country. This is a foolish extreme that brings loss of respect. People expect us to be who and what we are and love them as they are, where they are.

To adopt an extreme posture in seeking to identify is not always healthy, either physically or spiritually. What about seeking to fully identify oneself with the culture when it is contradictory to the Bible? For example, lack of discipline is one of the greatest problems. If the extremist must fully identify, he will cease to be disciplined and his children will not be disciplined. In many cultures, children are not disciplined

the way the Bible says they should be, such as the oft repeated message of Proverbs stating if you never discipline a child, you do not love him. What about the church planter who must fully identify and adopt the thought patterns of a nation that fails to discipline and control the children? On and on we could go to the point of the absurd, even to a very non-Christian lifestyle. The only lifestyle the planter must be fully committed to is the lifestyle of Jesus Christ, and that applies primarily to His spiritual lifestyle. It does not mean that we are to wear His kind of clothes or have His hairstyle or wash feet every time we enter a home. The greater the identification with His essential person, the more effective the church planter will be.

Does this mean we are to be indifferent to the new culture and people around us? Of course not. We must strive to identify and understand the culture. The "ugly American" has no place in Christian ministry anywhere in the world.

There is the other extreme which must be avoided, the living-it-up lifestyle. There is a common sense that ought to be a part of the planter. If he lives in the most plush houses and

has a chauffeured Mercedes Benz, he is removing himself from ministering to many people. But if he is ministering only to the wealthy, a lifestyle that matches theirs may not be a detriment to ministry. The message of Christianity is not that one must be poor and destitute in order to minister effectively.

One of the most effective church planters I know is a Filipino who lives in a beautiful marble house and has a chauffeur-driven Mercedes Benz. His ministry is to Filipinos of all classes, but primarily his church planting is among the lower, lower-middle class. How would it affect his church planting if he announced that he was going to move into a nipa hut and trade his Mercedes for a bicycle? It would be disastrous. People would pity him and lose respect for him for making such a foolish decision. Doors would be closed to many of the poor and certainly to the more wealthy. It is not what one has, it is what he does with it. What is in the heart makes all the difference. This same wealthy Filipino has started a church among the poor people living a short distance from his house. He relates well because he loves them. His house is open to them. He conducts a special Bible study/leadership training once a week in his house. The people come and feel at home.

A person can artificially bring himself down to the physical level of the poor, yet not be able to minister to them unless his heart is genuine. It is well to remember that physical poverty is not synonymous with piety.

The foreign missionary must remember his children when he is thinking of proper identification. If the missionary could fully de-Americanize his children, is he doing anyone a favor except fulfilling his perverted ego, an ego that can be fulfilled only by successfully grafting on a new culture to the point that the old is obliterated? He may be able to cope, but what about the children? They may do very well until they go back to their homeland they have been taught to forget. They still will have a spark of the American in them, but they don't fit into the culture. They are torn between the two cultures, one of which they left behind in that foreign land. They do not really belong anywhere. This will leave them very vulnerable to drift with others who feel they don't belong. Because of this, many missionary kids (MKs) feel more at home in the company of foreigners who have come to the United States or with minority ethnic groups. They may feel more at home in the



company of social misfits who are drifting outside the culturally accepted norms. This adjustment is further complicated for the MK back in the United States when he encounters the obvious lack of commitment among nominal evangelicals. This lack of commitment is in such sharp contrast to the commitment among new believers in cultures where it is unpopular and often costly to follow Christ. This leaves MKs disappointed and sometimes disillusioned.

It is often a difficult adjustment for even the best prepared MK. Why, in the name of ministry, should parents make it tougher? While the children must be allowed to remain Americans, the parents have the responsibility to teach them to abolish unhealthy nationalistic walls. It is not unusual for children to grow up resenting a foreign culture when it is lacking in basic discipline and morals. Some way the MK must be taught to respect and love every nationality in spite of cultural differences. There should be an atmosphere where the children can interact with national children and grow to love them, establishing deep friendships. Children should not be fully isolated from nor overly protected from the foreign culture.

How is the church planter family able to prepare the children for reentry into their native culture at college level? First, the values of the Christian home must be a part of the child growing up. The child must know that dad and mom will not sell him down the river in the name of Christian service, even church planting. The saying is true, "There is no success that compensates for failure in the home." The saddest words ever to come from an MK's lips are, "My parents never had time for me; they were always doing 'God's work.'" The Bible says the man (even a missionary) who does not properly care for his family is worse than an unbeliever

Second, the child's values and allegiance to his home country must be taught and reinforced. It is right to remember the holidays of his homeland with special celebrations. To know the history of his homeland should be a normal part of his education. To appreciate and respect the distinct culture of his homeland is healthy. A healthy attitude and pride in his nationality should be instilled in the child.

For the church planter, lifestyle is important; it can be a curse or it can be a blessing. His health, physical, mental and spiritual, will be affected by his approach to lifestyle. It makes a difference to his family and certainly to those to whom he desires to minister. Some find themselves leaving the field of service prematurely because of not being able to cope in a different culture. Nothing helps more than the security of knowing where one comes from, where one is going-all in Christ-to be a participant in the victory march with God in Kingdom expansion though the birth of church after church

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# The Church Planter and the Language

By Charles Brock

*Indigenous Church Planting A Practical Journey pp. 74-77*

Nothing will capture the attention of a group of unbelievers like the foreigner speaking clearly in their native tongue. Paul was able to communicate when he used the native tongue of his hearers. In Acts 22:12 we see the power of a commonly understood language. "Men, brethren, and fathers, hear ye my defense *which I make* now unto you. (And when they heard that he spake in the Hebrew tongue to them, they kept the more silence: and he saith,) *Speaking* the language of the people is of primary importance in effective church planting.

There are two areas of concern the church planter must hurdle if he is to be a strong indigenous church planter. One is finding a handle with which he can feel comfortable and aggressive. The other is learning to communicate in the local dialect or language. Failure at either of these points leaves the planter vulnerable to the temptation to leave church planting and

move into social ministries or other kinds of missionary work. There is nothing wrong with social ministries or support ministries, but they may not be the same as New Testament Pauline church planting. There are those who never learn the language yet stay in church planting, but must always speak through someone else. This severely limits church planting and takes away much of the joy. There is nothing more exciting than being under the control of the Holy Spirit and feeling the message flow freely, a message in the tongue of the hearers.

A big part of the miracle of Pentecost had to do with language. A multitude was present, people from various nations. It was essential that they understand the message of God, so God performed a linguistic miracle. The Bible says, All of us we do hear them speak in our tongues the wonderful works of God.  
Acts 2:11

For many, learning a new language is not far from a miracle. There is stress no matter what the language program is. There is, in a real sense, taking on a new culture as one learns a new language. Language and culture are so intertwined that to have one means sharing in the other to some degree. A living,

daily use of a new language means giving up some of the old culture and accepting a new and different culture. There will be physiological and psychological strain in learning the new language.

The strain is enough that full concentration must be given to learning the language, This means that, even in the presence of a burning desire to get into church planting, months must be set aside solely for language learning. This will not be easy for the man who has come out of a successful pastorate in USA fast lanes. His style and tempo of life changes drastically.

The same is true for the mother whose primary responsibility has been a Christian homemaker and co-laborer with her husband. Care must be taken not to abandon the children at any time to learn the language. There may be no other time so difficult to maintain a Christian home where every member is attended to properly than in full-time language study. There is no better way to make a loving mother fighting mad than for an insensitive language director to imply that learning the language is more important than the well-being of her children.

The church planter must pay the price of learning the language because of the needs of the hearers. The deep needs of the hearers can most adequately be met when they hear about sin and the Savior in their own native tongue, It is the heart that must be reached. The people's native tongue is their heart language, the language of their will and emotions. When they are confronted with something so intimate as the life-changing Gospel of Jesus Christ, they need to hear it in their heart language. In this way the message can penetrate every part of their understanding and being.

The church planter must learn the language if he is to accelerate church planting through reproducing churches. If a person does not hear the Gospel message in his native language, he is not only limited by his own understanding; he is seriously limited in being able to share the message with others. I have heard of the experiences of Filipinos who had come to Manila from other provinces where other dialects were spoken. They were converted and trained in a language such as English or Tagalog. When they returned to their homes to share their newly found faith, they found it is very difficult.

They had not learned the way of new life using their own dialects. On one occasion, a young woman, a seminary graduate, was asked to share at an association meeting. The language of the meeting was Ilocano, her native dialect. She refused, saying it would take such a long time to prepare something in her dialect. She had been trained in English, using Western English thought patterns and language. She spoke in Ilocano in ordinary life, but when it came to spiritual matters, she had little to say. Another told me that she could not even pray in her native dialect when she went back home because she did not receive the Good News of Christ in her native tongue. If the people use their native dialect in normal living and revert to a foreign language to convey spiritual truths, these truths come across as foreign and unnatural. When God calls out leaders from among the new believers, it is a serious hindrance to their ministries if they must receive their training in a foreign language. (There are exceptions to this when English is almost an equally used second language.)

A simple rule: if new believers are not able to communicate the Gospel message effectively in a second language such as



English, their leadership training should be in their native language.

There is no better way to communicate love than to speak to people in a language they can understand. Nationals feel good when they see the foreigner sweating over learning their language. They sense that he must really love them. If the language is learned early, more churches will be planted later.

Every church planter can learn a new language if he is motivated properly. Language programs may serve as avenues to help and enhance language learning, but the key is personal motivation. If the planter wants to badly enough, he will learn the language. The motive for the church planter is no less than a personal commission from God to communicate a lifesaving message to spiritually dead people. The love of God, the love for God, and the love for lost people will be the driving forces in language learning.

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# Self-rating Checklist of Speaking Proficiency

## Level Zero Plus

- ! I can use more than 50 words of my new language in appropriate contexts.

## Level One

- ! (You are at Level One when you can **confidently** check each of the following Level One language activities.)
- ! I can initiate conversations and use appropriate leave-takings to close conversations.
- ! I can make a selection from a menu and order a simple meal.
- ! I can ask and tell the time of day, the day of the week, and the date.
- ! I can go to the market or butcher and ask for vegetables, fruit, milk, bread, and meat, and I can bargain when appropriate.

- ! I can tell someone how to get from here to the post office, a restaurant, or a hotel.
- ! I can negotiate for a taxi ride or a hotel room and get a fair price.
- ! I can make a social introduction of someone else and also give a brief speech to introduce myself.
- ! I can understand and correctly respond to questions about my marital status, nationality, occupation, age, and place of birth.
- ! I can get the bus or train I want, buy a ticket, and get off where I intended to .
- ! I can use the language well enough to assist a newcomer in all of the above Level One situations.

## **Level One Plus**

- ! I have a One Plus proficiency because I can do all of the Level One activities and at least three of the following Level Two activities.

## Level Two

- ! (You are at Level Two when you can **confidently** check each of the following Level Two activities.)
- ! I can give detailed information about the weather, my family, my home and living arrangements.
- ! I can take and give simple messages over the telephone.
- ! I can give a brief autobiography and also talk about my plans and hopes.
- ! I can describe my most recent job or activity in some detail and also describe my present role as a language learner.
- ! I can describe the basic structure of the government in both my home and host countries.
- ! I can describe the geography of both my home and host countries.
- ! I can describe the purpose and function of the organization I represent.
- ! I could use my new language in hiring an employee and agreeing on qualifications, salary, hours, and special duties.
- ! I feel confident that my pronunciation is always

intelligible.

- ! I feel confident that people understand me when I speak in the new language, at least 80% of the time, I am also confident that I understand what native speakers tell me on topics like those of Level Two.
- ! I could use my new language well enough to assist a newcomer on any of the Level Two situations.

## Level Two Plus

- ! I have a Two Plus proficiency because I can meet at least three of the following Level Three requirements.

## Level Three

- ! (You are at Level Three when you can **confidently** check each of the following Level Three items.)
- ! I do not try to avoid any of the grammatical features of the language.
- ! I now have sufficient vocabulary and grasp of grammatical structure to complete any sentence that I begin.
- ! I can speak at a normal rate of speech, with only rare

hesitations.

- ! I can confidently follow and contribute to a conversation between native speakers when they try to include me.
- ! I am able to correctly understand any information given to me over the telephone.
- ! I can listen to a speech or discussion on a topic of interest to me and take accurate notes.
- ! I can speak to a group of native speakers on a professional subject and have confidence that I am communicating what I want to.
- ! I can understand opposing points of view and can politely describe and defend an organizational position or objective to an antagonist.
- ! I could cope with a social blunder, and undeserved traffic ticket, or a plumbing emergency.
- ! I can understand two or more native speakers talking with each other about a current event or issue.
- ! I could serve as an interpreter for a newcomer in any of the Level Three situations.
- ! I feel that I can carry out the professional responsibilities of my work in my new language.

## Level Three Plus

- ! I have a Three Plus proficiency because I can meet at least three of the Level Four requirements.

## Level Four

- ! (You are at Level Four when you can **confidently** check each of the following Level Four characteristics.)
- ! I practically never make grammatical mistakes.
- ! I can always understand native speakers when they talk with each other.
- ! I can understand humor and language puns, and I can actively participate in fun and humorous situations.
- ! My vocabulary is always extensive and precise enough for me to convey my exact meaning in professional discussions.
- ! I feel I have a comprehensive grasp of the local cultural Knowledge bank.
- ! I can appropriately alter my speech style for a public lecture, or a conversation with a professor, an employee, or a close friend.

- ! I could serve as an informal interpreter for a Abigwig@ at a professional or social function.
- ! I feel that I could carry out any job assignment as effectively in my second language as in English.

## **Level Four Plus**

- ! My vocabulary and cultural understanding are always extensive enough to enable me to communicate my precise meaning.
- ! People feel that I share their knowledge bank well enough to talk about and defend any of their beliefs or values.

## **Level Five**

- ! Native speakers react to me just as they do to each other -- I am usually considered an an insider.
- ! I sometimes feel more at home in my second language than in English.
- ! I can do mental arithmetic in the language without slowing down.
- ! I consider myself to be completely bilingual and bicultural,



with equivalent ability in English and in my second language.

! I consider myself a native speaker of the language.

# Language Learning Progress Report

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Date

---

Your name

---

Date language learning began

---

Target Language

1. This month the speaking skills that I have in the local language are comparable to the skills described at the following speaking proficiency level; **(circle your level)**

**0+ 1 1+ 2 2+ 3 3+ 4 4+**

2. I feel that I am; (check one)

making steady progress \_\_\_\_\_:

making some progress \_\_\_\_\_:

making no progress \_\_\_\_\_

retrogressing \_\_\_\_\_

3. I have been interviewing an average of \_\_\_\_\_ people per day. Some of the interesting things that I have learned about the culture are \_\_\_\_\_
4. In any given 5-day week this month I have spent a minimum of \_\_\_\_\_ hours in structured language learning. My typical daily schedule for this month is outlined on the back of this sheet \_\_\_\_\_.
5. The following activities are examples of experiences I have had this month which have demonstrated to people my role as a learner of their heart language;
- 
6. The following activities are examples of situations I have encountered in the past month which involved me in communication, using the language of the people;
-

7. If I made the following adjustments in my life-style, I would not be as isolated from speakers of the local language and might expect to make better progress.

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8. In my role as a language learner this month, I gained the following information about, or insights into, the culture and thought patterns of the community;

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9. In the coming four weeks I plan to direct some of my attention to the following specific needs; language feature  
Topic areas \_\_\_\_\_

10. I communicate my text with approximately \_\_\_\_\_ people each day.

## **My Goals**

I will need to reach level \_\_\_\_\_ in order to conscientiously fulfill my objectives and purpose in this new

culture. I am determined to discipline myself to a schedule of daily learning until I satisfactorily meet this goal.

Signed

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## **Communication Topics to aid in learning and living in the culture**

The way to handle this is to get a friend who will act as a tutor. This is something you do after you get out of language school. The classes are good. The books are good but don=t forget it is the practice that will teach you the language. Don=t forget you learn languages by being with people. Since most of us do not know what to do to be with them consider getting your friend/tutor to help you get ready to go out on the town with some made up questions and statements. You practice first with him/her and then you go out and just start getting to know the folks. They will love it that you really show interest in them. If you will have a good attitude they will love helping you. You will learn more from the people after school than you ever do during your school hours.

### **Telling folks about yourself**

This is my \_\_\_\_\_ day learning \_\_\_\_\_. I am from \_\_\_\_\_. My name is \_\_\_\_\_. I like your country \_\_\_\_\_.

very much. I want to learn your language well. I want to learn about your people. Can you understand me? Thank you for listening.

## **Using Public Transportation**

What bus goes to \_\_\_\_\_? Where does the bus stop?  
Where is the \_\_\_\_\_ post office, store, monument?

## **Developing a route of listeners**

May I come by each day and say to you the new things I learn? Be careful to have a good attitude when they correct you. Yesterday I made a mistake when I wanted to say \_\_\_\_\_. Am I saying it correctly now.

## **Greetings, Leave-takings, and Expressions of Appreciation**

Thanks, you've been a big help to me. I hope we'll soon meet again

Thank you so much for all your help. I really appreciate your taking time to listen to me.

You have helped me a lot. Can I come and talk with you again sometime? Thank you.

## **Your Role as a Learner**

So far I have learned to tell a little about myself .....(say it). Stop me if I say something incorrectly. Also, I can ask some questions like ....(ask them). So far this is all I can say. Each day I'm learning a little bit.

## **Personal Questions**

Learn to ask and answer these questions: Where do you live? What country did you come from? In what part of that country did you live? Where were you born? How long have you been in this country/town? What are you doing here? Are you married? Do you have children? What do you want? Where is your family? What is your name?



## **The Physical World**

What is considered to be animate? What role do spirits play? What is the perceived hierarchy of living things? What is exploitable? In man=s relationship with the world around him, are there certain taboos -- things that are not proper to do? How did the world come into being? What can man do to prevent or control disasters such as floods, drought, and lightening?

## **Disease**

Ask people about the causes of various kinds of ailments. How are illnesses treated? What precautions can be taken to avoid various illnesses? What should be done if sickness strikes? What skills does a local medical specialist have? How did he get these skills? Are illness and health a common discussion topic? How much value or importance is attached to good health?

## Life Style

Ideally, what do people think is the wisest way to spend time, effort and money? What things are of permanent and lasting value? What is most important in human life? What does a person want most of all? After ones essential needs have been met, what other things are worth striving for?

## Economics

What material possessions are essential in life? What can one not do without? Why is it needed?

## Private Property

Who has borrowing rights? Can some things be borrowed without asking permission? Do houses and property belong to individuals? Or families? \_\_\_\_\_

I am sure that you get the idea now. Much of what I am telling you came from a book that you definitely need to purchase. The book is **Language Acquisition Made**

**Practical** by Thomas and Elizabeth Brewster. The book is published by Lingua House and can be ordered from Academic Publications, Summer Institute of Linguistics, 7500 W Camp Wisdom Road, Dallas, TX 75236.

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I found the following while reading the life of John Paton. He was a missionary of the old school to the South Pacific. I found some interesting things in his book about learning the language. Let me have you read them and consider them.

At first the Tannese came in crowds to look at us and at everything we or had. **We knew nothing of their language. We could not speak a single word to them nor them to us.** We smiled and nodded and made signs to each other, this was our first meeting and parting. One day a man lifted up one of our things and said to his friend, "Nunksi nari enu?" **I guessed** that he was asking, "What is this?" Instantly lifting a piece of wood, **I repeated**, "Nunksi nari enu?"

They smiled and spoke to each other. I understood them to be saying, "He has got hold of our language now." Then they told me their name for the thing that I had pointed to. **I found that they understood my question** "What is this?" I could now get the name of everything around us! We **carefully noted** the name of everything around us! We **carefully noted** every name they gave us, spelling all phonetically, and making special notes on each strange sound. By **painstaking comparison** of different circumstances, we **tested our own guesses** by cross questioning the islanders. One day I saw two males approaching. One, a stranger, pointed at me and said, "Se nanging?" **Concluding** that he was asking my name, I pointed to one of them, and looking at the other, asked, "Se nanging?" They smiled and gave me their names. Now we were able to get the names of both things and persons. **Our ears became familiarized** with the distinctive sounds of their language. We made extraordinary progress in attempting bits of conversation and in reducing their speech to a written form for the first time.

By the way, by hard work, time, and **mixing with the people** they learned the language and went on to do great things for

God. Yes, they got discouraged and it hurt and they missed home but they knew that God had called them and so they just stayed. By the way, Brother Paton's wife got pregnant and gave birth to their child on 2121859. They had not been gone from home even one year yet. On March 3 she died. On March 20 the baby died. As she lay dying she said, "You must not think that I regret coming here. If I had the same thing to do over again, I would do it with far more pleasure, yes, with all my heart!" Language learning, losing a wife, losing a child but he didn't quit. He went on to become one of the missionary heroes of all time.

God grant us faith and strength to keep on keeping on!!

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# Identify Your Target Before Firing

By Charles Brock

*Indigenous Church Planting A Practical Journey pp 96-98*

At some time a church planter will have to deal with the subject of targets. Who am I going to try to reach? Sometimes missions and missionaries spend a disproportionate amount of time trying to determine the proper target, but a serious church planter will have to include this in his thinking. At one time our mission organization became very preoccupied with targets. In meeting after meeting, in large and small groups, this was the topic of discussion. It dawned on me one day that we could spend hours talking about who we should target and leave the meeting, walking past multitudes of people without thinking seriously about their lost condition. Not knowing which target to shoot for is not our problem. Our problem is being motivated enough to aim for the obvious, nearby targets-those within our sight, our voice, our touch, yet never touched with the Gospel because we are worn out from discussing who to target.

**Some say to go after the rich so they can provide support for future work.** This line of thinking includes financial support as well as leadership. **I have not personally met any missionary who thinks like this who is effective in any kind of church planting.** Part of the fallacy is the idea that if the rich are reached, they will have a great influence on society at their level and downward. Seldom will the rich be able or willing to reach the poor people. Another fallacy is the idea that the rich will be more effective in changing history. Great movements in history-revolutions which have made a difference-did not come from a movement among the rich. If we want to change society and the course of history, we must be aware of that sector of society which has within it the greatest capacity to think and effect revolution. The rich and elite are not the ones; they have it made and would rather things not change. They do not want their status and security threatened. They like history; it has dealt them a good life. These people also tend to be fixed in their way, their web of friends and lifestyle. Arrogance and pride are common to this class. They have the answers and do not need help. These are the reasons they are so closed to the Gospel. Does this mean that we are never to target them in church planting? Of

course, we should never ignore them; but we must realize that human nature has not changed from the days of Christ. Unless our motivation goes beyond reaching them for what they can do for us, we will be void of the Spirit of Christ who is the secret of our success. They need to be reached because they are lost and God loves them.

What about targeting the very poor in church planting? As is true with targeting only the rich, we must be aware of the leadership of the Holy Spirit and go where He directs. To target the very poor and forget and ignore the middle and upper classes may be just as calloused as targeting only the rich.

Some people feel more at ease working with poorer people and are therefore more effective in working with them. God may lead a person to concentrate his work among poorer people, but no one with Christ in him can be blind to the spiritual poverty of any sector of a Christless society.

Which socio-economic group will have the greatest potential of changing history? The poorest of society are not the ones. Often the poor are too deep in a fatalistic rut to



dream dreams. They are not able to see the prospects of revolutions which will change history. They see themselves as lacking education and opportunities. They tend to give up, just living out life as they find it. Discipline is not usually a strong characteristic of the very poor. Disciplined people change history. This does not mean we should ignore the slums and squatters. If they are not born again, they are doomed just as anyone else without Christ.

Who has the greatest potential for changing the course of history? What class of people are most apt to make a difference in a nation? It is the lower-middle and middle class. These tend to dream dreams of what they can become and do. These, not being rich, have little to lose and much to gain. They live at a level of flux. They are out of the cellar of poverty, yet do not feel they have all the answers or all out of life that they want. Generally, it is this sector which is most responsive to the Gospel. They have not only the capacity to be visionaries, they have the necessary discipline to pursue dreams.

Many church planters tend to spend more time with this level of society, just as Jesus and His disciples did. This is the level I have found best to concentrate on, without eliminating the other levels as potential targets for church planting. I feel very comfortable having a church planting Bible study with the rich on one night, the middle class on another night, and slum dwellers on another night, hoping to plant churches among each.

Some people are able to reach one level of society more effectively than others. It is difficult to imagine Christ deciding that He will concentrate on only one level of society and ignore the others. The Lord may lead one person to concentrate on the rich and someone else to concentrate on the poor, but neither can forget nor ignore the masses in various levels of society. I believe it is best to move at the leading of the Holy Spirit, without predetermined boundaries.

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# How to Plant an Indigenous Church

How do we plant an indigenous church? What will be the **PLAN** to use in starting your first church? Obviously, each country will have its own peculiarities and each missionary will do things differently, but we will present at least an idea or plan to refer to, should you so desire.

From beginning to end, all depends on **PRAYER**. Be sure to know the will of God in what you are doing. Many people quit because they do not know what God's will is for them when the discouraging times come. They begin to think that they are where they are because they decided to do so without the leadership of the Holy Spirit. Be sure he has called you and then ask his guidance, waiting on him for guidance on where you will work. Seek his power. Seek his direction as to where, when and who will help. Be careful to pray wisely. Drive around. Look at the folks and find out where the need is. Wait on him to show you just where to begin. You need not hide from other churches but it might be wiser not to start a church right next door to another church. What economic

level will you work with? Be sure to find out where the best location is. Determine what was in the building before you and if you are close to a bar, etc. Starting the church is not something you will do lightly or quickly if you want God's blessing on what you are doing. Be careful to start in a place that will leave open doors to carry the ministry forward.

Pray about the will of God as to who will help you start the work. Will you work with a national or will you be alone? Maybe you can get at least temporary help from another church in the area. They could go visiting with you, sing specials, give testimonies. Often times there is no one to help so you just go and start by yourself. Be careful to not jump in with out praying and planning, but neither should you waste time just because you are scared or nervous. I have personally known people in Peru that took months and one fellow years to get started because they where studying everything. There is too much to do to be wasting our time like that. Work for the night is coming.

After much prayer and finding out who will help you it will be time to find a **PLACE** to meet. You need to be careful to

get a good location where the people can find you. You need to study the area to see where the other churches are and where the people live. It is wise, especially in a third world country, to find a safe place because the people are often afraid to go out at night to certain areas. Rent a place big enough for what you want to do. You will need a place where at least 40 or 50 people can sit, a place with a bathroom, etc. Of course you will need to think of how the people of your country think and not what you are accustomed to here in the states. If you are able to do so you should put up a sign advertising the church and the services. Make it a good one. If you are in a country where you can not advertise a church, like Mexico, maybe you could use one of the portable signs that you can put up and down on service day.

Once you have your place you will need to get chairs, a pulpit and offering plates. I always try to have Testaments or Bibles present until the people can buy their own. I provide song sheets or hymn books, etc. I know what you are thinking. If it is an indigenous church, shouldn't it be self supporting? Yes, it should and will be when you have been there long enough and done enough. Even in the states, when

a man starts a church from scratch, he has to provide everything initially. There are folks who do not believe in providing anything. However, you will sure lose a lot of time getting folks saved and teaching them the Bible when they don't have one and can't see one. In Latin America, it is often very difficult to buy land in a city once you have started due to the fact that all the land is taken. At least in Peru there are very seldom any vacant lots. Try to rent where you will be able to stay long enough to raise the money to build and buy because it will not be easy.

There are still many **PREPARATIONS** to make even after you have gotten your place to work and found the place you will meet. It is good to print and use literally thousands of invitations, passing them out door to door, in the streets, market places, and public meeting places. Never give out an invitation without a tract because the majority of the people who receive the tract will not come. It would also be good to fix up some posters that you can put around in the public places so that people will know what you are doing. We even use a public address system to drive around inviting the people to come. I decided a long time ago that even though the

majority will not come, I at least want everyone to know what we are doing. I try to make a lot of "noise" about the opening of a new church.

The **PROCEDURE** then is to plan what you will do to get started. You might hold a week of meetings with gospel films followed by preaching or maybe just a regular service with Bible study. Which ever you do, you will need to go out and invite folks all around the area. I literally visit every house in the neighborhood with a gospel tract and an invitation. Many times we make plans to go back every day or every week with a new gospel tract. We do not stay long because our goal is to get folks out to the meeting. If you plan a week of meetings you might consider inviting other Christians from another area to come and give personal testimonies of what Jesus has done in their lives and what the Bible and the church mean to them. It is also good to have some special singing if you can. What we do is sing and have testimonies, then show the film, followed more testimonies. We then preach on the same idea of the film, trying to get folks to stay afterwards to talk with us about salvation. Be sure to sing the same simple chorus over and over so that the people will learn them and remember

them. Once you know what you will do and when then it is time to go visiting, be sure to visit much. When I knock on a door in Peru I ask for the man and teach the others to do the same. The church (at least in Latin countries) has too long been a thing of the women. Even the men who lead the thing wear dresses. I make my church a place for men. I do not use women much and when they are able to start making decisions I use the men of the church. By the way, I know missionaries that use women as deacons and song leaders, etc. I do not think that is scriptural nor wise in most cultures. Be sure to invite the world. Be sure to go to the market and to all public meeting places with your invitations. You never know where God has someone that will come. Due to the amount of work necessary we usually visit and advertise a week of meetings up to a couple of week before it really gets started. Before leaving the idea of using the campaign, let me tell what the Christian Missionary Alliance is doing in Lima, Peru. They will plan a campaign of up to two weeks and then will visit and work for a month getting ready. Then after a campaign of two weeks they will have follow up for two weeks and then another campaign. They go this way for an entire year. Currently in Peru they have the largest and most



powerful churches. This schedule is obviously very difficult, but it has worked.

A couple of **PRACTICAL POINTERS** TO FINISH THE IDEA. The hardest part is getting your first group of people together. Once you have some who will attend you can begin training them to win souls and to visit . They will bring their families. They will invite their friends if they have really made a decision. You must kill yourself to get those first ones. Use your people from the first day. Let them help with the visitation. As soon as someone shows some promise let him do something in the service that is not really important. He can welcome people or maybe later take up the offering. You need to do all you can to win them and then let them know that the church is theirs and for them. To be honest, it takes a miracle from God to get a church going but He will do it. We must be careful to go in his power and Spirit. Remember that the communists are using the young people to get their movements going. Don't be afraid to use the older teens. Let them visit and invite also. The more involved they are, the better. They will not be what you want in a church member the first day, but if you can love them and teach them they will

get to where they should be. Remember that it is all new to them.

The **PROBLEM** in starting a new church is that it will not be indigenous in the beginning. You must understand that no church is truly indigenous as long as a missionary is in the church. If a missionary is there they are depending on him to provide the message and give direction and they do not pay his salary. You can try to wait until you have mature Christians, but I am afraid that you will be waiting a long time. It is one thing to start in the states where the folks know something and may already have some interest but in a foreign country it is not like that. Think of them as babies that need your help as you start. They can do nothing for themselves. You open the doors and you close the doors. You sweep and clean. You visit, but as you nurture them along you will train them to do all of this and you will try to work your self out of a job. At first you pay everything and then as you win them and train them they will take the responsibility. From the very first service I take an offering and teach them what they should do. If God the Holy Spirit gets involved you will find that your people will want to take their own

responsibility. You will not build an indigenous church overnight and not without much sweat, blood, and tears. You will need to let them begin to do things as soon as possible even though they will not do it the way you would nor as well. It is their church, not yours.

Many folks think that indigenous just means they do not get money from the states, but that is only one small part of the job. They must be self supporting , self governing and self propagating. For that reason many want them to do all the giving while they make all the decisions. Again the plan is that I will treat them just like my child. At the first, I do nearly everything, but each day I will allow them more freedom, and responsibility until they will one day be doing it all and will arrive at indigenous status. Be sure to start teaching immediately what you want even though you do all of the work. Then take the risk let them do the work.

In the actual **PRACTICE** of starting a church, several things should be considered. By what authority do we start churches on the field? In other words, what principles do we follow and what is the pattern of a New Testament church? As

we start our church, what will be our priority? How will we spend the majority of the time? What is our plan to bring them from babes in Christ to maturity? On the field all the theory goes out the window. Many folks discuss the work but you will be faced with the actual problem of doing the work. Where do we begin?

The **PRINCIPLE** we follow is that of the local church fulfilling the Great Commission. One local church plants another local church through the life of its members. Therefore, the authority behind what we do and are doing is the local church, not the mission. The mission is an handmaiden of the local church, helping her to fulfill her mission. There are many valuable jobs that the mission fulfills but we must be certain to never think of the mission as being the authority. God's word does not show us the mission board but it teaches us of the local church. This is not to say that there is no need for the mission board. The board will be of great help to you. It will help by establishing who you are and what you believe to the churches you are going to visit. It will give you guidelines to follow on the field. It will give you someone with experience who you can turn to when you do

not know what to do. However, we are not starting churches for the mission board. The Bible gives examples of this principle in the life of Paul. Paul did not simply choose to go as a missionary. He was called and sent out by the Holy Ghost and from his local church.

*Now there were in the **church that was at Antioch** certain prophets and teachers; as Barnabas, and Simeon that was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen, which had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, **the Holy Ghost said**, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them. And when **they** had fasted and prayed, and laid **[their]** hands on them, **they** sent [them] away. So they, being sent forth by the Holy Ghost, departed unto Seleucia; and from thence they sailed to Cyprus. Acts 13:1-4*

They were sent out by the local church under the leadership of the Holy Spirit. They did not go because they so chose or because a mission board sent them. Upon their return after their first journey, they report to their churches.

*And thence **sailed to Antioch**, from whence they had been **recommended to the grace of God for the work** which they fulfilled. And when they were come, and had **gathered the church together, they rehearsed all that God had done with them**, and how he had opened the door of faith unto the Gentiles. Acts 14:26-27*

It should always be remembered by what authority we are starting churches. We do so as a ministry out of our local church. The mission serves the local church as a handmaiden. We are not sent out by the mission. We answer first to the local church. Without a doubt the mission serves in a wonderful way, but we do not find in the Bible one mission board. As you start your church it will be the daughter of your home church. Actually the members of your church on the field will be members of your church in the states until you organize.

Whenever you can you will need to organize the church with a charter and bylaws etc. You will find a copy of one church's actual constitution and bylaws with this paper. We do

not start churches based on the authority of the mission. We are out of a local church and the church we start will actually be a daughter of our home church. You start your church based on the authority given us by the Bible and the local church which has sent us out.

What is exactly the work of a missionary on the foreign field? Do we go to win folks to the Lord? Are we an evangelist? Many have heard the stories of literally thousands saved in only one week of evangelistic campaigns. Someone goes to a foreign country and shows a film and preaches through an interpreter and upon his return we hear of all that God has done and how the folks are literally begging for tracts and Bibles. I do not want to belittle this effort but we all realize that after the campaign it can be very difficult even to find all the "converts". It is hard for the normal person to understand missionary work. We go and we win a few here and there and baptize them and have trouble getting them to live right but the evangelist has so much success in such a short time. As missionaries we must learn that our job is to start local, indigenous New Testament Baptist Churches. The missionary does not go to the field to win souls although he

will have to do so to do his job. We go to start churches.

The principle is that of the indigenous church. An indigenous church according to the orientation manual of Macedonia World Baptist Missions Inc. is "THE ULTIMATE AIM". The dictionary says the word indigenous means "produced, growing, or living naturally in a country or climate native to the location. For us that means a church that is (1) self-governing, (2) self-supporting, and (3) self-propagating.

By "self-governing," we mean a church that is able to govern itself and make its own decisions. As a missionary, my job is to win people to Christ, baptize them and then teach them to so do the work that they will be able to win souls, baptize them, and carry on all the functions of a local New Testament church without outside intervention. They must learn how to do all the work. They will call their pastor. They will baptize. They will have Sunday School. They will send missionaries. When the missionary has finished his job in a local church they will be able to carry on in a manner that is pleasing to our Lord and they will be able to carry on the work of God as well as any church in the United States. They will



reach maturity when and when they become a living, breathing, reproducing, understanding organism like any other mature church. At first they will depend on the missionary for many things. The missionary tells them how to do things and also when to do them. As they mature they will learn how to find out from God's word what He wants and they will begin looking for ways to do the work of God. They will then learn how to walk in the Spirit and teach others how to do so also.

The danger here is, if and when the church decides to be self governing, it does not know how to do so. The church is not to be, in all honesty, even a democracy. Decisions have to be made based on what the Bible teaches and not necessarily what the people as a group want. The church will need, however, to learn to make decisions without looking to any outside source for its leadership. The Bible, the Holy Spirit, and the local body will make the decision. Too often the church on the field has had to obey the missionaries. We believe in the local church. That indicates that the church is not to look to Rome, Nashville, or even Lawrenceville. We must so prepare them that they can know how to take the word of God and find the leadership of the Lord for their

church. That means they must be taught how to make spiritual decisions as they follow the leadership of the Lord. They must not be under pressure from us to do what we want. Many times the mission boards choose to own the buildings so that the people are forced to do what the mission says. To be truly indigenous we will have to get them to a point that we can take our hands off and yes run the risk that they will do something we do not want them to do. Consider Paul in the book of Acts as he finishes his first missionary journey. He ordains elders and then commends them to the Lord (Acts 14:23).

*And when they had ordained them elders in every church, and had prayed with fasting, **they commended them to the Lord,** on whom they believed.*

We must teach and train our people to the point that they can make decisions, follow the leadership of the Holy Spirit and call their own pastors. They will not be able to do so until they really learn the basic principles from the word of God and how to apply them. *Train up a **church** in the way it should go and when it is **indigenous** it will not depart from it.*

The indigenous church is also self supporting. That means that the church must mature to a point that they can pay all of their bills and support their own pastor. For this reason, we must begin to teach them to tithe and give from day one. We must not do their giving because we feel sorry for their poverty. Much of their poverty is due to the fact that they do not know God's word and have not learned to tithe and give. We must teach them exactly what God says about that. The church must learn to pay its pastor and it must have a pastor. Many missionaries who were never full time pastors and have never started a church in the States do not seem to understand the plight of the pastor. If I am to live of the gospel he is to live of the gospel. Having the people learn how to tithe in no way hurts them. If God's word is true for us, it is true for them. If tithing works in the United States, it will work overseas. It calls for much sacrifice and faith but without that they will never learn what it means to serve God. We must teach the church members the importance of the work of God and therefore of the man of God. We must magnify the office of the pastor and teach them why he must live of the gospel. We must also be careful to explain all from the word of God. Often the missionary sees the full time pastor as

something of our culture that will never work in a foreign country. I am convinced that not only will it work, but it must work if we want to see the gospel spread. Consider a few thoughts from the scriptures and also everyone's favorite argument for the working pastor.

*Mine answer to them that do examine me is this, Have we not **power** to eat and to drink? Have we not power to lead about a sister, a wife, as well as other apostles, and [as] the brethren of the Lord, and Cephas?*

(Paul the apostle was not making the churches pay his way but Peter--Cephas not only was a burden to the churches but carried his wife with him.)

Or I only and Barnabas, have not we **power to forbear working?** (Paul wants to know if only he and Barnabas do not have the right to be full time preachers because he implies the rest are not "working.") This word "power" means (according to Strong's Concordance):

power, authority, right, liberty, jurisdiction, strength, power of choice, liberty of doing as one pleases; leave or permission.

*Who goeth a warfare any time at his own charges? who planteth a vineyard, and eateth not of the fruit thereof? or who feedeth a flock, and eateth not of the milk of the flock? Say I these things as a man? or saith not the law the same also? For it is written in the law of Moses, Thou shalt not muzzle the mouth of the ox that treadeth out the corn. Doth God take care for oxen? Or saith he [it] altogether for our sakes? For our sakes, no doubt, [this] is written: that he that ploweth should plow in hope; and that he that thresheth in hope should be partaker of his hope. **If we have sown unto you spiritual things, [is it] a great thing if we shall reap your carnal things?** If others be partakers of [this] power over you, [are] not we rather? Nevertheless we have not used this power; but suffer all things, lest we should hinder the gospel of Christ. Do ye not know that they which minister about holy things live [of the things] of the temple? and they which wait at the altar are partakers with the altar? **Even so hath the***

***Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel.*** But I have used none of these things: neither have I written these things, that it should be so done unto me: for [it were] better for me to die, than that any man should make my glorying void. For though I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of: for necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel! For if I do this thing willingly, I have a reward: but if against my will, a dispensation [of the gospel] is committed unto me. What is my reward then? [Verily] that, when I preach the gospel, I may make the gospel of Christ without charge, that I abuse not my power in the gospel. I Corinthians 9:3-18

The verse here says that the Lord ordained that they live of the gospel and that leaves us without the option of doing what we want. The word "ordained" means; "command, appoint, ordain, set in order, give order, to arrange, prescribe." (Strong's)

Other verses teach us the same truth. Note the following verses in Matthew. We must be careful to understand that

what God says in one language to one people he says to the others also.

*{Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils: freely ye have received, freely give.} {Provide neither gold, nor silver, nor brass in your purses,} {Nor scrip for [your] journey, neither two coats, neither shoes, nor yet staves: for **the workman is worthy of his meat.**}* Matthew 10:8-10

*Galatians 6:6 Let him that is taught in the word **communicate** unto him that teacheth in all good things.*

The word "communicate" here means: be partaker, communicate, distribute, to come into communion or fellowship with, to become a sharer, be made a partner, to enter into fellowship, join one's self to an associate, make one's self a sharer or partner.

*Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of **double honour**, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine. For the scripture saith, Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn. And, **The labourer [is] worthy of his reward.** I Timothy 5:17-18*

*Philippians 4:14 Notwithstanding ye have well done, that ye did **communicate** with my affliction.*

The first answer almost everyone has is that even though Paul preached that the preacher should live of the gospel, he did not practice it. However you will find a verse below where he realized that he had been wrong. If we do everything for them and are not careful to make them carry all the responsibility that they can, we will damage the work of God. They will consider it inferior to what it really is. They will also feel inferior to other churches. Paul did make tents, but here he says to the church where he made tents: "Forgive me the wrong of not being a burden to you."



*II Corinthians 12:13 For what is it wherein ye were **inferior to other churches**, except [it be] that I myself was not **burdensome** to you? **forgive me this wrong.***

Let me hasten to say here that we must teach the preacher to sacrifice and pay whatever price necessary to do the work of gospel lest he be a hireling. We must at the same time teach the people their responsibility in taking care of their pastor. Please remember to be careful when you teach the national about living by faith. Share your testimony with him. As you speak of faith he sees your standard of living. He knows that you are not suffering in comparison with him. Be careful to not make him a hireling nor to teach him to lust after what you have as you tell him that he is to live by faith.

*Not that I speak in respect of want: **for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, [therewith] to be content.** I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: every where and in all things **I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need.** Philippians 4:11-12*

I Timothy 6:8 And having food and raiment **let us be therewith content.**

If we have taught them to be self governing and then self supporting they can then reach the status of a real indigenous church when they reach out and start another local church, telling them how to do the work. They have learned and can now do the job. The missionaries' job is to start a church that can start churches. Therefore we must teach and prepare them for a great work. Until they know how to make decisions and seek God's face they will not be able to teach others to do so. Until they can support their pastor, pay the expenses of the church, and give to missions they will not be able to reach out and do it in another place. We have not reached indigenous status until we fulfill the great commission and go into the whole world. Many churches here in the United States have not truly reached the point of even doing this. However, we must consider that if we are ever to reach a country with the gospel the nationals will have to do it and to do so they will have to have the tools to do so. That means they will have to have an indigenous church that can and is doing the work of winning, baptizing and training people to do the work. The

goal is that without the missionary or the United States or outside help one day the national church will begin another national or international church using its own money and its own personnel.

We must make the forming of an indigenous church the **PRIORITY** of our ministry. Without the indigenous churches we have no true way to fulfill the great commission. The evangelist who goes to the foreign field and preaches campaigns is doing a good work, but when he leaves and goes home, who can carry them to maturity? His is a good work, but the best work is to win them and then train them. This is really what it takes to fulfill the great commission. We also find in the New Testament that the ministry of the apostles was always to form local New Testament Churches. It is therefore also the pattern of the New Testament that we follow. This must be our priority also because it is the only way to have a lasting ministry. When the evangelist leaves after having led many to Christ, what will happen to the new converts? If I go as a missionary and even start a church, but never lead it to a place that it can carry on alone, what will happen the day I leave? We must form indigenous Baptist

churches that need only to depend on the Lord to do the job God has called them to do. Of lesser, but still great importance we must recognize that one of the Baptist distinctives is that of a local autonomous church. We have no head quarters, no Vatican, not even the mission board or the missionary's house.

Our priority is to form indigenous local churches because that is the **Principle** laid down in scripture.

***Go** ye therefore, and **teach** all nations, **baptizing** them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: **Teaching them to observe** all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, [even] unto the end of the world. Amen. Matthew 28:19-20*

Without any doubt, He did send us out to preach the gospel and win souls. However, that was only the first step. We are then to baptize them and to teach them. They need not only to have head knowledge, but also a practical faith. It doesn't take much time to preach a salvation message but to

teach people to observe the message calls for a life time. We find Paul affirming this truth in Ephesians 4:11-16:

*And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the **perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:** Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: **That we [henceforth] be no more children,** tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, [and] cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, [even] Christ: From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, **maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.***

The work of the missionary is to perfect the saints. We are to carry them to the point of maturity that they will be able to do the work of a local church. That is God's plan. We need evangelists. We need every gift that God has given to his church but the end result of our ministry ought to be a local, indigenous church that will be able to carry on the work of winning souls and discipling them.

Therefore tract distribution, Sunday school, vacation bible school, street preaching and literally every ministry we have should produce the end result of indigenous, local churches. The missionary must win souls, he must train them, and he must do the work of a pastor at least for a time. Everything you do should have as an end result the preparation of men and women to carry on the work of our God in a local church.

Secondly, we find that the indigenous church follows the New Testament pattern. Wherever Paul went, he left a trail of local assemblies that were carrying on the same work that he did. The word "church" or "churches" is mentioned in the bible 114 times. Nine of Paul's letters were written to local churches and the others to individuals. In the book of Acts, Paul leaves

a trail of local churches in his wake and even speaks of how he organizes them.

*And from Miletus he sent to Ephesus, and called the **elders of the church**. And when they were come to him, he said unto them, Ye know, from the first day that I came into Asia, **after what manner I have been with you at all seasons, Serving the Lord with all humility of mind, and with many tears**, and temptations, which befell me by the lying in wait of the Jews: **[And] how I kept back nothing that was profitable [unto you]**, but have shewed you, and have taught you **publickly**, and from **house to house**, Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ. And now, behold, I go bound in the spirit unto Jerusalem, not knowing the things that shall befall me there: Save that the Holy Ghost witnesseth in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions abide me. But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God. And now,*

*behold, I know that ye all, among whom I have gone preaching the kingdom of God, shall see my face no more. Wherefore I take you to record this day, that I [am] pure from the blood of all [men]. For **I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God**. Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, **over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God**, which he hath purchased with his own blood. For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them. Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears. And now, brethren, **I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified.** Acts 20:17-32.*

As Paul plans to leave he calls several pastors or elders to him and explains everything to them. He is concerned for the church which Jesus purchased with his own blood. He leaves



instructions to care for the church and to see that "his flock" is cared for.

Paul also wrote to one of his disciples and let him know that his job was to set the churches in order and help them ordain pastors, etc. Paul was concerned for the local church. He took time to organize and even when he didn't or couldn't he left one of his disciples to do so. The indigenous church is the New Testament pattern.

*Titus 1:5 For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest **set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders** in every city, as I had appointed thee:*

A study of Paul's first missionary journey shows that he organized local churches and commended them to the Lord. The book of Acts reveals him returning to the churches that he founded to see that all still goes well in each church and that the folks are staying faithful. We see him writing letters to his churches for the very same reason.

And **when they had preached the gospel to that city, and had taught many**, they returned again to Lystra, and [to] Iconium, and Antioch, **Confirming** the souls of the disciples, [and] **exhorting them to continue in the faith**, and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God. And when they had **ordained them elders in every church**, and had prayed with fasting, they **commended** them to the Lord, on whom they believed. And after they had passed throughout Pisidia, they came to Pamphylia. And when they had preached the word in Perga, they went down into Attalia: And thence sailed to Antioch, from whence they had been recommended to the grace of God for the work which they fulfilled. And when they were come, and had gathered the church together, they rehearsed all that God had done with them, and how he had opened the door of faith unto the Gentiles. Acts 14:21-27

Those who do the work of the New Testament missionary must concern themselves with the starting and maturing of indigenous, Baptist churches. Our Bible Institute can never be an end in itself, but rather must be a "means to the ends" of

planting indigenous, Baptist churches.

Jesus was concerned with the building of the church (Matthew 16:18), as were apostles. Throughout history the local church is what has shaped our own country. History shows the influence of the Methodist circuit rider and his small churches, as well as the Baptists who did the same thing. It was small groups of people gathering together to study God's word, obeying him in winning souls, and observing ordinances of the local church that has carried the gospel to each of us. We must teach those who follow us to do the same.

The indigenous church is also the only way we will have any **PERMANENCE** in our work. I can only live so long. I can preach and do the work of a missionary only so long and can reach only so far with my ministry. However if I can plant a local, indigenous church, when I am dead and gone they can still be preaching the gospel to others. While I can only reach a handful, the church can reach more and can train others to do the same. If they kick us out of the country, as has happened in so many communist countries in the past, the way we will continue to have a ministry is by having people

trained to do the work. The indigenous church can exist without outside help or influence. The indigenous church will support itself and does not depend on the missionary for its existence. The indigenous church will continue to plant other churches in her own country and even around the world. The daughter church many times will do more than the mother. Consider that the church in the United States that came from Europe is now carrying the gospel back to the land of the mother church.

Finally it should be noted that the church must be indigenous because that is a **peculiarity** of the Baptist distinctive. As Baptists we believe in local autonomous churches. It has been our history to establish local churches that governed themselves. We have never had a headquarters that made the rules, supported our pastor, or received our money. How can the missionary go to the field as a Baptist and do anything less than a Baptist? As Baptists, no one pays our bills, calls our pastor or makes our decisions. As Baptists, we do things differently because we have that right and privilege as an independent group. We are autonomous. We are indigenous. Make it your priority on the field to establish

an indigenous church, just like you have here in your home church.

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# Training National Leadership

The indigenous church depends on its leadership. It has been said, "everything rises and falls on leadership." If we win people, baptize them and help them get a building, what will happen when we leave? Think of what would happen in America if the church were to lose its pastor and were unable to get a pastor. We all know what would be the results and have even seen it with our own eyes. It will surely happen on the mission field and to worse ends.

The **PURPOSE** of discipleship is to produce leaders who can produce others to do the work. Without men who can do the work, who know how to pray, preach, visit, and do the work of a pastor, we will leave the church to die. Often the missionaries' excuse is that the nationals will never do it as well as we do. If that is the truth, then whose fault is it? I believe that the reason nationals do not do the job as well as we do is that we do not teach them well enough. We need more than a few hours each day in the classroom. If they have only a Sunday School knowledge about the level of one of

our high schoolers the fault lies with the missionary. We must do more than we have been doing. Book learning is not enough. The desire and ability to do the work is more "caught than taught." It is interesting to notice in the scriptures that the men of God who accomplished something with their lives and ministry did so by multiplying themselves. We must reproduce ourselves if we really want to shake our country for Christ. If we desire to see the church grow it must depend on more than **my** spiritual life, my preaching, and my ministry. Notice what Paul says in II Timothy 2:1-2:

*Thou therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also.*

Paul tells his disciple (referred to as son) to take what he has heard from Paul and to commit it to faithful men. That is exactly our job. Strong's Concordance indicates that the word commit here means:

*Commit the keeping of, to set before (one) in teaching; to set forth (from one's self), to explain, to place down (from one's self or for one's self) with any one, to deposit; to intrust, commit to one's charge.*

Many missionaries have a problem entrusting the work to the nationals. Nationals have stated that they are treated like children. Often the "great white father" arrives on the scene and does not want to trust the people he works with. Yet if we do not train them so we can trust them we will never do the work as we should. Paul never stayed any where very long. He did not have time to do the work in depth, but he did leave men he trained to do the work and by that multiply himself in the ministry.

Even if I can do a good job preaching and building **one** local church I will never shake my city or the country. Without their reaching their people and pastoring their churches, the results will be very limited. The missionaries' job is to start, train, and get them going doing the work of reaching their people in their country and culture. God has not called us to pastor, but to be missionaries. Though the jobs are very



similar, they are very different.

We learn from the Bible **PAST** how God did the work through his men. Consider Moses and Joshua; Eli and Samuel; Elijah, Elisha, and the prophets that followed both of them; Jesus and the twelve; Paul, Timothy and Titus. Each of these leaders and others had men who served them, traveled with them and so learned to do the work. They then upon the passing or leaving of the teacher took his place to carry on the work. Jesus came and called out some men. He literally lived with them and taught them how to do the work both by example and teaching. After His ministry the church was not large, but the foundation was laid. Consider the life of Paul. Why was he never alone? Notice the salutation from several Pauline epistles:

***Paul**, called [to be] an apostle of Jesus Christ through the will of God, **and Sosthenes [our] brother**, Unto the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called [to be] saints, with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours: I Cor. 1:1-2*

**Paul**, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, **and Timothy [our] brother**, unto the church of God which is at Corinth, with all the saints which are in all Achaia: II Cor 1:1

**Paul, an apostle**, (not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ, and God the Father, who raised him from the dead;) **And all the brethren which are with me**, unto the churches of Galatia: Gal 1:1-2

**Paul and Timotheus, the servants of Jesus Christ**, to all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons: Philipians 1:1

**Paul**, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, **and Timotheus [our] brother**, To the saints and faithful brethren in Christ which are at Colosse: Grace [be] unto you, and peace, from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Col. 1:1-2

***Paul, and Silvanus, and Timotheus,*** unto the church of the Thessalonians [which is] in God the Father and [in] the Lord Jesus Christ: Grace [be] unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ. I Thes. 1:1

***Paul, and Silvanus, and Timotheus,*** unto the church of the Thessalonians in God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ: II Thes. 2:1

***Paul,*** a prisoner of Jesus Christ, ***and Timothy [our] brother,*** unto Philemon our dearly beloved, and fellow labourer, Phm 1:1

In eight of the thirteen or fourteen books that Paul wrote he sends the letter from himself and someone that was with him. It is hard to find Paul alone. Consider Paul's relationship to Timothy; maybe the most well known of his followers.

Paul speaks of Timothy by name at least 17 times in his letters. Paul considers him to be his son and knows well his family (II Tim. 1:1-5). They worked together. They traveled together and from Acts 16:1-4 we hardly see them apart and

even when apart it is to do the work and fulfill the desires of Paul!

*Acts 19:22 **So he sent** into Macedonia two of them that ministered unto him, **Timotheus and Erastus**; but he himself stayed in Asia for a season.*

*1 Cor. 4:17 For this cause have **I sent unto you Timotheus**, who is my beloved son, and faithful in the Lord, who shall bring you into remembrance of my ways which be in Christ, as I teach every where in every church.*

The word sent found here means:

*To order (one) to go to a place appointed, to send away, dismiss, to order one to depart, send off. (Strong's Concordance)*

You can see that Paul and Timothy had a very special relationship. Paul calls him his workfellow in Romans 16:21. They had worked together so long and Paul had such confidence in Timothy that he could say:

*1 Cor. 16:10-11 Now if Timotheus come, see that he may be with you without fear: for he worketh the work of the Lord, **as I also [do]**. Let no man therefore despise him: but conduct him forth in peace, that he may come unto me: for I look for him with the brethren.*

It might be difficult to understand what Paul meant when he said "as I also do" if we did not have his meaning in I Cor 4:17:

*For this cause have I sent unto you Timotheus, who is my beloved son, and faithful in the Lord, **who shall bring you into remembrance of my ways** which be in Christ, **as I teach every where** in every church.*

I believe it is obvious that Timothy had so learned the ways of Paul that it brought to remembrance Paul (made folks think of Paul) when Timothy did the work. I can hear the cries of folks as they say we need to be careful about following a man. We need to look only to Jesus and that is correct. However the scriptures teach us to live and be so that we too

can do as Paul did and taught. All would agree that we should live and be such that we can be an example. The Bible is clear here again.

*1 Tim. 4:12 Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an **example** of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity.*

All would surely agree that Jesus is to be our example, but Paul wanted Timothy to so live that he could be that example.

*1 Peter 2:21 For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an **example**, that ye should **follow his steps**:*

The definition of "example," using the various Greek words found in the New Testament, according to Strong's and the leccicon are as follows:

*"Fashion, manner, the mark of a stroke or blow, print, a figure formed by a blow or impression; hence a figure, an example; in the technical sense, the pattern in conformity*

*to which a thing must be made; in an ethical sense, a dissuasive example, a pattern of warning: of ruinous events which serve as admonitions or warnings to others; **an example to be imitated: of men worthy of imitation;** pattern, for imitation, of the thing to be imitated or, of a thing to be shunned."*

The **PREACHING** of Paul and other Bible writers is interesting and obviously shows us how we can do this work of discipleship. Paul uses the word follow and followers frequently in his letters. He unashamedly tells folks to follow him. The meaning of that word is something shocking to us today. However it is the key if we are to produce leaders with the qualities that Paul produced.

*2 Thes. 3:7 For yourselves know how ye ought to **follow us**: for we behaved not ourselves disorderly among you;*

*2 Thes. 3:9 Not because we have not power, but to make ourselves an ensample unto you to **follow us**.*

*Heb. 13:7 Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God: whose faith **follow**, considering the end of [their] conversation.*

*3 John 1:11 Beloved, **follow** not that which is evil, but that which is good. He that doeth good is of God: but he that doeth evil hath not seen God.*

*1 Cor. 4:16 Wherefore I beseech you, **be ye followers of me.***

*1 Cor. 11:1 **Be ye followers of me**, even as I also [am] of Christ.*

*Eph. 5:1 Be ye therefore **followers of God**, as dear children;*

*1 Thes. 1:6 And ye became **followers of us**, and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Ghost:*



*1 Thes. 2:14 For ye, brethren, became **followers of the churches** of God which in Judaea are in Christ Jesus: for ye also have suffered like things of your own countrymen, even as they[have] of the Jews:*

*Heb. 6:12 That ye be not slothful, but **followers** of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises.*

*1 Peter 3:13 And who [is] he that will harm you, if ye be **follower** of that which is good ?*

The words follow and followers comes from a very interesting word in the Greek language. For we preachers it is very scary to consider that someone would really follow me. After all we preach that they should follow Christ. Consider Strong's definition of the word to follow or followers:

*"Middle voice from mimos (a "mimic"); follow, to imitate: any one, follower, an imitator"*

Paul literally used the word "to mimic" when he spoke with his own followers. Repeatedly we are encouraged by scripture

to mimic Christian leaders. Not only did Paul's followers mimic him but in I Thessalonians 2:14 we find that even the church in Thesalonica followed, mimicked, or imitated the churches of Judea.

*For ye, brethren, became followers of the churches of God which in Judaea are in Christ Jesus: for ye also have suffered like things of your own countrymen, even as they [have] of the Jews:*

That is our job. We are to leave a good fundamental church here in the states that can be a pattern and model for the church in the foreign country. That does not violate the culture or the indigenous principle as long as we handle it right. They too should go soulwinning, tithe, pray, give to missions and do all the work that our churches here should do.

Paul had no fear in saying that folks should mimic him. He told Timothy to mimic him and he did so to the point that Paul could tell folks that Timothy would remind them of him and his ways.

*Php 3:17 Brethren, **be followers together of me**, and mark them which walk so as ye have **us for an ensample**.*

*2Th 3:9 Not because we have not power, but to make ourselves an ensample unto you **to follow us**.*

Hopefully having understood the purpose, past, and preaching that we have already covered you are ready to consider the **PLAN** for developing leadership in the local church on the mission field. We must live with our people. If we consider the ministry of our Lord Jesus Christ and the Apostle Paul we can see what a missionary is to do. Jesus came here from a different country, a different culture and had to communicate to us the need to learn to think like his Father and to live a different life. His way of doing this was to choose and call out several leaders with whom he would live for the next three and one half years. They saw him everyday. They learned by hearing, seeing, and doing. The work is more "caught than taught". We must love our people enough to be willing to spend time with them. Don't give them only the book knowledge but the actual living. We will teach them as

we go and do. If they can see it in the context of an actual life it will mean much more to them. This is not a professional ministry. Many would like to have a ministry where they can go to the pulpit and preach and then go to the class to teach but never really give of themselves. Someone will say "but familiarity breeds contempt". I am afraid that is used more as an excuse than a reason. Obviously Jesus nor Paul thought like that because they spend great amounts of time with their folks.

We will have to decide what to teach our folks. This is not just a fellowship ministry. It is a teaching ministry. We must know what we want them to learn and where we want them to go spiritually. Then we teach and live what our folks need. They need to pray with us. They need to visit or go soulwinning with us. This does not discount the need for good theological study, but only states the need for real personal work. Jesus developed great leaders who could go on as did Paul and we do not find one Bible school. Life was their school.

This plan calls for some very demanding **PREREQUISITES**. To be an example the missionary has to be transparent. He must be open and honest. He must be what he wants his people to become. If he is not faithful to be in church, how can he expect his people to do so. He must be a tither. He must have a strong daily walk with the Lord. Before I can say "Hey mimic me--imitate me", I will have to work on my personal spiritual life. We have plenty who know how to do but don't do. It is the hour to have folks who both do and say.

The missionary must be worthy of imitation. Too many missionaries are not living as they should on the field, such as traveling on Sunday to get somewhere when they would scold their people for skipping church; not visiting but asking the folks to go; taking pictures of the work the national does to get credit for it. (Believe me, the national knows what you are doing.) He learns to be and do exactly what you are doing. My best preaching will be what my life does and not what I say from the pulpit. If all the folks need is my preaching we would be better off to buy some good books and tapes of the really big guns who can do better than us and send them. What they need is a man whose life they may see and copy.

There are many **PROBLEMS** with this way of doing the work. It takes longer and is far more demanding. It can cause jealousy. After all, didn't Jesus have his inner circle and even different levels of disciples? There were the regular folks. Then we find seventy, and later we see the twelve, and of this group we have three most intimate, and of these three we have the disciple that Jesus loved. Did you ever notice that Jesus did not have much private time. Paul had to go to prison to be alone and even there they came to see and minister to him always.

Yes, some will take advantage of you but that is to be expected. Did not Paul have his Demas and Jesus his Judas? We could spend much time investigating this but we all realize what is meant. Some will come only because you are an American and rich. Others will come because they really want what you have. Didn't folks follow Jesus for the food and miracles? He said they did. You will hurt more this way because you will invest so much of your life in them and some will still deceive you and hurt you. If we look at the problems we will have many excuses not to disciple men, but we must consider what Jesus did. It was his plan to spend much time

with certain folks to make leaders of them.

Discipling men is not just teaching them or bossing them around. It means loving them and spending time with them -- working and playing. You must really accept their culture and language. Without that you will never really disciple them. It hurts national people when missionaries are there and never really learn their language well. Many would rather mix with North Americans and eat only American foods. Jesus was one of them even though he really wasn't.

It seems that Paul had the same problems we face today on the mission field. We see Paul, who loves the people with all of his heart and is really giving himself, sacrificing to be what he needs to be to reach this people:

*1 Cor 9:19-23 For though I be free from all [men], yet **have I made myself servant unto all**, that I might gain the more. And unto the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews; to them that are under the law, as under the law, that I might gain them that are under the law; To them that are without law, as without law, (being*

*not without law to God, but under the law to Christ,) that I might gain them that are without law. To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak: **I am made all things to all [men], that I might by all means save some.** And this I do for the gospel's sake, that I might be partaker thereof with [you].*

Paul does all he can. He has become one of them. He has adapted to their culture. He is not trying to make Jews out of them, but just give them the gospel. Peter comes along and gets right in there with them until others come, then we see what he really thought of the national people.

*Gal. 2:11-14 But when Peter was come to Antioch, I withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed. For before that certain came from James, **he did eat with the Gentiles:** but when they were come, **he withdrew and separated himself,** fearing them which were of the circumcision. And the other Jews dissembled likewise with him; insomuch that Barnabas also was carried away with their dissimulation. But when I saw that they **walked not uprightly according to the truth of***



***the gospel, I said unto Peter before [them] all, If thou, being a Jew, livest after the manner of Gentiles, and not as do the Jews, why compellest thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews?***

The problem is that we have to lose a little of our own culture or at least add theirs. We can not reach them trying to separate ourselves from them. We all love America but they do not need America nor her ways. They need the gospel. You can not live there thinking of here and making your home a "little America". You must become one of them. Maybe that it doesn't make sense or you don't like it, but you are in their country not yours.

We have the **PROMISE** of great things to come when we can train them to reach their own people. We need to work ourselves out of a job if that were possible. We must train them. Our primary job is to get them trained so that they can do the work. My job is not really to win souls. Many evangelists go to foreign countries and return telling of the thousands saved but the missionary can not find them the next week. We must not only get them to pray a prayer, but to be

baptized, learn and then train others. I am only one, but if I can but train others to do what I can do I will certainly reach out more. D. L. Moody said "I would rather teach ten men to do the work than do the work of ten men".

If we can train others who can train others who can train others, soon we can reach a country with the gospel. As much as we like the thought of large powerful churches here in the states we must all admit that the gospel was carried to our country by country preachers in small, one room churches. Many were circuit riding preachers who often pastored several churches. The missionary may be great but he can not do what 100 preachers can do. We must train preachers and leaders. As we prepare them really well we will reach our country. In all honesty Paul did not do much in one place for much time. But he did train men who could and would stay. That is what we must have. The evangelist comes and gets all the glory, but it is the pastor who stays and does the nitty gritty everyday work. It is your job to prepare just such a man.

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# Salvation: The First Objective

By Charles Brock

*Indigenous Church Planting A Practical Journey p. 154-162*

Only as salvation is taken very seriously can one expect to be successful in planting churches. It is at this point where many fail. Therefore we will look at the Biblical concept of salvation for a moment. It is amazing how routine and watered down the concept of salvation has become, not only in theory, but even more in practical application. Well-intentioned, highly-educated missionaries often have been lulled to sleep and treat salvation too lightly.

There is a great deal of discussion about the back door problem of our churches. So many come in only to go out the back door almost unnoticed. I am convinced it is not a back door problem as much as it is a front door problem. Some will say we just need better follow up, and there is no doubt about that. But if strong and healthy churches are to be planted, a proper understanding of salvation must be held by the church

planter. Great care should be taken to choose a strategy or method of communication of the Gospel which assures the reaching of this objective as much as possible. Most any method will work part of the time to some degree, but when the final product hangs in the balance, it is imperative that the planter examine and choose the method which most effectively communicates the Gospel that leads to new life.

There are areas of the world where the people are very open and quickly make decisions. In many developing nations an American preaching a strong message will find it easy to get scores of decisions; yet if one knows the culture and religious background, he will know that many will make decisions for reasons other than the salvation the foreigner is talking about. Quite often it is a joke when presumptuous foreigners come in and quickly win so many to Christ. It is amazing how well a foreigner can fully "understand" the culture in one week while many missionaries still try to figure it out after many years of living in the land. One crusade leader complained that the missionaries must not be doing anything since he could win more to Christ in a week than they win in a year. At a victory banquet following a week-long

crusade in Manila, one fellow gave this testimony. "I went house to house and met the families. I would tell them, 'What I have to share is too important to share with just a few. Go invite neighbors in and I will tell you the good news.' In no time, there would be twenty people in the house and in fifteen minutes all of them were saved and I just kept doing this all day long." A person who has lived in Manila and knows the culture and religion will know this was Asian hospitality. But it goes on and on with the blessing of sending agencies and is endured by local missionaries who know that often it is a game, a fatal one. Cheap grace has become such a common feature of the American religious scene that imported preachers often transfer what they know and have practiced at home. This is not enough in a pagan culture that often strives to please the guest at any cost.

How do many preachers approach getting people saved? For a moment let us go to a typical evangelistic meeting. The preacher preaches a good sermon. He gives an invitation for people to make a decision. Assume the crowd is made up of nominal Christians who know little about the Bible, even though they may have great respect for it. They may even

know about Christ and have a great deal of respect for Him. They may also believe that one has to do good works and go through many religious rituals in order to be put right with God. They may believe Mary to be the mother of God and co-redemptress. The preacher asks everyone who wants to go to heaven to raise their hands. Most hands go up since everyone wants to go to heaven someday. Then with the people trapped, the preacher asks for all those who raised their hands to come to the front. The people do not know what is going to happen at the front when they go forward. Some may think there will be a free sack of rice. Others may go just to please the guest speaker. Some may go so they can create a position wherein the speaker becomes indebted to them for doing his bidding. It is a simple game of social security that works like this. Every time a person can please or do something for someone else, it is like putting something in the bank. In the evangelistic service the speaker becomes indebted to the one who did something for him, which was going forward.

Those who respond to the invitation are greeted by the preacher, pastor, or some counselor. The preacher may say something like this: "Welcome, we are glad you came tonight.

Do you want to receive Christ as your Savior?" "Yes," the person says. "Do you believe that you are a sinner?" Again, the answer is yes. "Do you want to go to heaven when you die?" Again, it is yes. "Do you believe that Jesus died on the cross for you and that He was raised from the grave?," Yes, is the answer. "Will you pray this prayer after me?" Yes, again. The preacher does not ask the seeker to pray since it might be too difficult and may embarrass him. So the preacher prays and asks the person to repeat what he says. After the prayer the preacher gives a hearty handshake and joyfully announces that the seeker now is a child of God and on his way to heaven. He may ask the seeker, "Do you feel better?" and quickly states to those observing, "I know he does; look at that smile on his face." Can you imagine Jesus using this approach? This is easy believism and cheap grace.

There is no doubt that some really are saved in such situations, but in church planting you do not want a group where one or two out of twenty are really saved. This is the back door problem some talk about. We "get them in" and wonder why they don't stay.

Go back to the counseling session for a moment. What if the preacher asks questions like this: Are you a sinner? Do you believe that Christ is the Savior of the world? Do you believe that Mary is co-redemptress and Mother of God? In Mexico City or Manila the answer will be yes to all of the above questions. This raises the question of whether a person can be saved when having more than one object of saving faith. Acts 4:12 says no; it must be Christ alone.

When my family went to the Philippines, we had a young woman working for us in our home. She came from a religious background which allowed her to know in general about God, Jesus, Mary, etc. But she had no concept of what it meant to be saved. She thought she was a Christian because of her infant baptism and the accumulation of good works. Our prayer was that through exposure to the Bible she would come to know Christ in a real and personal way. She proved to be stubborn. No doubt she had received warnings from home about this new religion of her employers. After many months she began attending an evangelical church with her friends. Week after week I would ask her if anything had happened during the worship service. One day she said, "Yes, something



happened today." I quickly asked what it was and she replied, "After the preacher preached, an invitation was given for those who wanted to accept Christ to come forward. I felt as if a hand was pushing me to go to the front, so I did." "Then what happened," I asked? She said, "They gave me a card, and asked me to sit down and fill it out." "Then what?" "We all stood at the front and the preacher took the cards and gave our names and then people came by and shook hands with us." "Then what?" I asked. "That was all," she said. Cheap grace?

By the time this conversation took place her guard was firmly up again and we never found another time when it could be penetrated. The young woman later married and moved away. One day my wife and I went to visit her and see her new baby. As she left the baby in the room she was careful to pin a cross on the gown so the baby would be protected. She was so close, but never again to be open to the Gospel in the same way as she was on that potentially eventful Sunday morning. The preacher was sincere, highly educated, but perhaps in the higher levels where education had taken him, he could not deal with the subject of salvation in a real, serious way. Cheap

grace abounds from fear of hurting feelings and from a desire to be successful.

From this true story we are reminded that searching, hoping, is not the same as finding. Inquiring is not the same as acquiring. The rich young ruler ran to Jesus with the right questions, with sincerity, searching, but he went away lost. A person putting up a hand indicating that he wants to follow Jesus is not necessarily the same as following Jesus. People may come forward to find out, to inquire, but they often need help in knowing what they are to do and how to do it. The man who asks, "What must I do to be saved?" is not saved until he repents of his sin and trusts Jesus Christ as his Savior.

How does all this relate to indigenous church planting? It relates to the very core of it, for if we slip up at this point, there is nothing more to do in church planting.

Salvation is of greatest importance if the church planter sees people as lost when they do not know Christ as personal Savior. The planter must know that people are eternally lost without Christ. When conducting church planting seminars in

one country, I found that the normal number of new churches planted by that group in an entire year is four to six. As I visited with missionaries and tried to understand why the growth was so slow, I found several contributing factors. The materialistic and religious climate was no small factor, but the problem may have been more in the theology of some of those who should have been planting churches. It was in the area of salvation. A missionary who had spent a lifetime in the country said the biggest problem was universalism, a doctrine that saturates pastors and higher institutions of learning. To the universalist, sin is not serious, therefore the cross fades into insignificance. It was no surprise to learn that those pastors don't give an invitation. If people are not lost, why give an invitation?

If missionaries and pastors do not see people as lost eternally unless they receive Christ and Him alone, there is no hope for rapid church planting or growth. As I was lecturing in a missions class in a major seminary in the United States, a young man stood up and scolded me because I seemed to be saying that a person devoted in his religion may be lost if he has not been born again. He said, "Don't you know that we are

in the ecumenical era and that those people are our brothers?" (With this kind of theological climate, it was not a surprise when in another class another young man stood up and told me that what I was saying was offensive. He said, "You seem to be saying that one must believe in the virgin birth to be a Christian.")

If a person is going to heaven anyway, with or without faith in Christ, there is no urgency, not even a need to proclaim the Gospel and plant churches. Theology does make a difference in church planting.

The church planter must help the unsaved to understand they are lost. Until a person is lost, he cannot be found. Only when one knows he is guilty of the sin of rejecting God's only Son, can he repent of that sin, the sin that condemns him. The Good News can be Good News only when a person understands and feels responsible for his sinful position. It is not enough to tell a person that God loves him. It is not enough only to tell a person to believe. Unless the carrier of the Good News points out the sin problem, it is not likely a person will ever understand it and feel guilty. A theological

concept of salvation that takes lightly sin and repentance may produce a religious group but not a true church.

In Asia, loss of face is something to be avoided, even at great cost. People kill simply over loss of face. But unless a person comes to a total loss of face, he can never go to heaven. Repentance is an absolute necessity before a person can know Christ. Repentance means admitting that, up to this point, I have been wrong in my attitudes and actions toward God. It involves a deep sorrow and turning away from one kind of life to embrace another. It's the end of passing the buck. The old personal self must die. This is painful, but without it, there is no healing.

The tendency is to try to make people feel good, even if it means ignoring sin and its consequences. Some will try to excuse themselves by blaming culture and allowing culture to supersede the Bible in standard setting.

Many evangelicals confront people with a partial Gospel, the believe and receive part, and ignore the lordship part. When witnessing or counseling with someone, we use such verses as

Romans 3:23; Romans 10:9-10; John 1:12; 3:15-18,36; Ephesians 2-8-9; John 5:24; and a few others. These are great verses to use in leading a person to saving faith in Christ, but there is more.

## **How did Jesus approach the subject of salvation?**

We see His approach in John 3 when he tells a religious leader that his physical birth into a Jewish religion was not enough and if he expected to ever see heaven, he would have to have a radical change that could come only from above. He said it would be so revolutionary it would be like having a complete new start, a new birth, It was a tough approach, calling for a total change in lifestyle.

Again, we see His approach in Mark 10:17-22. To the rich young ruler He said that if the young man wanted to be His disciple, he must demonstrate that Christ was number one in all of his living. Jesus challenged him to demonstrate his love and commitment by selling all he had and giving it to the poor. Jesus was saying it was all or nothing. The young man went

away lost, because he failed the test.

When addressing a crowd as recorded in Luke 14:25-33, Jesus told of the necessity of counting the cost before following Him. He was talking to people who were interested but had not made a firm decision. Jesus gives illustrations of the instances in life when it is only reasonable for a person to look closely at what he is getting into before beginning. He concludes in verse 33: *"In the same way, " concluded Jesus, "None of you can be my disciple unless he gives up everything he has."*

Jesus talked about Lordship when He confronted people with the Gospel. A man once said to me, "Won't you turn people off if you talk to them about Lordship before they are saved?" Of course, some will turn back, just as happened in the experiences of Jesus. But to get genuine converts in less number is so much better than getting a few converts mixed in with a lot of false converts.

The full Gospel will include a message about sin and the love of God as manifested in Christ's death and resurrection. It must include man's necessary response to God's invitation. It

is a response of faith in the finished Work of Christ. It is a surrender of all a person knows about himself to all of Christ that he knows. It is a surrender that requires repentance of the sin of unbelief. It is a surrender that involves the will, emotions, and body.

The church planter must come to the conclusion that salvation is the beginning point of church planting and without it, or to minimize it, leaves no place to go. The planter must decide not only the method of communication, but also the particular portion of Scripture that best brings a group of people to genuine saving faith.

In my experience, which is shared by countless others in many nations, I have found **prolonged exposure to the Word** is the best way to assure that people make genuine decisions. The Gospel of John has been my choice of Scripture to use in bringing the salvation message to the lost.

At this time we will examine closely a technique of Bible study using *Good News For You* based on the Gospel of John.



This method of Bible study will allow a prolonged exposure to the Word of God, bringing people to a saving faith in Christ.

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# **A Letter from a Bible College Student Questioning Missionaries and their Work**

1. Do you believe that the need for a missionary should be great?
2. What is the basic objective of a missionary?
3. What methods would you use in a new field?
4. What would be the idea for missions, the mission, and new missionaries?
5. What would you say would be the missionary problem?
6. What would you say has been the mistake of missionaries in the past?
7. Do you believe that today there are still missionaries with the compassion of Matthew 9:36.
8. Why do you believe that I should be a missionary?
9. Do you believe that you can influence others with the Bible who are just getting started?
10. What was the number one incident that has discouraged you in becoming a missionary?
11. How can you now help others with your past experience?
12. What is your goal as a missionary?
13. How did the idea to be a missionary come to you?

14. What would you do if did not continue to have money, would you still be a missionary?
15. Were you afraid when you started a new work?
16. Are you a missionary with goals and challenges?
17. What could you say to one who would like to be a missionary?
18. Do you believe that a young man feels confident to be a missionary since he knows the pros and cons of the Christian life?

These questions came from Jose Antonio Cutipa Ticona during his studies as a student at the Seminario Bautista Macedonia. They show the doubts, questions, and bad attitudes of many nationals.

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# **Church Planting Problems**

## **A Letter from a Disgruntled Peruvian Pastor**

The following comes from a letter written by a national pastor, Victor Astete, to the mission board of the Missionary. I have purposely left out the names of the different individuals so as not to embarrass anyone. My name is in the article and I leave it there so you will know that missionaries do suffer these attacks, personally. The letter was translated by the veteran missionary who is under attack in the letter.

Beginning now are the notes either of the missionary or the national pastor for you to consider.

**I have purposely left Victor's sentence structure and punctuation**

Urubamba

January, 1995

Mr. C\*\*\*\*\* N\*\*\*\*\*. U.S.A.

Dear Brother:

After an affectionate greeting, desiring success in your ministry, I write you this present letter that I hope accomplishes its objectives.

**1.** This is a personal letter, but I am sure, that it encloses the feelings of many brothers, starting with our own congregation, and that of other congregations in Cuzco as well.

**2.** I am Pastor Victor Astete of the Church of Urubamba, I have known Christ since I was a child, since having use of reason I have known the Baptist Church, I practically grew up with the missionaries of B\*\*\*\*\* M\*\*\*\*\*-M\*\*\*\*\*

**3.** I perceive that you must be aware of the latest events that have happened in our city. On last October 20, 95% of the

congregation decided to separate from B\*\*\*\* M\*\*\*\*-

M\*\*\*\*\* and I have thought it convenient to give you our version of the facts, with the desire that you have a better idea of what happened..

**4.** In February of 1993, Brother R\*\*\*\*\* W\*\*\*\*\* gave me an invitation to take charge of the Church in Urubamba, a work that was started some 8 or 10 years before but resulting in disappointment, there had been no progress nor blessing of any sort. When we got to the church, we found only 10 brethren involved in the work and the majority of them in sin, but on the day of the separation there were now 130 people. My differences with the missionaries started when manifested that in neither theory nor in practice was I in agreement with the strange doctrine of second degree separation, for various reasons:

First for considering it antibiblical, in repeated occasions, the missionaries were incapable of showing me in the Bible the above mentioned doctrine.

For being new, in the seminaries and institutes this is not taught implicitly nor explicitly.

**5.** For being such a difficult presentation, the brethren including some leaders never finish understanding it.

**6.** I comprehend that you must have a similar conviction as the missionaries and I have a heartfelt respect for that, but my protest goes out and this is another powerful reason, in the sense that even the missionaries in practice have not fulfilled nor practiced the above mentioned doctrine.

The week that just passed, starting with the eighth -of January, a campaign was planned in the premises of B\*\*\*\* M\*\*\*-M\*\*\*\*\*, those in charge were youth from the church of Hunter of Arequipa whose pastor is Missionary William Gardner. Some of our members' were intentionally invited, with the missionaries knowing that they had voluntarily left, however I advised some to attend as a sign of courtesy, What a surprise for me to learn at the end **7.** of the campaign to receive reports from the brethren from our congregation that the directors in question had exhibited Pentecostal tendencies,

they asked "wasn't this the reason for which the missionaries pushed us aside?" I know Gardner personally, I think he is an extremist, but I respect him because he is sincere, never would I have been able to imagine that our brethren, catalogued as "liberals" could think of the youth of Hunter in exactly this same way.

I remember well a conversation with William Gardner, very much like others that I sustained with the other missionaries. The end never justifies the means they told me, Biblical methods must be used to evangelize they said. **8.** How great was my surprise to see the last day of the campaign in the pickup of Daniel Muth two of the youth dressed as clowns, they gave out tickets to the children promising them giant ice creams. It even confused me more when in the nights of the campaign, the messages were preceded by **9.** presentations of comical type where jokes very common in the world were used. **10.** Only this way could the absence of Brother R\*\*\*\*\* and D\*\*\*\*\* M\*\*\*\*\* in some of the services of the campaign be understood. This event that I describe Brother is only one illustration, you could find things like these in every **11.** trajectory of the missionaries as Pastor Gerardo Reyes will



be communicating to you at an opportune time.

**12.** I tell you that after organizing the church and having singular growth, the missionaries warned of the identification of the brethren with our ministry, piling up an organized effort to convince the church that we were not of God, **13.** the autonomy of the local church was impunity trampled on in a special form by R\*\*\*\*\* W\*\*\*\*\* who leaving his labors in the city of Cuzco visited our church summoning the brethren to a meeting to make charges against my person, without obtaining one favorable answer; this had its culminating **14.** factor when they organized on October 17 a private meeting behind my back **15.** with some of the brethren to convince them of my problems of testimony of 8 years ago. The brethren invited were considered "rescuable", those considered to be of my inclination were olímpically ??? (brother!!!!) pushed **16.** aside. Some of the brethren asked about their pastor, it wasn't ethical to make charges behind my back, receiving as an answer that we had been invited, something that was totally false. Not being convinced the brethren asked for a meeting for the next Sunday insisting that Missionary R\*\*\*\*\* **17.** show proofs of the terrible accusations.

Upon arrival of the day, the missionaries presented a letter in which I was prohibited to preach in that building as of that date in an eagerness to destitute the pastor even against the will of the church, it was in that meeting that it was infinitively ??? clear that a division was being projected. That meeting I will never forget, the missionaries passed from the accusers to the accused, the brethren making use of great courage told the missionaries incredible but true things. Among other questions that were never answered were:

**18.** Brother Robert, why did you bring us such a bad person in your opinion as our present pastor?

**19.** Why do we have such great blessing if the pastor is as bad as you say that he is?

**20.** Later, the brethren were in agreement that the missionaries didn't have the moral quality to make an accusation against somebody and they hadn't for seen such questioning, among other items they were told:

**21.** Why the total failure in the work after 30 years of effort? We don't know the type information these missionaries put out but I can tell you that the work at least in the city is totally deficient. The brethren recognize in J\*\*\*\*\* H\*\*\*\*\* a better identification, but even now the **22.** First Baptist Church which is directed by R\*\*\*\*\* W\*\*\*\*\* and G\*\*\*\*\* G\*\*\*\*\*, an old work is nothing exemplary and I could make a similar analysis of the work (I guess he means in general) that simply and even if it hurts to say so is a **23.** total failure. The years are many, the incalculable money invested but the fruit is almost nothing.

(I understand this next statement to be a dig, but I can't understand exactly what he is getting at.) In the opinion of many, this situation is the results of **24.** loose work at the level of leadership stamped by the missionaries who are anonymous where they live, they don't mix with the people, they don't dialogue with the unbelievers, as I said they are almost unknown except for their **25.** luxurious pickups. In living together two years in Urubamba. **26.** We never saw the missionaries give out a tract, **27.** nor visit one of the annex

works.

The leaders and brethren ask why 5 families are encased in local churches? **28.** Isn't the primary work of missionaries to plant the seed in the harvest fields? If the work of God has grown so much out in the villages it isn't **29.** to the credit of anybody but the brethren themselves who with a series of obstacles without knowing well the Word, without preparation; announce the Gospel and raise up new churches and if they love in some way, **30.** the missionaries it is for the hope of receiving some material help or their way paid to the pastor's camp, but for the rest the year they are totally abandoned, I refer to the brethren of the rural areas.

**31.** If they say they respect the local church so much, why don't they become members of one and fulfill their duties of attending punctually, tithe etc. Like we said in that meeting, the money that the Lord puts into the hand of the missionaries continues to be a mystery, at least concerning its administration. I have seen more than once when the missionaries have said in a **32.** loud voice that this money is theirs and that they can work where they want, that they don't

have to give an account to us, but we keep asking ourselves don't they receive these funds for the work in the midst of our people? **33.** Where is the social help? the only ones who have access to the missionary help are those who repeat like an automaton the thoughts their testimony isn't important, know this Brother **34.** N\*\*\*\* that favoritism is something that we brethren have noticed on the part of our missionary brothers.

**35.** Why the cold services, warmed over messages, the lack of evangelism, lack discipleship, why their legalism, why the gossip, why the pose of "sanctity", when they are capable of doing all of the above mentioned items. Doesn't the Lord say "by their fruit you will know them". I am sorry to have to tell you these things but I am sure that any brother who has been here in Cuzco for years can show you **36.** proof of each of these things that I am mentioning.

**37.** All. these were the things that the brethren mentioned, adding to this racist tendencies in some of the missionaries and **38.** signs of riches in others. Perhaps one of the things that bothers the most is their **39.** intromission into just any church using the most impeding methods to place any

leader of their preference.

**40.** After many hours in the meeting, the brethren except for four, decided to separate and go to another place to congregate. We left, **41.** pastor, deacons, secretary, treasurer, teachers leaders and brethren. Even though we had nothing, the Lord has given us all the material needs and we experience many blessings and, growth, in spite of the fact that the brethren (that stayed) and the M\*\* family visit our. people to disquiet them into returning, our brethren are firm and joyful and they tell me: "if they never were concerned about us before, now they are for some motive" and they congratulate themselves for having left, we experience better union and love for the work. We have the intention of going on **42.** Baptist, but so far as the secondary separation is concerned, we believe that it is an **43.** exegetical exaggeration for this we will try to affiliate with another mission and leave the. past behind.

**44.** Why am I writing all this, perhaps you should know what is happening and because other churches will surely follow our destination very quickly and because it is good to

think about if it is worth it or is the presence of the missionaries a blessing.

We will never deny, the contribution of the missionaries in the beginning in bringing us the Word, for that we are totally grateful, but I think it worthwhile to ask ourselves, are they more of a blessing than an obstacle at this' moment? Neither the missionaries nor have I tried to make a **45.** survey of this sort, but if it were done I think the results would be astonishing.

In spite of having separated ourselves, we still suffer in reflection of the **46.** consequences, the conditions of extreme poverty in which the students of the Institute lived here in Urubamba during the past year, the legal problems facing the locality of Baptist Mid-Missions for not subjecting themselves to the law, they have constructed a wall in spite of notification that will cause a fine according to what one official **47.** showed me yesterday of approximately \$4,500.00, the constant defamation **48.** of which we are the objects here in Cuzco, it dents in part the work that we want to do for the Lord, but in no way does it discourage us, to the contrary these pitfalls

encourage us to fight against sin armed with the armor of God.

I should say before finishing, that the situation concerns us, after all it is the work of God that suffers, for this I dare to say that a revision of your strategy of work or a **49.** reconsideration of the presence of missionaries is imperative for the good of the work of the Lord. I understand that this last reflection is jarring and painful, but perhaps it is what **50.** God is \_\_\_\_\_ to show us, his blessing far from paternalism. The Lord would know how to guide us with assurance toward better destinations. This is what we have experimented and we keep on experimenting for which we are grateful to the Lord.

I hope to contribute to your mature meditation and to receive the sense like I said in the beginning A this present (letter) of a great number of leaders and brethren that is to say at least we have been deceived by your colleagues.

As for anything else, I extend my admiration to your organization for the efforts displayed, that for some reason you don't receive desired sheaves.



In Christ.

Victor Luis Astete Cordova

Pastor

Church of Urubamba

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## **Letter by the Missionary Explaining each point of the Previous Letter**

February 23, 1995

C\*\*\*\*, I have written a short story of this whole thing. I have also translated Victor's letter. Now I want to do a running commentary on his letter. Before doing so, I just want to say this letter has been about the hardest thing that I have ever translated. First of all, it is so badly written that I would not have, believed that Victor Astete had written it if it had not been signed by him. The guy is such an excellent speaker, I would not have imagined he would have put such a poor demonstration of writing in the mail. He has running sentences that are not complete, and dangling phrases that really don't have a whole thought. I often had to guess at what he is saying. I suppose to show the level of his education, he uses high sounding words, many of which I don't remember hearing before. I asked some of the nationals with pretty good education about some of the words and none of them knew a 100 per cent of the list. I have a pretty good dictionary and not all of the words are there. Or did he misspell them so

badly that I couldn't tell what he was trying to write? The most appalling of all was his lack of knowledge in punctuation. One pastor, a graduate of the Seminary of Trujillo said, "you will have to translate that to Spanish before you put it into English."

Anyway I am sending a running commentary with the translated letter. You probably won't have time to read it all at one sitting. In fact you may not have time to read it at all, if you do, here it is.

1. Victor's own congregation would go along with what he says.

I don't think the ones in Cuzco would, certainly they would not go along with all he says. Some of the people in them would perhaps agree with some of the points he makes. I do feel a degree of anti gringo attitude in some people but nothing to the extent show here.

2. This is more or less true.

3. I doubt that you did know about much of this. The date was October 16. I know, it was my birthday, the worst I ever

had. 95% is an exaggerated amount. Depending on how you juggle the figures, the very highest he could come up with would be 75%.

4. The month is off. It was probably July.- The year was 1992.

R\*\*\*\* W\*\*\*\* didn't give him an invitation to take charge of the Church in Urubamba. " I recommended him, The church voted him in. We started services there 7 years before. Yes the results were disappointing, I would have liked to have the church up to 200 or 500. I would not have been satisfied with, a thousand. If I must be truthful, I haven't been satisfied with any work that I have ever been in. "We found 10 brethren involved in the work" is a lie anyway you look at it. Betty and I can easily remember 16 active members. If anyone was in sin we didn't know about of it, and we are certain that most of them were not. There were probably more members if we got to thinking about it. About 45 was an average Sunday service attendance. 130 is nothing but another lie. The highest service they had was 115. Of those there were exactly 35 Institute students, children, and personnel who attended the church there. That means that the work had grown by about 30 or 35, not 120. His

differences did not start with the separation issue. The guy is a crook and a scoundrel. The problem of separation was, at least in the beginning, nothing but a smoke screen. He couldn't tell the church "I am a crook, therefore the missionaries are throwing me out". It was convenient to say, "the missionaries have never been able to show me from the Bible the doctrine of second degree separation. They are not going to control me with their money. They have tried, but they never ran into a man who could think for himself before. They are not going to shove me around just because I am a Peruvian. I am going, to stand up for what is right. " He had shown us 2 or 3 years before that he held our position. On the matter of second degree separation, he builds straw men and tears them down easily. For example, "I could never hold such an impossible position. If my little daughter grows up and marries a Pentecostal, I would never be able to speak to her again. I will never be maneuvered into such a ridiculous situation." The people then think that the pastor has really thought this through. And by the way, I think Victor himself introduced the term "second degree separation" into this area.

5. It is strange that the country people can understand separation and an anthropologist can't.
6. The main problem here is that Victor gives a stupid illustration of what he says is our position and can show that we don't hold to it in practice. What he said about his daughter marrying a Pentecostal is an example.
7. There was absolutely no show of Pentecostal tendencies in those meetings. I was in one of the meetings. Some who were in all the services told me the others were carried out in the same way.
8. I didn't see the clowns in Urubramba, The same group used clowns in Cuzco a few months ago, they preached to gobs of kids in the neighborhoods who came to see them. I saw nothing wrong with it.
9. It looks like Victor is trying give the impression that the jokes were off color. That is simply not so. Many of the churches here use comical skits and dramas on special occasions. I don't remember ever seeing one that was in bad

taste.

10.I think Victor is trying to say that Robert and Dan stayed out of the services because they knew that there would be some dirty jokes, and that if we had been there, we, would have been in the position of having to call them down. We wouldn't want to do that because they are separatists. Best to stay and let them have their dirty jokes in our absence. Nonsense, I work in Cuzco. I was in my own services. Dan didn't miss any services. Anyway, this group wouldn't use anything improper anymore than I would.

11.Gerardo Reyes.! Another discontent. He came here to work, and had some problems including drinking. I don't think the Seminary knows about this part of his activity in Cuzco, but even so they wouldn't graduate him because of a bad testimony when up here. He made a faintly veiled threat to have some terrorist friends kill a local pastor if exposed, concerning one of his sins.

12.He didn't organize the church, that happened years before.

13. The autonomy of the local church was never violated. We said only that the pastor had to leave the premises of BMM. Of course, we had to tell the church why.
14. The date is wrong. It was the 13th of Oct. The railroad fraud was not 8 years before. At most it was 6, probably more like 5.
15. It is true that we had hoped that the people would be sensible about this. In fact, I had the deacon talk to the lady lawyer, she told him basically what she told me.
16. Another lie, nobody said that the pastor had been invited. Maybe we should have invited him. This meeting was not to argue. It was called to inform them that the pastor had to leave.
17. I was not asked to bring proofs, the deacon already knew as much or more than I did. However, I did take the tape recording in which Victor said he had not stolen from the missionaries. He simply had deceived us into giving him the money. The church heard the recording and over half of the



people dismissed it as being insignificant.

18. Why did I recommend him for the pastorate? Because he lied to me about his past. I told them that, it was like water off a duck's back.

19. Why so much blessing, well if he refers to attendance increase it wasn't as much as he says. From 10 to 130. Not at all. Much more exact figures would be from 45 to 75 or 80.

20. Moral quality can refer to courage. I think he is saying that the missionaries didn't have the courage to accuse somebody.

21. The work in Cuzco is nothing like the missionaries had hoped for but I doubt that it is "totally deficient."

22. I would be the last one to say that the First Baptist Church in Cuzco is an exemplary church. Frankly, I had hoped for more progress in the first year. On the other hand, all services have more than doubled. The records show that the average attendance for morning services for Jan. was 93. We

had 2 Sundays with 102. That is up from some where in the 40 1 s less than a year ago. There had been no Quechua services for many years when we came. There is an average of about 30 now. There had been no young peoples meetings for four months when Glenn started up. The first meeting had 6 with Glenn himself. In the last 5 services, the average has been 27 with a high of 33. I would say that even in Victor's vocabulary of superlatives, Glenn and his young people should rate a "singular growth".

23.I don't think any honest person could say that the work is a total failure. However, I am disappointed that it is not more, much more.

24.Maybe he is saying that missionaries have placed their stamp of approval on pastors who work loosely.

25.Luxurious pickups - I could safely say that there are hundreds of pickups and if I included automobiles, thousands of vehicles in Cuzco that cost much more than mine did, and all driven by Peruvians. In fact, when Victor was living high on the hog with railroad money, he had two pretty good cars

himself, at the same time.

26. Victor never lived two years in Urubamba with missionaries.

We were in the States on furlough. We were in Urubamba about a month after that, before moving to Cuzco. Victor was on vacation that month. The Muths are just now finishing up a year in Urubamba. This year they ran the Institute, taught 5 of the classes, directed in the construction project, helped with the radio in Cuzco, have made several visits for campaigns in the country churches. And I personally doubt that they never gave out a tract in Urubamba. As for previous years, we covered the entire city 3 times with tracts, reaching every possible home. I am sure that we could have missed some families but we tried to knock on every door.

27. This is a lie. We went at least once to what Victor calls an annex with Victor himself. Dan has made several trips this year, taking Institute students to preach. Betty and I have done the same thing even since being in Cuzco. Glenn had done this also. Tim and Barb practically lived in the villages, and still brought the church they pastored up to record highs

before going on furlough.?

28.I don't know that missionaries are encased in local churches. for instance, Dan runs the institute and makes trips to the villages. Betty and I are in a local church, but we have other ministries. And anyway, who started the church in Urubamba? Who started the first churches in Curuhasi? Chumbivilcas? other places? and Cuzco itself?

29.I would not for a minute take away any credit from the village pastors. I think many would rate up there with those any where in the world. ( off the cuff comment from Betty who just read this. "Any one of them is better than Victor, at least they are out doing something not just sitting in front of that T.V. getting fatter". And this is true. ) However, to be honest, the missionaries were quite active in the beginning in all the areas where we now have churches. I started preaching in the Curahuasi area during our first term on the field. Jack and Lois lived over there for a year under quite primitive conditions. There are 8 or 10 churches over there now. The Huchinsons also lived in Quillabamba for sometime. They worked in the country a lot while there. For

years they worked in other areas, staying days, weeks and even months. Betty and I have done the same thing. Dan and Kathleen were some 3 years in Paucartambo, which is certainly no resort city. From there they went even further up into the mountain villages, Kathleen carting a kid on her back, staying in the Indian huts, like the rest of us have done for years.

30.I think few, if any of the village churches are with us for what they hope to get out of us. Not many have gotten much.

31.This is a problem. However if I gave a complete tithe in one church, one month would be more than most of the churches get in an entire year. On the other hand, we are punctual.

32.I have never heard a missionary say this in a loud voice. In fact I think all missionaries in Cuzco and elsewhere would be very tactful the way they handle this thorny subject. Every time Victor brings this up, which has been often lately, I keep thinking of his handling of funds, especially that of the railroad company. On two separate occasions Victor has

commented to the church on the "mystery" of the missionaries' salaries. I really don't know why it bugs him so much. A rumor has been floating around for more than a year, it says that the missionaries receive money for the salaries of the national pastors. I suppose Victor has been active in pushing this rumor. Could it be that he is wondering if it is true? It could be that he mentioned it to you, to see if you would hit on that and say "haven't you been receiving your monthly support?" For my part, a far bigger mystery is what he did with the \$35,000.00 dollars that is unaccounted for with the railroad.

33.Social help? There has been a lot of that although this is in no way our main work. I remember on one Sunday afternoon at a village church, about 3 years go when Betty and I extracted 48 teeth. Tim, Dan and Glenn have been active in the same way. Through the years BMM personnel has hauled the sick and the dead. We have vaccinated village children, We have paid for births and burials. We have foot the bill for operations of about every sort. We have put hundreds of glasses on people. We have used the Mission's emergency fund on more than one occasion to help in famine

and terrorist areas. We have helped poor families on numerous occasions for different kinds of emergencies. I suppose in Victor's warped way of thinking, this is probably not social work, just "favoritism". How about the camp in Urubamba? Betty and I have put many, many, thousands of dollars into that project. The other missionaries have helped in it too. Is this not social work?

34.Favoritism! This guy is definitely an Olympic (to use some of his wording) class jerk. Scenario: I am a member of one of the churches here, I tithe \$300 or \$400 a month. The church is not his. In this case it is for sure favoritism. I know, he told me so. Jack and I put thousands of dollars into The First Baptist land and building. He let me know that it is favoritism because we didn't do it for other churches.

35.Cold services, I am not going to have clapping through the whole song service and go to the use of contemporary music to please Victor. Warmed over messages? Yes I have used them, but not to the same group of people like Victor has done. I put a date and place on the back of mine to avoid this. Apparently he doesn't. Lack of evangelism? Yes but I

want to do better in the future. Same with discipleship. I suppose not clapping and non contemporary music is legalism, not to mention refraining from "dancing in the Lord".

36. Not too many brethren in Cuzco would be in agreement with him, much less offer proof.

37. I suppose that I am the racist because I tried to get the ARRIBA girls out of here still single.

38. I don't know who shows signs of riches. I have bought several church properties, Jack has done some of that too. Maybe we are the guilty ones here.

39. I don't know of one case where a missionary placed a pastor in an organized church.

40. He says 4 stayed. That is a lie. Eight members stayed, and that is not counting 4 who had tried to become members for a period of 8 months. Victor would not receive them because he knew they were on our side. Two more would not join



because Victor was the pastor. Another was not a member for what reason, I don't know. On the first meeting after the split, 7 were received into the membership. That made a total of 15 members who actually stayed with us. This does not count the Institute students who have now returned to their villages.

41.His comment on those who left is an exaggeration. Not all the teachers left. They had only one deacon. He is a man who has had 2 divorces, 3 legal wives and at least one illegal child in between. I had told him that he could not serve directly in the ministry though he could do many other things. Maybe this is part of my "legalism". When Victor came he put him in as deacon.

42.They may go with the Southern Baptists.

43.He agreed with our position when he was out of work.

44.Maybe other churches will follow, especially if they learn there is money obtainable with the Southern Baptists.

45.Maybe it is time for a survey.

46.If he is so concerned about the poverty of the Institute students, why didn't he give the supplies he sold in the market to them? It was intended for the poor, both by the Peruvian government and the U.S. who sent it down. The organization of the Institute calls for the cooperation of the churches in sending food supplies to their students. This worked this past year. Not as well as we would like, but it has worked. This past year we were able to give work at fair pay to the students who wanted it, and most of them did. The missionaries paid for one gall bladder operation, and the birth of two babies, all of which involved students. There were other offerings to students because of different needs.

47.Of all Victor's complaints, I think this is the only one that has some validity. Even though the city architect said it would be all right, and even though others in town did not give up the meter, I think we should have, just for the sake of our testimony. No one has said anything about a fine to us. It could happen, I don't know.

48.Talk about defamation of character, This guy has few peers.

49.I tend to agree with the guy here. I think a good, wide spread survey would be appropriate. I have said for years that if the majority of the Baptists in Peru and especially in this region want me out, I want out. The quicker the better.

50.The word that would go in the blank is "esoerando" . No one is familiar with it. Nothing even close is in the dictionary. We can all understand "blessings far from paternalism". The Communists have harped on this for years. Victor is one of those who wants anything he can get out of a person, with absolutely no strings attached. He doesn't want anybody to tell him to be at work at 8 o'clock. He doesn't want anybody to hold him to faithfulness toward the organization. He doesn't want anyone to say "don't let people from other groups stay at the camp". He wants my money, and has received it at times legitimately and otherwise, but he doesn't want me to tell him what his responsibilities are, nor what to do during working hours. If that is done, it is "paternalism."

That is about all of the comments that I can think of concerning Victor's letter. I am sorry that this has come up, but I am sure that there is much to be learned from the experience. May God help us to avoid situations like this in the future.

R\*\* L\*\* W\*\*\*\*\*

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# Letter to the Mission from the Missionary about the Disgruntled Pastor

Apartado \*\*\*

C\*\*\*, Peru

Feb. 22, 1995

Rev. C\*\*\*\*\* N\*\*\*

C/O B\*\*\*\*\* M\*\*\*-M\*\*\*

\*\*\*\*\*

\*\*\*\*\*

Dear C\*\*\*:

Greetings from, Peru. S\*\*\* S\*\*\*\*\* had told me about the letter you received from Victor Astete. So the copy you sent came as no real surprise to me.

Victor Astete! where do I start?

Victor grew up in the First Baptist Church of Cuzco where I was Pastor. I think that his mother is a good Christian. His dad

died an alcoholic. Victor went to the Seminario in Trujillo for one year. He finished a 5 year course in anthropology in the University of Cuzco. He is quite a brilliant man. He is one of the best speakers in Spanish that I have ever heard. We had his wedding in the church here several year ago. He and his wife have 2 children.

When I recommended him for the church In Urubamba, T\*\* and I talked to him quite extensively. There had been a rumor sometime back about funds missing when He worked in ENAFER (the train company). We asked him about that. He said that it true that his boss had taken money and because of that, the whole department got fired. He looked at Tim and said, "Timo, si yo fuera ladrón, no estaría en la carcel"? "Tim, If I were a thief wouldn't I be in jail?" Well that convinced us that there was nothing to the rumors so I recommended him to the church as Pastor when I left for furlough. What a mistake! I might add that when Tim and I talked to him he convinced us that he was in agreement with our separatist position. He said the same thing when the church quizzed him.

The first problem was when he let non-Baptists stay at the camp in Urubamba. The missionaries had made a rule against this because of previous problems. We will let folks, from our own churches stay 3 or 4 nights under certain circumstances. Come to find out, Victor was teaching an anthropology class for some strange national mission, and the young women staying there were his students. He conned me the folks in Urubamba into letting use my old pickup to take his students to see the ruins in Ollanta, he turned it over right in the middle of the road. One of the girls was killed.. His story to the police was that a bull came out of the bushes in front of him. He had witnesses. At least two have now told us that there was no bull.

One was hurt in the hospital, Victor went there, and said, "say that there was a bull in the road, or the missionaries will be in deep trouble". That person admits lying to the police. When the missionaries talked to him about it, he could only say how it was an accident. Tim pointed out that if he had obeyed the camp rules, the girl would ' not have been living at the camp and would therefore still be alive.

Just after the accident, T\*\* asked Victor to replace him in the church while he and B\*\*\* were away. I think Victor was there a week or two. Later Tim got complaints from the church on Victor's familiarity with the girls. He borrowed a motorcycle and took a single girl with him to preach in one of the out of town churches. That meant a night trip through the jungle for some 3 hours. The church people didn't like it that he was alone with the girl that long except for the time in the service. The girl told me that he wrecked the motorcycle and knocked the tail light off. She said that he threw the light into the jungle and simply told the owner that it was stolen. He will lie about anything. Another story that I remember, was when he we with a group walking to a preaching service. A single women with two kids went with them even though she does not attend the services. This women who is a nurse, hung on to Victor's arm all the way home. They walked 10 yards behind the group. He would have walked her home alone if one of the women hadn't put a stop to it. When Tim and I talked to him about it, I thought he was defensive and in his mind, hadn't really been improper. He said he would watch out in the future.



Not too long after that, he had a contemporary music group sing in the church. When pressed on the issue, he admitted that he had let them stay at the camp. "But only for 1 night". Right when the missionaries were talking, the gardener walked in and was asked how long they had stayed. He said right in front of Victor "two nights". Victor said without batting an eye, "yes as a matter of fact, one night at my invitation and another at the insistence of the church". It didn't seem to bother him that he was caught in a lie. Not that it mattered to the missionaries if it had been 1 or 2 nights. We weren't happy about a modern music group singing in our building either.

Before going on furlough, Victor and a man by the name of Angel Castillo had a radio program. Tim, Dan and I were helping support it. Victor left the program but kept on receiving the money as though he were still paying it. Angel kept the program going for a while with the financial help of somebody else. A friend of Victor inadvertently let Tim know that Victor had left the program. So far as I can tell, he took us for some \$300.00.

The government has a program in which food is given to needy families. It is called "Vaso de Leche H , "Glass of Milk". Victor got a supply in the name of the church and sold at least some of it in the market in Urubamba. We don't know how much, but at least some was sold to two women of the church. One became suspicious when she heard a couple of workers going over the list of who had received their allotment.

One said that the Baptists had already received theirs. She was struck by the thought that maybe that was why she could buy something so cheaply from the pastor. At the insistence of Dan Muth, on the basis of Mat. 18:15, she talked to Victor. He said no, that he hadn't gotten an thing in the name of the church. He claimed that what he hadn't sold was given to him by the mayor who owed him and paid off with government supplies. Well, if true, that is against the law too. A man in the church who works in the office, looked up the records. Sure enough, he found the delivery slip in the name of the church signed by the pastor. Then Victor changed his story, and said that there were actually two deliveries. He said that he had only sold that which was not for the church. In any case, he is a crook.

At this point we missionaries were really over a barrel. The big question was, what do we do? This happened just at the time when we had been cleared of kidnap charges. Believe me, that was not easy. We were innocent in the kidnap case. If we let Victor continue preaching on our property, we would not be innocent in this one. If just one newspaper had gotten this story, we would have been in deep trouble. All eight missionaries on the field were in agreement that we had to disassociate ourselves from Victor immediately. We got as many of the church people together as we could and told them that the pastor had to leave. We made it real clear that the people could stay if they wanted to. More than half went with him.

Seeing something more of Victor's character, I began to wonder if he had told us the truth about the train money. I talked to one of the lawyers who had worked for the train company at that time. It so happens that this person is a young lady who as a student lawyer worked on the case. As an adolescent she attended the church when I was pastor. I don't know that she is a Christian but she was friendly and quite helpful. When I asked her about the situation, she said, "Oh

yes Victor Astete"! She remembered the case quite well. She said when they caught him, he had \$80,000.00 big bucks in his own personal account! Yes eighty thousand dollars! He was in charge of the money from the tourist train. He found that he could put money in his own account, then just before the day of accounting, he could put it in the company bank and keep the interest. The lawyer said that he would have gotten some \$2,000.00 interest on this transaction. She didn't say how long he had been doing this but she did say he was making a lot more money on his crooked activity than he got from his salary. And that is not all. On the morning of the discovery, the \$80,000 was in Victor's account, before they could get it back into the company's hands, only \$40,000 was left. The reason he didn't go to jail is that he promised to pay it back. If they put him in jail, they would never get the money. if they let him stay free, just maybe they could recover it. The lawyer says they got \$5,000 dollars back, but she thinks that they never got the rest, which would have been \$35, 000. 00 dollars unaccounted for. She left the company 2 years ago.

One of the other lawyers on the case was contacted, who by this time had left the company and had become the

Employment Judge for all the State of Cuzco. He was surprised to hear that Victor is a Baptist pastor, and wondered why. Is he laying low for a while to later use the \$35,000 dollars, or is he using the pastorate as a front for something? I am sure that I don't know. Any way, he said to get rid of him and to be careful the way we do it because he has connections. And to think that I recommended Victor for the pastorate.

In retrospect, I wonder if we informed the church in the right way. It looked like we had to do it in one of 3 ways: 1. Tell Victor privately he had to leave. We decided against this. we had talked to him many times to no avail. 2. We didn't think we should call a meeting and talk about the pastor with all who would attend. There would have been new believers, and kids in a meeting like this. 3. We chose to get a few of the older believers together and simply inform them why the pastor had to leave. It was not to be an argument, just an explanation as to why the pastor had to leave Mission property. It didn't work that way. They called for a meeting of the church.

I was asked to go, I got somebody else to preach in Cuzco and went Victor had prepared the people well. As he says in his letter, the missionaries were changed from the being accusers to the accused. There was no one in the meeting that did not know for certain that Victor was guilty of the charges, either partly or totally. In some cases Victor passed things off as being insignificant. In the case of the money he kept from the radio program he said the following: "Tim and I are friends from the time we were kids, What are 10 soles among friends?" It wasn't 10 soles, it was probably about \$300, 00 dollars. He made "mole hills out of mountains", to reverse an old saying.

I was simply amazed at the way he handled the train swindle. He started out by demonstrating that he had done nothing wrong. He did this by saying, "all of you know that if somebody takes even two soles from the government, they go to jail." Everybody agreed. If he wasn't in jail, he must be innocent. I can't really blame the folks, I had fallen for the same line a couple of years before.

After this, with great indignation, he said that he was being accused of swindle. He said, "I could easily get a good lawyer and have these people in jail for defamation of character." Most of the people agreed. He kept talking for 3 or 4 minutes in a subdued voice and finally said, "it was simply a situation of retention of funds, they accused me of benefiting from, the interest. He didn't deny or admit guilt. Then he kept talking a few minutes more and in a very quite, humble voice said, "the whole problem came about because of my having gotten back into the world. Brethren, the temptation was horrible, I couldn't handle it. I got to drinking with my buddies, that is when it happened." Two women were seated in front of me. One said to the other, something like, "why it could happen to anybody". The other responded, "of course it could, why don't they leave him alone?"

I couldn't believe it, he had gone from a state of perfect innocence, to "retention of funds", and then on to an admission of guilt using drunkenness as an excuse, and he had carried the people right along with him to the position of acceptance. It really didn't matter now what he had done,

many were going to go with him anyway.

Some objected to us having brought up the train fraud for having been in the past' As near as I could tell it had been about 5 years before. We had tried to show a way life and precedence in that he had taken money from the missionaries by deception about 2 years before, and now he had sold government supplies illegally for personal gain. We could get nowhere. The missionaries were on trial, not Victor.

When the group left the premises of BMM there was \$2,400.00 Of our dollars in the bank. At least 3 people talked to them about that money. Each time they were told that we would get every penny back that belonged to us. The morning after the split, Victor came to the house and asked how we could divide up the money fairly. I told him that it shouldn't be much of a problem, in that they had the treasurer's record book. There were only 2 people that went with them who had given anything at all that was significant. It was in the book. Victor said "why sure that should be easy enough. Now don' t worry a bit, you will get every bit that is coming to you." The bum went to Cuzco that very hour and got the money and put



it into a lease on a house. We then got a letter saying that we had not given the money to men, but to God and that they are very good stewards of God' s, money and will administrate it very efficiently. They also said that they would be foolish to return it. So we lost money that we had been saving for years. I would venture that Betty and I had given more of it than anyone else. The ARRIBA students gave a good bit too in that this fund was started several years ago.

Now we know what Victor Astete really is. It is too bad that a young man with so much to offer went so wrong. We all know that we have to leave everything in God's hands. Actually there isn't much else that we can do.

In closing, I want to say that Victor's real problem was not that of separation. He simply hid behind the issue. It was easier to defend himself on separation than the other issues. Of course maybe he only lied to us in the beginning because he needed a job.

I guess I have said enough about all this so I will stop now. Lord help us to learn from this tragedy and never get into

another mess like this again. I hope what I have written will help in some way. Thanks for your patience in wading through it.

Sincerely In Christ,

R\*\*\*\*\* W\*\*\*\*\*

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# WELFARE MISSIONS

By David Cloud

The American Council of Christian Churches (ACCC), at its annual meeting in October 1993, passed a resolution on missions which caught my eye. I am going to take the liberty to reword it slightly to give a clearer expression to the phrasing. Following is an excerpt for this resolution:

"The indigenous church policy has been diminishing over recent years. The self-governing, self-propagating principle is no longer a policy and practice, but has degenerated to a mere objective. We believe the New Testament teaches that from the beginning a mission agency should cause the nationals to provide their own expenses, build their own buildings, and propagate the Gospel themselves. Some agencies are involved in massive give-away programs."

We have long been aware of this problem, and it is a serious and widespread one--not only in mission board work

but in independent work as well. Missionaries hire their own national evangelists and pastors who remain dependent upon the missionary and his supporting churches back home for support year after year. The missionary raises the money from North American churches to build church houses in other lands. This is usually the method followed, too, by nationals who spend a lot of time in North America raising funds for their poor brethren back home. I remember talking to an Indian national who was doing this several years ago. We were at a missions conference together, and he had shown slides of the dozens and dozens of churches he and "his men" had started. The size of the work was impressive, but the problem was that the evangelists and pastors were mostly, if not entirely, on his payroll. I asked him privately how long these national churches had been dependent on North American funds. He said many years. I asked why the churches didn't support their own work. It was the same old tired story. The people are too poor to build their own works.

## **"I WANT A JOB"**

We were frequently approached in South Asia by men who were looking for a "Christian job." They were accustomed to being hired by the parachurch ministries and by the denominational ministries--even by independent Baptist missionaries--and they thought we might give them a better deal. I always tried to explain to these men that the ministry is not a job; it is a calling. A God-called preacher will preach and serve God whether he is paid for it or not! I know the realities of money. I know it takes money to live in this world. I know very well that the Bible says the workman is worthy of his hire. But the Bible emphasizes that the preacher's MOTIVE must not be for money. "...not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind" (1 Pet. 5:2). The man who is merely seeking a JOB as a preacher is not a God-called preacher--whether he is Indian, American, Canadian, or Russian.

## **WELFARE MISSIONS PRODUCES WEAK CHURCHES**

It is not surprising that the national churches established upon this weak and unscriptural Christian welfare principle never seem to become fully self-supporting. Once they learn to put the hand out, they become a bottomless pit for the

absorption of North American funds. I have received countless letters from men in Africa and South Asia requesting every sort of thing. They ask for literature, for Bibles, for cassette players, for videos, for clothes, for money. One man wrote and said he had been blessed through my books and had started a "David Cloud church." Another wrote and said he had been convicted by my books and had withdrawn his congregation from a cult in which he was a leader, and that he was starting an "O Timothy church." I assume I was supposed to be impressed and start funding these fellows. I didn't. I was impressed, though--impressed by their cleverness!

## **"WE ARE TOO POOR TO SUPPORT THE WORK"**

The excuse for this type of thing is always the poverty of the national people, whether they be East Europeans or Asians or Africans or Mexicans or Central and South Americans. The people supposedly are too poor and downtrodden to be expected to support their own churches.

This simply is not true. Any people in any part of the world can support a church on their own wage scale. They might not

be able to build an American-style church building, but they don't need an American-style church building! If they live in grass huts, they need a grass hut church house. If they live in adobe dwellings, that is the kind of church house they need. If the average wage of the congregation is only \$30 a month, their pastor can be supported by them for \$30 a month, and that is what he should live on if he is their pastor. It only takes 10 families who make \$30 a month to support by their tithes a pastor on that same fiscal level. Another 10 families in that same congregation can support a missionary full-time to their own people on that same wage level. This Bible principle works regardless of the income level of the people involved. It works, because it is God's way.

By the way, the average monthly wage figures often do not take into consideration such things as farms and gardens. In Slovakia, for example, it is true that the average wage is very small. It is also true that practically every family grows a wealth of food and flowers on every inch of ground available. There is a large untaxed and uncharted underground economy. Am I saying that the Slovak people are actually rich? By no means. I am saying the churches there can give the pastors

and evangelists all sorts of foodstuffs in addition to the tithes of the people's incomes. The same is true in many poor countries.

Someone might protest, "This is easy for you to say, because you don't know what it is like to work among poor people." The fact is that we lived and worked for 10 years in one of the most poverty stricken nations on earth, the country of Nepal. And by the grace of God we were instrumental in leaving a church behind at the end of that 10 years which is truly self-supporting and indigenous. That church paid its own rent out of its tithes and offerings while we were there, almost from the beginning of its existence. Even while we were building the church up from scratch it was supporting the man who eventually was ordained as its pastor. His salary was never paid by North American churches.

After we left, the people sacrificed and built their own building without our help. Some of the people sold their jewelry. The pastor sold his motor scooter, his only personal means of transportation, and put the money into the building. This congregation of poor people supports its own pastor and



several other evangelists and teachers full-time. They have started several other churches, all with their own tithes and offerings.

Poor people can be taught to give. They need to give and to support their own work, because God blesses them when they give. They need to be taught to look to God rather than to North America. It is simpler and much quicker to give a man a fish than to teach him how to fish, but the one who has been taught to catch his own fish will not become perpetually dependent upon an outside benefactor. I recall when I had been in Nepal for about three years I held a Bible conference and invited some men up from India.

They wrote to me and said they were too poor to pay their own way and requested that I help. I wrote back and said they should pray to God and get Him to provide their needs. They came to the conference at their own expense and even gave me, the rich American, a love offering! It would have been easy for me to have paid their way, but it was better for them to learn to trust God for their needs and to stop poor-mouthing.

Christians don't ever need to poor-mouth! We are children of the King of kings and Lord of lords, and though we don't yet enjoy full possession of our inheritance, we should never talk like the work of God is about to go out of business or that we are poor and under provisioned. God has promised to meet our needs, and when we poor-mouth (and I have been guilty of it many times, and have just as many times confessed it as sin) we are slandering God and denying His promises. That is the way some of the money- grabbing charismatic "healers" talk and act, and we should not follow in their shoes.

Ever since God saved and called me, I have set out to do His will, and I have never sat back and waited until someone financed me. I have sought the help of God's people, but I have not felt dependent upon such help. I am dependent on God, and one way or the other, He will provide for those He calls. When we knew that the Lord wanted us to go to Nepal, we gave up our rental place and literally started driving up the highway looking for meetings. We were going to Nepal! We were in Florida at the time, and I determined to return to Tennessee where we knew more pastors. We left my hometown in Lakeland, Florida, without enough money even to

drive to our first destination, Chattanooga. It was Wednesday. We stopped that afternoon at a little church several miles up the road and met a pastor who had used my study on rock music. He did not know that I was coming until I drove up to his doorstep, but he invited me to preach that night, and the little love offering got us to Chattanooga! Once there, we started getting meetings, and in SEVEN MONTHS we were in the strange land of Nepal. One mission board said I needed to get at least a seminary degree and raise thus and thus amount of money, but we believed the Lord wanted us to get to Nepal quickly. As it turned out, we only had 10 years there. If we had waited for another four or five years we would not have had enough time to have established that kind of church and such a broad literature ministry.

Admittedly, we did not have a lot of money those first few years. I could not even afford a bicycle the first year and a half there. We did not have a refrigerator for several years. We did not have heat in our house. For the first few years we had only a little single-burner kerosene stove to cook on, and no oven. We never did own an automobile of any kind during our ten years there. We couldn't afford one, but it really didn't matter.

We got along with public transportation and the used motorcycle I eventually purchased. Let me emphasize, though, that we STILL lived better than most of the people we were witnessing to.

I'm saying that our dependency must be God, not man, and if God calls a man, he had better be about God's business one way or the other and not sit around waiting for someone to "properly" fund him.

When I began to have a burden to write and distribute little testimonies and sermons the first year after my conversion, I did not have the proper resources. I did not have any money for printing, nor did I have any printing skills, but I didn't sit back and wait for money. I took what I did have, a typewriter, and I began to type out my sermons using carbon copies. I distributed these to people in my home town. About a month later I got a new job as an apprentice offset printer, and soon the boss let me use the equipment on my breaks to print my own booklets. God asked Moses what he had in his hand. It was only a stick, but it was enough with God handling it! Jesus asked the disciples what they had, and it was only a few loaves

and fishes, but it was enough!

I don't believe it is wrong, necessarily, for North American churches to give a helping hand in completing a building which the foreign believers have started and mostly finished by themselves. Churches help other churches in North America at times, and I believe they should. It is a natural expression of Christian love. There are always great dangers in these areas, though, particularly when dealing with very poor parts of the world. Any such decision must be made with great caution. Just as the welfare state produces a permanent dependent class of people, welfare missions produces weak, dependent churches. Mark it down; a church that does not sacrifice to support its own pastors and to build its own buildings will not appreciate nor fight in defense of that work when the money stops flowing.

## **PRINCIPLES, NOT LAWS**

Let me close by stressing that these are very difficult areas of decision. I am convinced that guidelines in the area of missions giving and inter-church assistance, in the final

regard, cannot be LAWS which we lay down, but must be governed by WISE PRINCIPLES derived from the Word of God and mature Christian experience, and separately applied case by case. The only divine laws the churches have are those expressly given in the Word of God. We also are reminded that each church is autonomous before God under its One Head, Jesus Christ, and all of these decisions must be made before Him and are answerable to Him alone. In writing this article my intention is not to be a critic, but to be a help.

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# **MISSIONARY SUPPORT COST COMPARISON**

## **TRADITIONAL VERSUS NATIVE**

By David Learner

"Sirs: I view the attitude that is expressed in this comparison of costs between foreign and local workers to be one of the most dangerous trends in modern missions. The attitudes expressed are:

- since it is more cost effective to have local workers than foreign workers, then foreign workers should not deploy or be deployed.
- the best use of mission money is to send it to the locals, since it is more cost effective than sending missionaries.
- the local community or the foreign community has no need for a relationship with other communities, and there is no need for interdependence or relationships, just send money.

- it is OK to be dependent or to cause dependence on foreign funding.
- locals have no need for the experience or knowledge of those who have been doing the job well for many years, and foreigners have no responsibility to share what they have learned.
- it is OK to treat locals with less respect than foreigners by not providing adequate training, salaries, housing, transportation, medical care, retirement benefits, or program funding.
- there is no need for one to go overseas or to another country because it is much easier, and perhaps better, to just send money.
- there is no benefit to the missionary or the church who sent him or her when he or she is obedient to God, just send money.



- money, not obedience to God, will solve all the problems related to missions.
- our obligations to God can be fulfilled through money.
- it doesn't matter what the Bible says, or how the Holy Spirit calls and moves people from around the world, just send money.

The attitudes expressed appear to look at obedience to God's call from an economic perspective, and use cost analysis to determine if one should be obedient. The Creator and Owner of the universe places a high value on obedience. ... The Great Commission, and other Biblical imperatives, are not qualified or negated by financial analysis. Often, God's commands make no economic sense at all from a human perspective. I don't think that finances are the only issue in the comparative cost analysis of foreign versus local workers. At the root are:

- mistrust
- refusal to cooperate with and love one another
- bigotry on both sides

- a refusal to see the world on a global rather than a provincial basis
- a basic misunderstanding of the fact that the church of God is not defined by local perspectives but by the Word of God.
- disobedience of God's Word
- sin

Rather than doing cost analysis in order to exclude people or avoid responsibility, we need to be working together to build relationships and partnerships that will bring to the effort of Global evangelization the strengths and resources of all involved by the grace of God."

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## **Another Opinion**

It is interesting to note the response by Mr. Learner, but perhaps he is missing another important piece of the big picture - the views of those involved in the mission work as national workers.

Very often it is supposed that national workers are better suited to the task and should be allowed to do the work. Of that I have no doubt. However, to say that they require money is only half the story. Very often they do need this and we can spend so much time debating the issue of sending support or other missionaries that little is done. So much procrastination takes place that opportunities are missed. This cannot be tolerated and that is something that deeply grieves national workers. Often support for their work from their home country is not forth coming (and this is not just the case in developing countries, but is true of western cultures as well) and the possibility of reaching effectively over a period of time is lost. Often they cannot express their need (perhaps because they do not know who to tell or maybe because people don't think they could possibly need help) and it is something that has to be addressed. Those who have the where-with-all to help national workers need to go and find out the needs. This does not negate the need for traditional missionary work as often this can be a way of highlighting a need. However, we must be at pains to discover the needs of national workers, wherever they are serving, be it in Sudan, South Africa or Scotland. Never can we procrastinate and thus rob national workers of

the support they need.

Yours in Christ,

Steve Marr (national missionary serving in Scotland)

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**JON NELMS WRITES ABOUT  
NATIONAL PARTNERING MINISTRY,  
CURRENT MISSIONARY  
TRENDS AND AGGRESSIVE CHURCH POLICY**

Jon Nelms, director of Final Frontiers Foundation writes:

"In the past year, I have spent a great deal of time in Central America, and as a result, have had the opportunity to experience first hand, what others who serve internationally have witnessed for years. This has in no way changed my thinking and philosophy regarding the support of national preachers; in fact, to a great extent, it has enhanced my belief that these men are better equipped and better qualified to reach their own countrymen than I would be as a foreigner. I believe as much as ever, that they need the support of the affluent American believer (by comparison) to accomplish the task set before them. And that we should consider it our opportunity and obligation to help them in whatever way we can. For many, this would mean a partnership in service on the field; working alongside the national as an equal in ministry. And while it is true that in many cases, our missionaries have a knowledge advantage over their national

counterpart, it should also be acknowledged that they have a ministry advantage over us. By working separately, we are at times working against each other. By working together, and capitalizing on the other's strengths, we accomplish a greater result. What I have learned is the reason why many American boards, and some missionaries (though their numbers are shrinking) are unable to trust the national believers. In my own dealings over the past year, I have also wondered if there exists a man in this region that can be trusted. Now it is important that such a statement not be taken as a judgment, but rather as voicing frustration. I know that everyone cannot be 'lumped' together; though I must recall that even the Apostle Paul declared 'all Creteans are liars'. More than once, in my business dealings in the region I have been warned by other Latinos, 'be careful, don't trust anyone'. Often we take that to mean even the preachers, but I have learned differently. It is precisely the preachers that we can trust. Some, who are opposed to our philosophy of ministry, are so because they have had bad experiences in dealing with national preachers. I believe that this is often our own fault. Let me explain.

There is a certain mission organization here in the USA that began its ministry in the Caribbean some years ago. After conducting several crusades, and winning many people to Christ, these Americans, being pastors, had to return to their own churches. Because they had worked independently for the most part, they had no national church to lead their converts to, no national preacher to shepherd this new-born flock. Out of despair, they advertised in the paper that they would pay for a preacher to organize a church. Well, you can imagine not only the quantity of applicants they received, but also the quality. True to their word, they began sending funds to the preachers believing they were buying Bibles, and building churches. On subsequent trips they learned that these 'wolves in sheep's clothing' were instead, buying cars and building houses for themselves. Were these 'preachers' at fault? Yes, without a doubt. But the well-meaning preachers and church members who funded them were also at fault. There was no examination of their experience and character, there was no accountability for the funds given, in short, there were no principles of stewardship applied. No company would operate in such a manner on an overseas project, and neither should we, who are 'busy about our Father's business'.

The end result of such experiences, and they are legion, is to discredit all national preachers, but that is simply not fair. I wonder how many Americans have misused funds, how many are lazy, how many haven't won a soul to Christ in months or years, how many have never even started a church, and yet, they continued to be funded, and lauded as spiritual heroes, and why, simply because they are Americans, not nationals. That is a double standard that should not exist.

When I pastored in California, I had the weekly deluge of phone calls requesting support that pastors today still experience. Many pastors feel guilty because they cannot help all the missionaries needing help, others literally become bitter to the missionary who is 'draining' their church's budget, all the while the pastor is overworked and underpaid. In those days I adopted a philosophy in regards to supporting American missionaries that I believe is useful today. I looked upon each request as if he were applying for a job as missionary and would be working directly for our church. There were qualifications that had to be met and maintained. For example, if I needed to hire a youth pastor or a music director, he had to meet certain criteria to be considered, and had to maintain a



certain standard to keep his job.

Unfortunately, (and I say this from eleven years experience in church work and eleven years experience in missions work), the criteria most churches have for 'taking on' (hiring) a missionary is: 'What board is he with and what school did he go to?' And even more shocking, even these so called standards are brushed aside when its time for the missions conference. For that is the one week during the year that all attention is given to missions, and therefore it is the time to 'take on' some new men. The qualification that week, usually, is only one thing: 'Who is present at the conference?' Now, let me say that many pastors have a form of qualification that determines which missionary they invite to their conference in the first place, because they have limited funds available for additional support. My hat is off to such pastors, but they should know that they are the exception, and not the rule; and their church members should thank God that they have a pastor who is exercising Godly wisdom and discretion.

Can you grasp the absurdity of hiring a mute as your music director, or appointing your ninety-five year old deacon

as youth director. Heart and desire is one thing, but ability and spiritual gifts are quite another. Why then do we appoint men as missionaries who have had no experience in ministry. Do we believe that the trials of ministry in another land are less difficult than those in our own culture? If so, we are wrong. I believe it is the responsibility of each church to develop its own missions philosophy and strategy, under the direction of the Holy Spirit and the guidance that is already given us in the Bible.

Some will say at this point, that the Bible does not tell us to support national preachers. I agree, but neither does it command us not to. Let me quickly point out that the Bible does not tell us to have youth pastors either, nor does it admonish us to have indoor bathrooms and air conditioning. The criteria is to find what it does tell us to do, and then do it. Beyond that, be led by the common sense God gives you. The Bible does tell us to 'do good unto all men, especially those of the household of faith'. It also gives us examples of the churches in one nation assisting the believers in another.

What we are told is to be good stewards of the funds God places in our hands, after all, they are His and not ours. Any steward who is worth his salt is very cautious in spending his master's funds, and is accountable for those funds. In recent days, a foreign preacher, who has had a ministry here for years, has been discovered to have been embezzling funds from his 'operations account' in his home country. This has led to the destruction of his ministry, and rightly so, but for some, it has also led to the condemnation of support for all national preachers, and that is not just. After all, have we not had our own scoundrels who have acquired national enmity? I pastored during the era of the Baker and Swaggart scandals. It was heartbreaking to me that in many homes I visited, the remarks I heard were 'all pastors are just alike' or 'they are all hypocrites' or 'all they care about is money'. Such universal condemnation is unfair. And it is equally unfair when it is made toward God's servants abroad. After all, the national preachers that are so often maligned, represent God's servants in every country in the world except our own. But when we condemn them we should remember, that we too are nationals, only we are nationals of the USA.

When I learned that this preacher had embezzled funds I was saddened, but when I learned that his board permitted him a salary of more than \$100,000.00 annually, I was shocked. Some would say, with a salary like that, why did he need to embezzle more funds. My question is, why did he have a salary like that in the first place!

Believing that Romans 8:28 is true, I do not fear as some have wondered, that this scandal will effect Final Frontiers. In fact, for those who know us, who know our standards of financial accountability and the strenuous screening process each applicant endures, as well as our perpetual and consistent, on-sight maintenance of his credentials, I believe we will be helped. But for those who are looking to be more careful with those they support, let me encourage you to apply the same scrutiny to the American missionary as you do to the national preacher. Here are some suggestions that you might consider:

(1) Consider those who have been referred to you by someone in the ministry whom you trust, and be sure that the recommendation is based upon a 'long term, personal

knowledge of that man and his ministry'

(2) Thoroughly examine his family life, his morals, and his ministry experience. Has he ever started a church? Has he ever disciplined a man who is now serving in the ministry? If he has not done these things in his own culture, why should we expect he will do so abroad. The Bible warns us not to promote a novice, yet most missionary candidates have little or no experience in day to day ministry. Such inexperience is why most missionaries (statistically) will never start a church in their lifetime!

Another thing to consider is, has he and his family ever been to the field of their choosing. Yes that is a great expense, but it is necessary. And logically, consider this: If the members of his church have so little confidence in him, that they cannot help him finance a short-term trip for his family to serve in that land, then why should your people, who don't even know him help out. And if he lacks the ability to raise the finances needed for a short trip, why should we expect he will raise the necessary support to live there indefinitely? Fifty-five percent of all missionaries do not serve a second term, and

many don't even make it through the first term. The number one reason given is the inability to adapt to the culture. A short-term mission trip of two weeks to two months might have revealed that inability, and would have saved your church its valuable missions dollars.

(3) Hold your missionary accountable to you on a frequent basis. Monthly is admittedly difficult for the missionary to send out personal letters to all his supporters, but quarterly or trimesterly is not. You have a right and a responsibility to know what he is doing because of your support. And let me say here, a letter in itself is not accountability. The purpose of the letter is to tell you what he is accomplishing for the Gospel's advance, not to tell you that he has bought a new dog or that the kids are sick with the flu. There is nothing wrong with those facts, but they should be in addition to his reporting on the WORK of the ministry that he is doing.

These are just three suggestions that may help your church in developing a missions strategy. They are incidentally, the basis of inquiry that we have for the national preachers we

support. Of course, there is one other thing to consider. What do you want to accomplish with your missions funds. For us at Final Frontiers, we don't even consider a man for support unless he has 'verifiable experience in church planting and discipleship, and is perpetually involved in both'. If you want to support church planters, then support church planters, not mechanics and school teachers. If you want to support school teachers, then do so, and not doctors.

I believe the Biblical purpose of missions is to take the Gospel to those who have not heard it. Exhorting and maturing believers who have the Gospel is not missions, it is pastoring. Paul declared that he had not 'built upon any other man's foundation'. He was a 'ministry marine'. The first one on the beach with the Gospel. That is missions, everything else is 'support ministries', and though they should be funded also, every dollar given to those causes is a dollar not given to reach one of the 12,000 people groups who have never heard the name of Jesus.

This is 'The Cause', to reach this generation in our life time. As Paul, I am happy anytime someone is preaching

about Jesus, whether he be an American or a foreigner. If we carefully apply the principles of stewardship, and carefully support those who are needy and worthy, then much will be accomplished for the cause of Christ."

Postscript: Jon Nelms can be contacted at the main office of the Final Frontiers Foundation by calling 1-800-522-4324. You may request to receive the free, monthly Progress Report by calling, or apply over the internet. Final Frontiers sight is currently under construction at <http://www.finalfrontiers.org> The purpose of Final Frontiers is to raise support for doctrinally sound, morally pure, national church planters who have verifiable experience in church planting and discipleship. The foundation currently supports over 800 preachers in 35 nations and are currently experiencing a new church being planted every five to six hours. Already, more than 8,000 churches have been started in our ten year history." (Final Frontiers Foundation Progress Report)

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