Society of Mentors Zoom Meeting

January 18, 2022

Theme:

This call was centered on ideas for the 5 to 6 months prior to starting a new church. The guest speaker was John Walz.

Introduction to John Walz: [{2:29}](https://www.societyofmentors.com/products/membership/categories/2149393016/posts/2154299341?wtime=02m29s)

Since 2014, the Walz family have been missionaries in Taiwan. Before going to Taiwan, they were missionaries in China for about a year and a half until John was arrested on Easter Sunday. After the arrest and interrogation, they were deported from China and told they were not allowed to return to China. A month later, John tried to enter the country and was arrested again. Therefore, since they could not return to China, they decided to go to a Chinese-speaking country, like Taiwan.

In Taiwan, the main traditional religion is Taoism, which is a pagan, polytheistic religion, and Buddhism. 95% of people in Taiwan identify as one of these two religions.

In 2015, he began a church planting ministry, and since then, he has planted four churches and trained six men who are currently working in the ministry. He started the last three churches within the last two years.

Starting Compass Baptist Church: [{8:00}](https://www.societyofmentors.com/products/membership/categories/2149393016/posts/2154299341?wtime=08m00s)

Within the first two weeks of landing in Taiwan, he traveled the city to learn the area and to meet young people. He met several young men who he would later train to serve in the ministry. One of those men is now the Pastor of Compass Baptist Church. After about a year, he started the church and had three young men who were with him all the time to help him start.

{14:30} With his first church, he learned what not to do more than what to do. In the beginning, he had a few young men who helped him start the church. When he found the first guy, he had friends who could be part of the Bible study, etc. Using the first guy, he made many connections to produce young men who could be led to the Lord and trained.

He found a location, a 5th story office building, which he thought would have worked like it would have in China. However, the church never really grew within that 1st year in that location, with only 10 people after the first year. However, that time was not wasted as he had several young men that he was training during that time. They spent a lot of time with him, and he allowed them to preach, sing, make the announcements, etc. Then, by the time they moved to a better location, 1st floor, with large windows in the front, they began to have more people attend and the church grew. After a few years, he turned over that church to Peyton, one of the young men he trained.

5 to 6 months before starting a church: [{17:58}](https://www.societyofmentors.com/products/membership/categories/2149393016/posts/2154299341?wtime=17m58s)

After living in their city for 5 years, he is very familiar with the city; major roads, cost of living, where people live, social classes, etc. So he began looking into these things as he planned a new church. He also had the young men he trained and worked with, and so he always seeks out their advice and opinions. He has planted churches on the outskirts of the city where the city is developing. The 2nd church plant is only 10 minutes from the Pastor’s home so it is convenient for him. Within 6 months of starting the 2nd church, he visited the area to become more familiar with the area. They sought out Facebook friends of the Pastor to see if they would be interested in coming to a church in that area.   
  
He pays the rent upfront to help the church but calculated that Pastor Sam would only need 5 tithers to cover the cost of the rent if something should happen to him. They were looking for a property that would sit around 50 people, and they hold multiple services throughout the week. Started that church in November 2020, so a little more than a year, and Pastor Sam is almost financially independent, with about 30 in attendance, which includes several people tithing and serving.

Had all of the men made professions of faith at the time they were serving in the church? [{21:16}](https://www.societyofmentors.com/products/membership/categories/2149393016/posts/2154299341?wtime=21m16s)

Out of the six men currently being trained, two had a Christian charismatic background. Those from the Christian charismatic background seemed to take a little longer to realize they were lost than the men from the Buddhist background. Those from the Buddhist background attended faithfully, each Sunday, and a Bible study once a week, between 3-6 months. Normally, during this time period, many people made professions of faith. For those without a Christian background, it took about a year to see professions of faith.

John offered them chances to do things in the church before they made professions of faith.   
He allowed them to read scriptures, run PowerPoint, greet people, help with parking, go with him to pass out flyers, and if they are with him he is always looking for things of value to help the church and to go meet people.

How many pieces of property have you purchased? [{23:30}](https://www.societyofmentors.com/products/membership/categories/2149393016/posts/2154299341?wtime=23m30s)

One. They just finished renovations. They chose a place that they thought could be a reproducible model. The location is 3 stories high, built long, but narrow, and can hold about 60 people.

What part did prayer play in getting ready to start a new church? How to go about praying and looking over where you’re going to start a church? [{26:00}](https://www.societyofmentors.com/products/membership/categories/2149393016/posts/2154299341?wtime=26m00s)

We need to have prayer to start.

There are different kinds of prayer for him. He has an attitude of prayer even as he is driving down the road. He would pray and ask the Lord to let him do something in that neighborhood or to let him start something there. He passes many places that look suitable for a church building or suitable to have a meeting and he has asked the Lord to give him that place or to give him somebody in that area that wants to start a church. Even though they have 4 churches started right now, by the grace of God, there are still several places in his mind that he has already prayed about that if he had the people and the opportunity he would start churches in those areas. He is already praying for other places to start a new church, and that is why he is there and so it is always on the top of his head.

A second kind of prayer is when he has quiet time and when he is confessing that he is a complete fool and doesn’t know what he is doing, and he just needs God’s help. Those are the two main kinds of prayers that he has employed.   
  
Once you have a man or some people you are working with, you are praying for them pastorally, that the Lord would protect their testimonies. By far, the people that you have are the most valuable to the mission. So you pray for the Lord to protect them and their testimonies and to give him the wisdom to be a better leader, to lead with his personal testimony.   
  
By far, the thing he has prayed for the most is for the Lord to protect their family and his marriage, and to give him wisdom in his family. He has always found that if family things and things at home are doing well, then things in the ministry are doing well. So it’s not just praying over the steps to build a church plant, but having that personal prayer life with the Lord and drawing strength from that.

Recap: [{29:18}](https://www.societyofmentors.com/products/membership/categories/2149393016/posts/2154299341?wtime=29m18s)

* Pray over every plan that you have
* Drive the streets, praying and meditating
* Think about souls and families
* Find young people and meet them
* Asking God, the Holy Spirit to guide and direct you because you don’t know where to go or what to do, but you can ask the Lord.
* Ask God to help you prepare people for the message you will deliver.
* Ask God to give you a man and people and get things ready. Let the Holy Spirit be doing the work before you ever go out there.

It’s God’s work, God’s harvest, and God’s ministry so you are going to need God in every part of it.

Developing a philosophy of church planting: [{30:28}](https://www.societyofmentors.com/products/membership/categories/2149393016/posts/2154299341?wtime=30m28s)

It’s not right to say only one-way works. But in the 6 month period, everything they are going to do is going to be based on the philosophy that they develop. So they are going to need to figure out what they want to do.

So what are you attempting to do? What is your philosophy?

He (John) wants to plant as many churches and train as many men as possible while they are in Taiwan. His philosophy when he first started was to stay at Compass Baptist Church and train men out of that church. However, he has an autistic son in his family, and when they returned to Taiwan after furlough, they decided that they needed to find a school where his son could attend and have therapy. That school was not in the same location as Compass.   
  
However, he has still started multiple churches, and he has a Friday class with his men. Once he started having churches in different locations, he moved the Friday class to wherever was convenient to have it so the men could always get to those locations. He has turned over two churches, and since then he has spent less time with them at their church, and he has spent more time at the newer church plants with the men who are less experienced.   
  
Therefore, so far, his philosophy has been getting a church started with a man, helping him until he has some experience and is doing well financially. At the same time, asking God to provide more opportunities to start church plants.   
  
As far as where he is going to be will heavily depend on the needs of his family, and especially the needs of his son. So if his son’s needs were to get more acute, they might even move to another city that would have therapy for him. But as far as philosophy, it would still be focusing on some men. However, right now, he is in a situation where he is forced to be more flexible than he had planned. With the 4th church plant, which was started last Christmas, so it’s only been going a few weeks, they only have a few in attendance. He doesn’t have much music, PowerPoint, or much of anything, but he is actively looking and praying for a young man. Therefore, once he has one, he will begin to have those other things through training a young man. That is what he is attempting to do right now with the 4th church plant.

What would your thoughts be on starting three churches at a time? [{34:34}](https://www.societyofmentors.com/products/membership/categories/2149393016/posts/2154299341?wtime=34m34s)

To be honest, he thinks it would be extremely hard to do. One church plant is difficult, but you would not have to prepare three different sermons. You could work on one sermon and preach it three times. He attends three churches on Sunday, and he visits Peyton’s church once a month. So he preaches the same sermon and the same Sunday school message three times. It is taxing to do that. They have church services on Monday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, and Sunday. Each church has 3-4 services each week. Although he does not attend all of those services.

When you first start the first church, you may have three different groups of people going if you have three different services. Eventually, it can form into one church.

What social level are you trying to reach? There are now considered 5 different social classes of people.

How much should they be preparing preaching/teaching material 5-6 months out? [{39:14}](https://www.societyofmentors.com/products/membership/categories/2149393016/posts/2154299341?wtime=39m14s)

It is extremely important to use the time as a student or intern, the relatively free time that you have before you have a larger family and church to manage. He has two years worth of sermons and Sunday school lessons to rotate. He has developed those messages into Chinese and he shares those sermons with any man who starts a church. It allows them to have more time to go out for outreach and to go out to meet people.

What areas do you feel you were lacking experience in when you started? [{40:58}](https://www.societyofmentors.com/products/membership/categories/2149393016/posts/2154299341?wtime=40m58s)

He wasn’t always around his mentor asking questions. He took what you knew and ran with it, and when he ran into problems then he would ask questions. He experimented and sought out counsel from others who had more experience. He was very inexperienced in many areas, but he relied on the counsel of a mentor and several others with more experience. He experimented a lot for what would work or not work for Taiwan.

What did you do as you did an area study before you started a church? How did you figure out where you wanted to start a church? [{43:08}](https://www.societyofmentors.com/products/membership/categories/2149393016/posts/2154299341?wtime=43m08s)

Once he had an idea of where people lived, it did not matter to him in which area he started. At the time, he knew of a couple of families in the area where he started the church. However, none of those families actually came to church, although that is the reason he started in that area and because that area needed a church.

When starting a church he looks for

* Population density
* Location of markets
* Location of schools with a large number of students. The last church plant is across from a well-attended school so the area has lots of young families/children.
* Grocery stores, restaurants, Supermarkets, Parks, etc all within a walking distance; Constantly people in the area all day.

Do an extensive study. Find out where all of the evangelical churches are in your city. You need to know your city.

One philosophy is to go to common people. That’s who Jesus went to. Jesus worked with young men. He discipled young men.

Ask for help. Needy people get help. Sometimes Americans are prideful and they act like they know more although the nationals want to help.

What do you purchase when you are starting a new church? [{47:26}](https://www.societyofmentors.com/products/membership/categories/2149393016/posts/2154299341?wtime=47m26s)

Expenses in Taiwan seem to be double the price than in the US, but people only make about $1,000/month.

Don’t start a church in a place where you can’t afford to buy property. Figure out what it costs to buy a piece of property. It should be one of your goals to buy a piece of property in the first year.

You need to think about how people get around? Buses, walking, bicycles, motorcycles, cars, etc. Then, think about the parking spaces needed.

You need a sign, chairs, tables, decorations, pulpit, nursery equipment, hymn books, PowerPoint equipment, lighting, etc. In those 6 months, you have a lot to do to get ready for the purchases and to make a plan.

John has seven service teams in the church with a detailed list of things needed for each of those service areas.

How many people would you have met through your guys before the first service? [{54:15}](https://www.societyofmentors.com/products/membership/categories/2149393016/posts/2154299341?wtime=54m15s)

With Compass, he didn’t know a lot of people, only a couple of families. The church was 20 minutes from his home so he wasn’t there every day. It was easier to meet people once he had a church location and church sign to invite people. Everyone he met was after he first started the church. In order to get people, he had a grand opening for the church with food. He canvassed the area before the grand opening and used Facebook advertisements (could be within a 2-mile radius of the church), which would fill up the grand opening with first-time guests, on whom he could then follow up.

How many would you have committed to come to that first service? [{56:35}](https://www.societyofmentors.com/products/membership/categories/2149393016/posts/2154299340?wtime=56m35s)

With the Facebook advertisements, people could RSVP to attend. He had a photo of the meal that would be offered and began to advertise a month and a half to two months before the event. He had 30-35 people RSVP.

Publicity: [{57:57}](https://www.societyofmentors.com/products/membership/categories/2149393016/posts/2154299340?wtime=57m57s)

Advertisement companies in the city can canvas specific areas. The last time he paid an advertising company, it canvassed 30,000 homes in the area, and every home got one flier. However, the Facebook advertisement was a much better option than paying the company.

Typically, he creates at least 5,000 flyers that he and the men can pass out.

English classes? [{1:00:00}](https://www.societyofmentors.com/products/membership/categories/2149393016/posts/2154299341?wtime=01h00m00s)

He would try anything on a temporary basis. He doesn’t like games/parties at church, although he has used it on a temporary basis to make contacts and follow up with people.

What is the priority of your ministry? [{1:01:15}](https://www.societyofmentors.com/products/membership/categories/2149393016/posts/2154299341?wtime=01h01m15s)

You have to determine your priority? What are you trying to accomplish with your church? One option is to train men so they can reach out into the community to start churches.

If you start doing all of the things that a Pastor or a deacon might do, you will get wrapped up in all of those things that as a church planter you do not need to be wrapped up in. The goal is to turn the church over to a national Pastor. You need a young man to be with you so that you can train him. Once you have the young man, you can begin training him and begin to have a formal church service.

The power of God versus the pressure of Pastors: [{1:04:00}](https://www.societyofmentors.com/products/membership/categories/2149393016/posts/2154299341?wtime=01h04m00s)

Work on the process and let God take care of the product. Your success or failure in a ministry does not change the way God feels about you at all. He loves you and He will love you no matter what happens. Missionaries stress and worry and are almost looking for pressure. Just do your best and allow God to work.

Many struggle with this as we are responsible to report back to churches and you want to have good reports. But there are seasons of visible fruitfulness. Not every month is going to be the same. At the same time, for the sake of your own personal walk with the Lord, you have to be humble before Him. Even though you have had some success, God is using you in spite of you, your training, and your knowledge. Without God’s grace, none of your training or knowledge is anything. God develops that with trials, and by experiencing God’s grace through those trials. Be prepared in your heart that if you have a daily walk with God, and are constantly submitting/humbling yourself when you do face the trials, He will help you get through those trials, perhaps even a little sooner than later.

The biggest problems you are going to face on the field: [{1:08:00}](https://www.societyofmentors.com/products/membership/categories/2149393016/posts/2154299341?wtime=01h08m00s)

* Comparing yourself to other servants
* Competing with other servants
* Complaining that God is not treating you as well as He treats others
* Criticizing others
* Confusion
* Culture shock
* Loneliness

Culture shock can happen even after much time on the field.   
  
Constant battles regarding what is best for the family. But also constantly bringing those thoughts into the obedience of Christ knowing that the peace and quiet of living in a small country town is not going to bring the satisfaction to your heart that only God can bring. Be constantly on the watch for those thoughts. Be aware that Satan uses those types of thoughts and you need God’s grace to continue serving.   
  
In regards to competing with others, it is a pride issue. If we focus on what the Lord has given us to do today and allow Him to prosper us, then that should be enough for someone who is bought and paid for by Christ’s blood. That is a truth which we need to constantly remind ourselves, and trust God with your family or other things you would be worried about or be anxious about.

The price you have to pay: [{1:12:05}](https://www.societyofmentors.com/products/membership/categories/2149393016/posts/2154299341?wtime=01h12m05s)

* Don’t sacrifice your wife and family for your ministry
* Find a way to take care of your family; love your wife and children
* Believe the promises of God
* Keep your shield raised high
* Know that attacks are coming and that the devil is attacking you at all times
* Remember that God does the work; It is His work and you are just the worker; you are not the work; so you work and wait
* Realize that it never grows as fast as you think
* God doesn’t love you because you are in the ministry or have a thriving church; He loves you because He is good

As inexperienced servants of the Lord, we have no idea what is ahead of us. We have to trust God and learn along the way. Trust the Lord moment by moment. We do not have a special revelation. Ask that the Lord would confirm what would be pleasing to Him before you make any decision.