

CHURCH PLANTING

New Churches for
New People



Peter Roennfeldt

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NewChurchLife

Preface

There are many reasons for planting new churches. This book walks through a process of planting new groups and churches for unreached people groups or in unentered areas or cities.

It provides an environment for fostering new and creative approaches – exploring new possibilities for biblical and relevant expressions of church that honor God and reach friends with the gospel. It is intentionally open to allow the Holy Spirit to work as he will. This process has been used effectively by planters of cell and community churches, café and contemporary churches, satellite and multi-worship event churches, some very traditional churches – and many *emerging* initiatives and churches.

While encouraging many new plants – this process focuses upon the *nature* and *purpose* of each new church. Even while fostering *church-planting church-plants* and movements of church planting – and acknowledging that there may be times when a *clone* of an existing church may be healthy – each planter and team is encouraged to pray and work through a process that challenges them to think about church and mission in new ways.

It can be argued that church planting is not only the most effective means of reaching more secular people – but, fresh approaches to worship and evangelism also gives new life to many of the *de-churched*. It may also prove to be the most significant way to hand on faith to new generations. Every believer (minister) and pastor should be involved in some way in church planting. In that all local churches have been ordained to multiply, God has either called you to plant a church or to support a church planter. And, it would seem that a commitment to starting new congregations may actually help a church defy the old age, decline and death of the normal organizational life-cycle.

There is not one way to start new churches. It need not be expensive. And, every approach and method that has been successfully used in the past need not be totally abandoned. In fact, planting new churches calls for the use of a variety of ministries that will lead people to Jesus Christ, including home Bible studies, small groups and evangelistic outreach. Church planting is not a new programme or fad. It is what the New Testament believers were about and needs to be part of the life of every church today. Where there is planting lost people are found and there is growth.

God needs those with leadership ability, resilience and entrepreneurial skills to be empowered and released to fulfil the great commandment and the gospel commission by going out to plant new churches. Our vision is to plant new churches to reach secularised and unchurched people. We seek the guidance and baptism of the Holy Spirit. We are committed to using forms of witness and worship that are both biblical and relevant to lost people.

This revision of *CHURCH PLANTING: New Churches for New People* further incorporates the important principles of *natural church development* and explores concepts related to the *emerging church* – providing a practical *how-to* church planter's guide. It takes into account lessons learnt from the extensive use of earlier editions as well current church planting dialogue and practice. This revision maintains the 2002 design layout prepared by Esti Pujić.

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How to Use this Book!

For those just starting

It could be that you are a group of friends who have been praying together. Or, you have started a project for teens in the community, a small group with friends who don't know God, or a feeding programme for street people – and you are sharing Jesus. Perhaps you and some friends have launched a monthly 'praise and worship' time in a local park or community centre. It may be that some of these initiatives could develop into a church plant. This book will help you think through a process.

Maybe you are a church planter and you have gathered a potential Core Team – people who are showing an interest in the vision of planting a church, or those who have generated a possible initiative. Or, you are a planter and Core Team being mentored by a *church planting church* – being given experience and training. It is time to develop your planting **Project Plan**. This book provides a planning process. Here are some suggestions:

1. The church planter or team leader could bring together the potential Core Team to meet as a small group to pray together and –
 - a. Read through **Section ONE** – getting **a Framework** for a future plan.
 - b. Work through the Core Team studies in **Appendix C**.
 - c. Read the biblical references to God's purpose for his church (on **page 48**) – and discuss the possibilities of a new plant.

NOTES:

1: By this time (if not before) ask your local church or denominational leaders to help you find a coach – or suggest a person who can facilitate the process.

2: Invite friends who have no connection with church to join in these times of fellowship and discussion. We have found it extremely positive to involve these friends in every part of the process. They are our friends – and friends do things together!

2. While working through these concepts (#1 above) – regularly (every 4-6 weeks) plan activities and interaction with people in your community, building an every widening circle of friends. These can be fun things like a day at the zoo with families from your community, having street barbeques, or fund raising activities for local charities. The idea is to mix regularly with people in your community – but these should not be activities that absorb your energies in a lot of planning.

3. Now it is time to work through **Section TWO – a Planning Process**. This next step can be taken in a couple of ways. It is important to get input and information from as many as possible – using the instruments on **pages 48-62** to gather ideas.

- a. The planter and this potential Core Team could participate in a residential Church Planting School or a *Church Planters X-Change* – to work through this planning process to prepare a draft **Project Plan** (see **pages 63-64**).

- b. If there is no School or *X-Change* accessible, then the planter and Core Team would benefit by planning a long-weekend or retreat of at least four full days to work through the whole planning process.

NOTE: Again, we have found it to be very positive for the planning process – and for friends who have no connection with a church – to involve them in this *X-Change* or retreat!

4. By this time the coach will guide the planter and potential Core Team through two important processes:

- a. **Section THREE** – developing **a Time Scale**, and

- b. **Section FOUR – a Behavioural Interview**, to assess the experience and giftedness of each of the planter and Core Team members, to help all understand the roles they may play in the church plant.

For your Information ... an overview of the Life Cycle

Planting a church is a process. We could change the metaphor and speak of the *life cycle* of a church. In the *life cycle* of a new church **birth** is the first public worship service. Planters and Core Teams often move quickly to have a worship service – perhaps because some feel you do not have a church until you have weekly worship services.

Stop. Think though the process. You are forming a new life (body) – and this cannot be rushed. Are those involved in agreement on the **conception**? Is the health of the future church being fostered in careful preparation during the **pre-natal** phase of life?

If there is any advice experienced church planters would give, it is this: Do not rush to have worship services (the **birth**)! Churches that are born too early can experience problems similar to those of a prematurely born baby.

An overview of the *life cycle* gives some idea of where we are going. More detail is given for life cycle phases 1 and 2 – for these will be essentially covered by **Sections ONE** and **TWO** of this book (before getting to **Section THREE** – which covers these life cycle phases in more detail:

1. **Conception Phase** (What needs to be done early!)

- 1.1 Identify the potential Church Planter & conduct a **Behavioural Interview**.
- 1.2 Start forming the Core Team.
- 1.3 Select Support Teams - Steering Team & Prayer Group.
- 1.4 Gain experiences & background necessary for effective planting (**Section ONE**).
- 1.5 Work through the Planning Process (**Section TWO**).
- 1.6 Develop & write the **Project Plan**.

2. **Prenatal Development** (To be done 6-9 months before the first worship services!)

- 2.1 Develop the **Discipleship Path** – start the process and equip leaders.
- 2.2 Continue building relationships with community friends (start **Small Groups**).
- 2.3 Select a name for the new church.
- 2.4 Start community initiatives – to meet needs.
- 2.5 Re-evaluate the Time Line.

3. **Birth Phase – is the first worship services.**

It is perhaps helpful to realise that the birth of a new church is not like the birth of an infant – but more like giving birth to an 18 or 19 year old! It can be pretty painful for the parent church or denomination – and the child is ready to go! And, then it is the -

4. **Growth Phase – and -**

5. **Reproduction Phase!** (We will come back to these in **Section THREE**.)

For a Coach

The key pages that provide a ready reference guide for coaches and planters are **pages 46, 63-64 and 70**. These give the basis for planning – and, can be used as instruments during ongoing coaching sessions.

For Denominational & Parent Church Leaders

Whether welcome or not, *emerging church* (pages 19-22) and church planting will happen. We live in an era where many believers in our established churches are weary of ‘playing church.’ They want to reach their friends who don’t know Jesus. They may be talking with other evangelical Christians. And, they have decided to do something for the friends of their kids or their friends – or for some particular people group in their community.

Perhaps the first you learn of such an initiative is long after a small group has been formed, a monthly kids or teen program has been launched, or even a café centre has been established.

How will you react? This is not how institutional churches are used to operating – where appointed committees plan outreach and approval must be gained for each concept, feasibility study, draft proposal and step of a project.

Your alternatives are limited – because we live in a new era. If you want your members involved in sharing the gospel with friends and extending God’s kingdom (which is what all want!), you will need to take a pro-active interest in the evolving initiative.

Here are some suggestions:

1. **Visit with the team** involved in the emerging initiative. Affirm and encourage – but, now as a friend and colleagues, also guide and raise relevant questions. (For example, if working with children, are all legal requirements being met, are insurance provisions in place, etc?)
2. **Be helpful.** Suggest ways in which the denomination or parent church could be involved – without trying to control. (For example, in their enthusiasm – and even scepticism of institutions – some may not be aware of the legal implications of having certain structures in place and the parent organisation could assist.)
3. **Become a prayer partner.** You may not agree with or understand all that this team is doing but they are committed to sharing faith – and they are your faithful members. Pray with and for them – often.
4. **Defend them.** Some of your fellow leaders will want to close the initiative down – as if it is under their ‘control.’ They will say, “They cannot do this. It did not go through the committees.” But remember, the team involved in this initiative are members sharing faith. Do they need to get permission? Can they be controlled?
5. **Choose a coach to work with them** – someone they and you are enthusiastic about. And, keep in regular contact.
6. **Suggest they start working through the process on page 3 – ‘for those just starting’.** Don’t try to control – it could be a special work of the Holy Spirit. But be proactive in suggesting some processes.
7. **See the potential and be relaxed.** Don’t try to close it down – experience shows that won’t work. Try to close it down and the project will simply move out of your control – and go independent or, if it a church plant, go congregational. I repeat: whether you like it or not, *emerging church* initiatives and church planting will happen.

If you find teams and groups involved in initiatives and projects – involved in their communities and building friendships – rejoice. Yes, I know there will be those demanding that only established forms, procedures and structures be used. But rejoice. Maybe the Holy Spirit is being given room to work in the lives of your members. The postmodern era presents enormous opportunities for the church – and you may be about to enjoy one of the most satisfying periods of leadership. Fan every small flame of initiative. Foster a culture of encouragement.

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Section ONE



a Framework

Planting New Churches for New People ... Why?

The apostle Paul spent his time planting new churches. Church growth authority Peter Wagner believes this is still the way to go: “The single most effective evangelistic methodology under heaven is planting new churches.”¹ Evidence can be assembled to demonstrate that new church plants are the most effective means of reaching new and secular people - but, there is still debate relative to *numbers* of new plants needed versus the *nature* of those plants.

The story of church in the New Testament suggests that there were two broad approaches –

1. **Spontaneous Church Planting:** This is evident in Acts 3-8 where believers spontaneously shared with people in Jerusalem, Judea and Samaria. The church was impacting many lives and growing dramatically. Churches were multiplying. This is seen today where groups from strong, vibrant churches simply start new house and satellite churches.
2. **Strategic Church Planting:** This is reflected in the ministry of Paul and his associates in their planting in Gentile (unchurched) cities. It seems evident that Paul followed a strategy in establishing new congregations. In the same way, it is important to be far more intentional and strategic in reaching cities today where there are few or no believers.

There was variety. And, this is more so today. Today there are house churches, cell churches, mega-churches, meta-churches, satellite churches, community churches, parish churches - and now, emerging churches! In some communities it will be better to speak of planting small groups for outreach, worship, fellowship and service - while other communities will be reached more effectively with community church plants. Our commitment is to plant biblical churches that are culturally relevant. And, the question of *numbers* and *nature* of new plants must be an item of regular discussion in planning.

Established churches must not be neglected. However, church planting has been neglected for too long. Philip Bryant was right: “It is not a case of planting new churches versus assisting established churches. Both are very important. However, there are compelling reasons for planting churches.”² What are those reasons?

After extensive research on the correlation between church planting and church growth, Lyle Schaller says: “The first priority in any denominational strategy should be on organizing new congregations.”³ Why?

Why Plant New Churches?

1 *It is biblical*

Matt 28:18-20 The great commission mandates that we make disciples of “every people group on Planet Earth”⁴ - not just every nation. (See Acts 1:4-8 and Revelation 14:6.) Church planting provides an ideal environment to rediscover discipleship-making.

1 John 1:3 “Proclamation is not an end in itself. We proclaim Christ in order to create a new community where fellowship occurs.”⁵ New church plants provide opportunities for new believers to be involved at ‘entry level’ with other new believers.⁶

¹ C. Peter Wagner, *Church Planting for a Greater Harvest*. Ventura, CA: Regal Books, 1990. p.11.

² Philip Bryant, *Church Planting Workbook*. Baptist Union of Victoria, Australia, 1992. p. iii.

³ Lyle E. Schaller, *Growing Plans*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1983. p. 165.

⁴ Russell Burrill, *Why Plant Apple Trees?* Ministry, February 1996. p. 26.

Romans 15:20 Paul was a church planter. Church planting “is the New Testament way for spreading the gospel.”⁷ This doesn’t mean that it has to be the twenty-first century way. However, Paul’s conviction and reasoning provides a foundation for church planting – for there are still many (and many places) who have not heard the gospel.

Acts 13:1-5 The New Testament story indicates that healthy “Churches began churches.”⁸ Early Adventists saw it this way - with Ellen White urging, “Place after place is to be visited; church after church is to be raised up.”⁹

2 ***It is efficient & effective***

“Nature has taught us that it is far easier to have babies than to raise the dead!”¹⁰ It is easier to start new evangelistically minded churches than to refocus existing and established churches. And, it is effective.

Established churches often find it difficult to reach new people, while new church plants have the vitality and vision that is attractive to unchurched people - and, this initial attraction often leads to a commitment to Jesus Christ. Back in the 1980’s it was demonstrated that Adventist church planting effectively advances God’s kingdom in western societies. Roger Dudley and Clarence Gruesbeck found that “between the years 1977 and 1984, the average annual growth rate of all the [Adventist] churches in North America, including new ones, was 2.8 percent. During the same period the average annual growth rate of new congregations was 31.2 percent.”¹¹

Bob Logan believes that the Seventh-day Adventist Church would grow in western countries if we started planting churches. He says, “There are whole hosts of people out there who could be reached by a different style of ministry while maintaining the integrity of the core beliefs that [Adventists] hold dear.”¹²

3 ***It is necessary for life & vitality***

Lyle Schaller, church growth expert, says, “Every denomination reporting an increase in the total number of congregations reports an increase in members. Every denomination reporting a decrease in congregations reports a decrease in members.”¹³ So, church planting is necessary for denominational survival. New church plants give life, vitality and growth to a denomination.

Russell Burrill, Director of the North American Division Evangelism Institute (NADEI) agrees. He says, “Every denomination that has a church planting strategy is a growing denomination. Those conferences that are growing are planting churches. Those conferences that are not planting churches have levelled off or are declining.”

We saw a clear demonstration of this some years ago in highly secular Australia. In the five years (1986 to 1991) the Baptist church experienced 42% growth - while the Seventh-day Adventist Church grew at .03% per year. In 1986 the Baptists launched a fifteen year program of church planting with a plan to plant 76 new churches and add 10,000 new members in the state of Victoria alone.¹⁴

⁵ Burrill, *Ibid.*, p. 26.

⁶ Burrill, *Ibid.*, p. 26.

⁷ Ron Gladden, *Church Planting: Key to Growth*. Ministry, October 1988, p. 4.

⁸ Bryant, *Ibid.*, p. iii.

⁹ Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church*. Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1948. vol. 7, p. 20.

¹⁰ Gladden, *Ibid.*, p. 4.

¹¹ Roger L. Dudley and Clarence B. Gruesbeck, *Plant a Church, Reap a Harvest*. Boise, Idaho: Pacific Press Publishing Assn., 1989. p. 27.

¹² Reported by Alex Bryan, *Church Planting Summit Brings Spirited Response*. Adventist Review, Sept 19, 1996. p. 21.

¹³ Lyle E. Schaller, *Commentary: What are the Alternatives? Understanding Church Growth and Decline*. New York: Pilgrim Press, 1979. p. 351.

¹⁴ Philip Bryant, *Church Planting - A Denominational Perspective*. Australian Fellowship for Church Growth - Bulletin: Vol 3. No. 1; July 1993. pp. 9-11.

4 ***It is visionary***

Some ask, “Why do we need new churches when we have room in existing churches? Or, why plant in a city where we already have a church of our denomination?”

The fact is: many urban churches have not grown in decades. They barely maintain their membership. They are no longer community focused - and, “a non-missionary church cannot accomplish the mission of Christ.”¹⁵

The life cycle of organizations (including churches) leads to decline. So when unchurched people are not coming to our churches or when we are failing to reach different people groups - it is time for us to go out meet them. This is what Jesus did. It is called *incarnational* thinking. And, it involves planting new churches.

“Research indicates that as churches age they become less effective in reaching new people. One study revealed that churches in existence for 50 years or more required 100 members to baptize one convert, while churches in existence for 10 years or less required only 10 members for each new convert.”¹⁶

It is visionary for churches to plant new churches for they: (1) attract new unchurched people; (2) develop new lay and pastoral leaders; and (3) generate new resources - new people with energy, time, talents, abilities, finance and visions.

Why has Planting not been a Priority?

1 ***Lack of awareness***¹⁷

Pastors and church leaders have not been aware of the potential growth opportunities. However, the research that shows the correlation between new churches and growth is readily available today.

2 ***Limited finance***

In many areas the church is downsizing and cutting back. But, can we afford not to plant new churches? “New churches bring new money.”¹⁸ We need a strategic plan for planting new churches that includes a workable policy for:

- *Caring for dysfunctional and dying congregations:* Many churches have settled at fewer than 20 members. No one should be critical of the pastors and members who have worked for many years to try to move these churches, but could not lay leaders run these churches?
- *Developing bi-vocational planters:* We must release, encourage and support visionary young adults who develop visions of new churches with new approaches. Some will be professionals who are well able to support themselves and a new church plant.

3 ***Negative experiences***

Sometimes we think of new groups that have started as the result of a few unhappy people leaving their church and starting on their own. Groups that start because of friction, often engender friction with conference leaders. Then there are the few families who get together and want a building and a pastor - adding stress to the denominational budget with very little promise of

¹⁵ Burrill, *Ibid.*, p. 27.

¹⁶ Russell Burrill, *A Breathtaking Initiative*. Adventist Review, June 1996. p. 21.

¹⁷ These four reasons why church planting has not been high on the agenda of church leaders are discussed by Mark Bresee, *Plant a Church and Reap a Harvest: Seeds '96 - Strategies for Church Planting*, pp. 9-13.

¹⁸ Bresee, *Ibid.*, p. 10.

growth. There is certainly the perception in some circles that new churches are small and struggling - and, that there is a high start-up cost.

Although there is a cost in planting new sustainable churches, McGavran and Arn demonstrated twenty years ago that it is the most cost effective form of evangelism.¹⁹ We have also learnt that very few new church plants that depend upon outside funds (for either covering their pastor's wages and costs with the denomination, or their operational and evangelistic expenses) grow and become strong.

4 *Slow results*

Some leaders hesitate to support church planting for the growth rate seems slow compared to traditional methods of public evangelism. Church planting does not seem to always give the fastest rate of return when compared to the 5-6 week "evangelistic campaign."

However, there are some other benefits:

- *New churches can reach unchurched people:* It is possible to develop significantly new approaches to worship, evangelism, and relationship patterns. Doing this in established churches is extremely difficult - and, often as disastrous as putting new wine into old wineskins.
- *New churches can give new life to the de-churched:* Many are present "in body, but not in mind." This is certainly true of many youth and young adults. For a variety of reasons their spiritual needs are not being met in the churches they are attending - and, they would welcome a new church with a new approach.

Why Plant Churches that are Different?

Churches often plant churches like themselves. Ministry is done with more energy, but the approach and methods are the same. But, "If the parent churches struggle to impact their communities, why plant churches that are similar to them in approach and personality?"²⁰

Ron Gladden goes on to say in his paper *The Denny's Dilemma*, "We can do better, much better. We can reach thousands more hungry people for Christ by planting varieties of churches with 'atmospheres' and 'food preparations' or presentations especially designed for specific groups within the culture. That is, we plant churches that are deliberately different - not in theology, character, or essential standards, but in approach and personality from our traditional churches. Without compromising the quality of food, we can plant a variety of churches in which the food is served to attract youth, the unchurched, singles, Christians of other faiths, and young parents to the Bread of life."²¹

Russell Burrill writes, "The evangelization of lost people is the reason for planting churches in all cultural groups."²² Planting churches for different ethnic, cultural and generational groups calls for training and sensitivity. The stories of planting in Acts demonstrate these principles:

1 *Approach the people group using their language or dialect*

It is impossible to truly understand a culture until we speak the language. To reach unchurched **people** - we must also understand the language.

2 *Treat the people group with love and respect*

¹⁹ Studies revealed that it cost US\$1,833 to win a new member to an old church and US\$60 to win one to a new church: Donald A. McGavran and Winfield C. Arn, *Ten Steps for Church Growth*. New York: Harper & Row, 1977. p. 93

²⁰ Ron Gladden, *The Denny's Dilemma*. Ministry, September 1996. p. 17.

²¹ Gladden, *Ibid.*, p. 17.

²² Russell Burrill, *Why Plant Apple Trees?* Ministry, February 1996. p. 27.

It has been said that a Christian is not equipped to reach a Muslim with the gospel until he/she understands Islam so intimately that he/she is tempted to convert to Islam. In a similar way, such an intimate understanding of why people do not connect to churches will foster love, respect and a burden for them – and an understanding of their connection or lack of relationship with God.

3 *Develop strategies specifically for the people group*

- Unique: Do we understand the people we are speaking to?
- Relevant: What do they think and feel?
- Reproducible: Are they dependent upon ‘foreign’ resources, people & money?

4 *Respect the culture of the people group*

This raises the need for cross-cultural training. It is acknowledged that Christians and churches effective in reaching secular people have some understanding of the history, processes and effects of secularisation.

Targeting – is it Right?

When we look back over our work in western countries, it is true to say that “The first wave of church planting was territorial. It lasted 130 years.”²³ There was very little planting for many years. However, today, a new wave is developing. This new wave is both, *territorial* and *targeted* - planting churches that take into account educational, social, ethnic, cultural and generational differences and relate to people at the point of their understanding and wants.

Some are uncomfortable with this – and the dialogue on contextualisation must be ongoing. We will each come to this issue of planting targeted churches with our biblical understandings, the influence of pioneers that we respect and some pragmatism (what works):

1 *Biblical Perspectives*

In 1 Corinthians 9:19-23 the apostle Paul challenges us with the concept of contextualisation - being a Jew to win Jews and a Gentile to win Gentiles. He wrote of his “great sense of obligation to people in our culture and to people in other cultures, to the educated and uneducated.” Romans 1:14.²⁴

Paul’s commitment to contextualisation was a miracle born out of his conversion. Following his experience in Damascus, Paul spent years preparing for his ministry as an apostle to the Gentiles. The first years were spent in the Arabian Desert. Ellen White writes, “Here, in the solitude of the desert, Paul had ample opportunity for quiet study and meditation. He calmly reviewed his past experience and made sure work of repentance. He sought God with all his heart, resting not until he knew for a certainty that his repentance was accepted and his sin pardoned. He longed for the assurance that Jesus would be with him in his coming ministry. He emptied his soul of the *prejudices and traditions* that had hitherto shaped his life, and received instruction from the Source of truth. Jesus communed with him and established him in the faith, bestowing upon him a rich measure of wisdom and grace.”²⁵

2 *Pioneer Perspectives*

Pioneer Adventist Ellen White gave counsel to the Seventh-day Adventists Church to adapt to various cultures. (*Testimonies to Ministers*, page 213.) She outlined this church growth concept long before Donald McGavran, “The people of every country have their own peculiar, distinctive

²³ Gladden, *Ibid.*, p. 17.

²⁴ *New Living Translation*.

²⁵ Ellen G. White, *Acts of the Apostles*, p. 125.

characteristics, and it is necessary that men should be wise in order that they may know how to adapt themselves to the peculiar ideas of the people, and so introduce the truth that they may do them good. They must be able to understand and meet their wants.”²⁶

It takes different approaches to effectively minister to different people. Ellen White wrote, “Thus the apostle varied his manner of labour, shaping his message to the circumstances under which he was placed. . . . The labourer for God is to study carefully the best methods, that he may not arouse prejudice or combativeness. This is where some have failed. By following their natural inclinations, they have closed the doors through which they might, by a different method of labour, have found access to hearts . . . God’s workmen must be many-sided men; that is, they must have breadth of character. They are not to be one-idea men, stereotyped in their manner of working, unable to see that their advocacy of truth must vary with the class of people among whom they work and circumstances they have to meet.”²⁷

Then, in a chapter entitled *Proclaiming the Truth Where There is Race Antagonism* Ellen White shares her burden for reaching African-Americans, while also acknowledging the reality of prejudice: “Among the white people in many places there exists a strong prejudice against the Negro race. We may desire to ignore this prejudice, but we cannot do it. If we act as if this prejudice did not exist, we could not get the light before the white people. We must meet the situation as it is and deal with it wisely and intelligently.”²⁸

We will fail if we think that people must become culturally like us to be saved by Jesus Christ. We will fail if we cannot acknowledge that God has always spoken within the culture of the time. We will fail to fulfil the gospel commission if we do not plant churches that can effectively reach every people group. Donald McGavran said, “People like to become Christians without crossing racial, linguistic or class barriers.”

²⁶ Ellen G White, *Testimonies to Ministers*. Pacific Press Publishing Association, California, 1962. p. 213.

²⁷ Ellen G White, *Gospel Workers*. Review & Herald Publishing Assn. 1948. pp. 118-119.

²⁸ Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church*. Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1948. vol. 9, p. 204.

Biblical *and* Effective Churches

Many who have had nothing or little to do with Christianity are being attracted to consider the claims of Jesus Christ in new churches and groups. What do churches that are reaching unchurched, secular people look like?

Some Radical Biblical Concepts

Note ways in which the key biblical concepts in these verses may change your view of church:

- Matthew 5:13
- Acts 2:42-47
- Acts 15:19
- Romans 15:20
- 1 Corinthians 9:19-23 (compare Romans 1:14 NLT)
- Colossians 4:2-6
- Titus 2:10,11

Churches for Unchurched People

Churches that are reaching unchurched, secular people are different. They radically stretch themselves to identify with a biblical view of church - and yet, at the same time, they strive to be part of the current decade. In other words - they are comfortable with change.

It is surprising that Christians and churches struggle so much with change. Jesus said, "You must be born again." Our Saviour Jesus Christ died, arose and lives in us by His Spirit - to bring about change. And, Seventh-day Adventist Christians should be on the cutting edge of change. We have seen ourselves as "Elijah the prophet" for this end-time. Elijah, a person possessed by the Holy Spirit of God, spoke within his culture - to the issues of his day. If we are using the ministry and worship forms of the nineteenth century - and, if we are still speaking to the issues that our pioneers addressed - we surrender the mantle of Elijah to others. Churches that are speaking to unchurched and lost people - including Seventh-day Adventist Churches - strive to be both biblical and relevant. What do these churches look like?

1 *They have Leaders with Vision*

They believe Jesus was right when he said, "The harvest is plentiful." (Matthew 9:37) They believe that they have been called to be sub-contractors to the Master-Builder in the business of depopulating hell. (Matthew 16:16-19) They do not get lost in the minutiae of maintenance and housekeeping - for they know that knowing Jesus makes a difference and He has given the purpose of the church in the Great Commandment and the Great Commission. (Matthew 22:37-39; 28:18-20) They see spiritual and numerical growth as God's plan for His church.

2 *They believe the Gospel Makes a Difference*

Being a nominal Christian or a pew warmer makes no sense at all to the members of these churches. They know that Jesus Christ died and rose for them - and, they know that this is the good news or gospel. (1 Corinthians 15:1-4, 14, 17 & 18)

Christians who are making a difference today are “theologically conservative” - in other words they believe in miracles. They believe that Jesus Christ lived and died - and, rose from the grave. That is the ultimate miracle. And, they understand that if a person does not believe in Jesus that person is lost or damned. However, they are also aware of the difference their lives and testimony is to make in a community. (See Luke 4:18 & 19)

3 They are Praying Churches

In his book *20/20 Vision* Dale Galloway noted that the average church member prays less than three minutes a day. He said, “Every study of growing (effective) churches reveals that dynamic churches - where it’s happening - have in common the fact that prayer has a central place in their ministry.”

Jesus told his followers, “The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask (pray - KJV) the Lord of the harvest ... to send out workers into the harvest field.” (Matthew 9:37, 38) And, after his resurrection Jesus told his followers to wait and pray for the presence and power of the Holy Spirit to empower them as witnesses of his resurrection. (Acts 1:4-8)

4 They believe in the Baptism of the Holy Spirit

The leaders and members of effective churches do not neglect the Holy Spirit. Jesus Christ loved to speak of Him. (John 14-16) And, just prior to his ascension he said to his followers, “Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about. For John baptised with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit ... you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.” (Acts 1:4, 5, 8) Members of effective churches are comfortable speaking in a normal and natural way about Jesus Christ and their fellowship with the Holy Spirit.

5 They have a Strategy for Reaching Unchurched People

This strategy is built around four concepts (see Acts 8:14-17; Ephesians 4:11-13):

- Every believer in Jesus Christ has been called into ministry.
- The baptism (anointing) of the Holy Spirit is evidenced by witnessing.
- The Holy Spirit gives those he baptizes at least one spiritual gift for ministry.
- The pastor’s primary role is to equip members for their ministry.

Dale Galloway’s *New Hope Community Church* has one trained lay-pastor for every 10 worshippers. These lay-pastors meet weekly with their small groups - the basic unit of the Christian church. Friendships are developed with neighbours, needs-based outreach programmes are run by the church and unchurched people are invited to visit a small group with friends. There is a steady stream of visitors to worship services.

6 They Encourage Friendship with Unchurched People

Jesus mingled with people from all walks of life - as one who desired their good. He met their needs, gained their trust and invited them to follow him. (See John 1:35-39; 4:1-38; 1 Corinthians 5:9-11)

The strategies of all effective churches have been built upon this principle: members are encouraged to get out and build genuine friendships with unchurched neighbours and associates. Jim Dethmer planted and pastored *Grace Fellowship Church*. As senior pastor his job description mandated that he spend 40% of his time building friendships with unchurched people. Those who attend a Willow Creek Conference will be asked by Bill Hybels, “How many close friends do you have among unchurched people?”

Churches that reach unchurched people are made up of members who actively go out to develop friendships. They look out for the newcomers who attend worship and events. They actively build these people into their lives.

7 *They Multiply Small Groups*

In 20/20 Vision Dale Galloway wrote: “No matter how good your preaching, your music, or anything else at your church, if you do not get people into some small fellowship group you will lose many of them within a two-year period.”

You cannot find either a growing or effective church where there are no small groups. This is the basic unit of the Christian church - not the individual believer. These may be prayer groups, Bible study groups, fellowship-social groups or ministry groups. However, to be successful - and, to qualify as a small group - they will (1) meet regularly (usually weekly), (2) be supportive and pastoral - providing spiritual accountability and pastoral care, and (3) they will be evangelistic. It is here that the unchurched can find warmth and friendship and be introduced to Jesus Christ.

8 *They have creative Church Services - with Practical Bible Messages*

Before starting Saddleback Valley Community Church, Rick Warren interviewed 300 unchurched residents in a door-to-door survey. The number one reason people gave for not attending church, he reports, was that church was boring. Other reasons included: church people are unfriendly, the church is more interested in money than people, and quality child care is not provided. A common question raised by unchurched parents is: “Are the child-care facilities and rooms safe and clean?”

Every service that the church offers must be culturally relevant to the unchurched. We need to listen to what unchurched people are saying. Listen - and, they will virtually tell us how to lead them to Jesus. This is a biblical principle.

In Acts 6 the early Christians had to address the tensions that developed between the Grecian Jews and the Hebraic Jews in Jerusalem, They didn't try to change the culture or ethnicity of the people. Rather the Holy Spirit led them to set in place systems to care for each group. What was the result? “The word of God spread. The number of disciples in Jerusalem increased rapidly.” (Acts 6:7)

In Acts 15, when faced with cultural differences in evangelizing the Gentile world, the Jewish-Christian church leaders were faced with the question of whether they would accept different ways of doing church. To what conclusion did the Holy Spirit lead them? They concluded: “We should not make it difficult for the Gentiles who are turning to God.” (Acts 15:19)

The Bible is clear that mature Christians should accept differences graciously. For example, a mature Christian can accept that another Christian may appreciate a different style of music or expression. However, it is easier to lead people to Jesus and salvation if we don't ask them to cross cultural, generational and language barriers first. The ministries that we offer must be relevant. But, not only relevant. They must lead people to Jesus.

In witness and worship we need to use forms and methods that are biblical and relevant to unchurched people. If they are not doing this - we should stop and change. If our outreach activities - such as aerobics, seminars, evangelistic meetings etc - are not leading people to Jesus Christ we should try something that may! Paul emphasized this disturbing principle in 1 Corinthians 9:19-23.

Many don't like the word, but *postmodernism* is being used to describe the predominant attitudes and thinking of a world impacted by dramatic paradigm change. Whatever descriptor is chosen, the fact remains: the world has changed and this is impacting the shape of the church!

1 *The Changing Shape of the Church*

It seems that Christianity is losing ground. That may be true in what are called *western* or *northern* countries - western and northern Europe, the United States, Canada, Australia and New Zealand. However, in other places Christianity is exploding. Philip Jenkins explains: "The center of gravity in the Christian world has shifted inexorably southward, to Africa, Asia, and Latin America... If we want to visualize a 'typical' contemporary Christian, we should think of a woman living in a village in Nigeria or in a Brazilian *favela*."²⁹

The data indicates that northern Christianity is dying. However, southern Christianity is growing in numbers and influence – and, southern Christianity is migrating north. Some denominations would hardly exist in western and northern cities if it were not for the southern Christians who have migrated to those countries. They have brought life, vitality and hope to the churches in London, Paris, New York and Sydney. However, church leaders are now noting with concern – southern Christianity is not effectively reaching northern populations with the gospel. The numbers of indigenous, Caucasian believers are clearly on the decline – and second and third generation southern people groups grow equally resistant to Christianity.

With the northern church vanishing, increasingly disconnected from society, sluggish, exhausted (and often exhausting for pastors!), and absorbed with its own agendas of survival – the majority of northerners no longer consider it or its message relevant to life's questions. Not many northerners are turning to the church or Jesus. A high percentage of youth from the declining numbers of church going families are not following in their parent's footsteps. Many churches are left disappointed and discouraged.

2 *New Expressions of Church*

Most recognise that church life as we experience it – with its liturgies, buildings, forms and structures, etc – is not how the church has always been. Those who have travelled or observed widely will also have noted that the form church takes in northern countries is not the same as southern Christianity.

Michael Moynagh notes that "As the existing church (in the northern world) feels shaken and fragile, new expressions are crawling out of the rubble."³⁰ Various terms are used to describe this movement. Peter Wagner speaks of a "New Apostolic Reformation" and the "Second Apostolic Age." Eddie Gibbs and Ian Coffey write of "Church Next." Brian McLaren explores possibilities for "The Church on the Other Side." Dan Kimball features "Vintage Christianity." However, a term used by each of these (and others) – and the one that is used by friend and foe – is *emerging* or *missional church*.

As Moynagh explains, the term *emerging church* is descriptive. It suggests continuity – fresh expressions or 'new ways of being church' while at the same time emphasising a connection to the 'continuing church.' It suggests a continuous dynamic process – a journey. And, it suggests something experimental.

It is agreed that "attempting to categorise the emerging church at this stage is like trying to nail jelly to a wall."³¹ There may be times when proponents overstate their case – and criticism and experience in practice will be valuable. However, those involved in *emerging church* are seriously attempting to (1) interpret the changing culture around us, (2) discover the 'good' in that culture, (3)

²⁹ Philip Jenkins, *The Next Christendom*. Oxford University Press, 2002, p. 2

³⁰ Michael Moynagh, *emergingchurch.intro*. Monarch Books 2004, p. 15

³¹ Moynagh, *Ibid.*, p. 14 – quoting Stuart Murray Williams.

identify where the Holy Spirit God may be at work, (4) confront cultural norms that are destructive – in ways that are constructive for the gospel, and (4) find ways of growing Christian faith and God’s kingdom in this environment.

3 The Search for ‘Vintage Christianity’ is on!

The *emerging church* intensifies the search for ‘vintage Christianity.’ The best (and maybe) the original ‘wine’ – and the most appropriate ‘wineskins’ for today’s ‘new wine.’ How does the mix of message, methods and messengers impact the effectiveness of mission in our postmodern and post-Christian environment?

As well as serious attempts to understand our culture, *emerging church* proponents and practitioners seek lessons from others. Effective churches (perhaps primarily for *moderns*) were established upon five purpose of the church found in the two great commandments and the gospel commission (Matthew 22:37-39 & 28:19-20):³²

1. WORSHIP: We were planned to **please** God.
2. SERVICE: We were SHAPED³³ to **serve** the community and each other.
3. EVANGELISM: We were made for a **mission**.
4. FELLOWSHIP: We were formed for God’s **family**.
5. DISCIPLESHIP: We were created to **grow & develop** as individuals and communities.

It is not surprising to find that those who fostered biblical *purpose driven* (but *seeker sensitive*) churches have encouraged the *emerging church* quest. Nor it is surprising that the *natural church development* quality characteristics and biotic principles sit well with this environment – as we will note in the next section.

What can we learn from the contextualisation of other times and places?

1. The Vitality of New Testament Churches

Renewed attention is be given to factors that cultivated the experience and vitality of the churches in Acts –

1. They knew what it was to PRAY
2. They knew what it was to be baptised with the HOLY SPIRIT
3. They knew what their MESSAGE was
4. They knew EVERY BELIEVER WAS A MINISTER
5. They struggled with CONTEXTUALISATION
6. They were in the COMMUNITY
7. They were intentional in their WITNESS
8. They worked in TEAMS
9. They were PLANTING NEW CHURCHES – in homes, synagogues, market places; beside rivers and on beaches!

Of course, because a method worked in the Roman Empire it does not mean that it will work today – but principles are important. *Emerging church* practitioners seem very aware of this – but it is good to be reminded that Acts is not simply a ‘how to manual’ for ministry in the twenty-first century. Then, some (like Stuart Murray³⁴) have drawn attention to the rich resources of the gospels and epistles for theological and biblical frameworks for ministry today – perhaps a necessary reminder for all church planters. Murray suggests that all New Testament books and letters, except the *Revelation*, were written to address issues and concerns relevant to planters and newly planted churches.

2. The Majority Christian World (southern Christianity)

Avoiding superficial and misleading suggestions (such as: the churches in the southern world are growing and yet they only have one pastor for 15 churches – therefore we would see growth in

³² See Warren, Rick. *The Purpose Driven Church*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan. 1995.

³³ The acronym S.H.A.P.E stands for Spiritual gifts, Heart passion, Abilities, Personality and Experience.

³⁴ Murray, Stuart. *Church Planting: Laying Foundations*. Carlisle, Cumbria, UK: Paternoster Press. 1998

northern churches if we reduced the number of pastors!) – Eddie Gibbs and Ian Coffey explore significant factors in the majority Christian world.³⁵

1. Most pastors are first generation Christians.
2. Their training has been the apprenticeship model.
3. The churches are *missional* churches.
4. The leaders are emerging from grass roots – from within the growing churches.
5. The leaders are mentoring new leaders – who are going out to plant new churches.
6. They are mobilizing new missionary movements.
7. Their organisational structures are of a networking nature – where leadership emerges on the basis of mutual recognition and by building and maintaining strong relationships.

Emerging church takes observations such as these seriously and seeks to learn. Again, it must be recognised that what works in southern Christianity is not to be used as a template for work among post-Christian, postmodernists – in fact there seems to be no evidence that southern Christians are able to effectively reach northern populations. However, insights such as shared by Gibbs and Coffey are being taken seriously. New followers of Jesus (and even those not yet followers) are being involved in mission, there is a renewed emphasis upon mentoring and coaching (using apprenticeship models), educational programs for leaders are becoming more localised – even with seminaries finding new ways to deliver their education without the future leaders needing to leave their involvement in their local missionary environments (while maintaining recognised academic standards), and respected networks are increasingly being honoured over hierarchical structures.

3. The Commitment to being *Missional*

The *Gospel and Our Culture Network* (GOCN) has identified twelve qualities of a *missional* church:³⁶

- The missional church proclaims the gospel.
- The missional church is a community where all members are involved in learning to become disciples of Jesus.
- The Bible is normative in this church's life.
- The church understands itself as different from the world because of its participation in the life, death, and resurrection of its Lord.
- The church seeks to discern God's specific missional vocation for the entire community and for all of its members.
- A missional community is indicated by how Christians behave towards one another.
- It is a community that practices reconciliation.
- People within the community hold themselves accountable to one another in love.
- The church practices hospitality.
- Worship is the central act by which the community celebrates with joy and thanksgiving both God's presence and God's promised future.
- This community has a vital public witness.
- There is a recognition that the church itself is an incomplete expression of the reign of God.

You will note the emphasis upon authenticity – relationships, community, reconciliation, love, worship, care, hospitality, accountability, justice, and joy (fun); and spiritual and faith development. GOCN says that “The missional church represents God in the encounter between God and human culture... It is a community that visibly and effectively participates in God's activity, just as Jesus indicated when he referred to it is metaphorical language as salt, yeast, and light in the world.”³⁷

Emerging church could be accused of being highly proactive in seeking to be missional in postmodern cultures. House churches, cell churches, alternative worship services and even being a new church plant do not qualify for a church to be called *emerging* – any more than an established

³⁵ Gibbs, Eddie & Ian Coffey. *Church Next*. Leicester, Eng: Inter-Varsity Press. 2001. p. 82-83.

³⁶ See <http://www.gocn.org/> and Frost, Michael & Alan Hirsch. *The Shaping of Things to Come*. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers. 2003. p. 6-12.

³⁷ Frost, Michael & Alan Hirsch. *The Shaping of Things to Come*. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers. 2003. p. 7.

traditional church would qualify. *Emerging church* signals a new priority. God is a missionary and mission is at the heart of God's purpose for his people (church) in our postmodern world. It is a relational thing. God came into the world and lived. *Emerging churches* are in the culture to live and share the gospel from within. This is consistent with the expectations of postmoderns – who are not impressed with arguments over the truth of my doctrine, but do identify truth when it makes a difference in lives and community.

4 *Some Basic Values of Emerging Missional Church*

At a *Church Planters X-Change* in Finland (2002), planter Tina Kjeldal articulated the essence of *emerging church*, saying, “Jesus did not tell the disciples to go to church, he told them and the church to go to the world.”

In attitude, commitment and practice the value *we'll come to you* is at the heart of *emerging church*. This value does relate to physically going rather than expecting the unchurched to come to our buildings, events and services (at times convenient to us). However, it is much more. *We'll come to you* is a grid through which every attitude, form, method, practice and tradition is passed. Is it possible to grow God's kingdom more effectively in a life, home or community by going within – in the way in which God became one of us in Jesus?

Frost and Hirsch propose (and build their book entitled *The Shape of Things to Come*) upon three overarching principles “that give energy and direction” to GOCN's twelve hallmarks of the *missional church*.³⁸ These are basic to the *emerging church* and further inform the value *we'll come to you*:

1. **The *emerging church* is INCARNATIONAL** - *not attractional* in ecclesiology. Frost and Hirsch say, “By incarnational we mean it does not create sanctified spaces into which unbelievers must come to encounter the gospel. Rather, the missional (*emerging*) church disassembles itself and seeps into the cracks and crevices of a society in order to be Christ to those who don't yet know him.”³⁹ *We'll come to you* – with what we have in our hands and to identify with you.
2. **The *emerging church* is MESSIANIC** – *not dualistic* in spirituality. Frost and Hirsch use the term *messianic* to focus upon the worldview of Jesus the Messiah. They write: “Instead of seeing the world as divided between the sacred (religious) and profane (irreligious), like Christ it sees the world and God's place in it as more holistic and integrated.”⁴⁰ *We'll come to you* – interested in every aspect of your life and community. (Lee Strobel wrote, “God is not interest in your spiritual life. He is interested in your lives.”)
3. **The *emerging church* is APOSTOLIC** – *not heirarchical* in leadership. I quote Frost and Hirsch again: “It abandons the triangular hierarchies of the traditional church and embraces a biblical, flat-leadership community that unleashes the gifts of evangelism, apostleship, and prophecy, as well as the currently popular pastoral and teaching gifts.”⁴¹ *We'll come to you* – to identify God's activity in your life. To see how God is working in your life, to encourage faith development, and to faithfully recognise and foster ministry according to the gifts, passion, abilities, personality and experiences God gives to every believer.

These principles are radical and have wide-ranging implications – as do the ‘radical biblical concepts’ found in the verses suggested for reflection at the beginning of this section (page 13). We have operated in the ‘you come to us’ mode for so long, it has become part of our culture. The modernist Christian in particular will need to be rigorous in challenging every ministry idea and plan – to adopt the value *we'll come to you*. It will be easier for postmodern Christians.

³⁸ See Frost, Michael & Alan Hirsch. *Ibid.*, p. 12.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 12.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 12.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 12.

Planters and coaches from denominational churches that find strong identity in their structures will need wisdom in fostering initiatives and plants with connections to their ‘continuing church’ systems. To many (even those involved) *missional* and *emerging churches* will look “messy, chaotic, and dynamic.”⁴² It will be a journey – experimental and experiential. There will be issues of identity, discussions over the nature and form of the church (ecclesiology), ongoing debates over contextualisation⁴³ – but, this must be. And, this is *emerging church*.

In his article entitled *Emerging Values – Spiritual Formation, Community and Mission*, Brian McLaren wrote: “The way we traditionally expressed Christianity may be in trouble, but the future may hold new expressions of Christian faith every bit as effective, faithful, meaningful, and world-transforming as those we’ve known so far.” The postmodern, post-Christian culture we find ourselves in presents church planters with some of the greatest opportunities. The *emerging missional church* suggests new possibilities for fulfilling the gospel commission.

Natural Church Development Quality Characteristics

Jesus often used parables from nature and agriculture to illustrate the character of God’s kingdom and the church. *Natural Church Development* (NCD) is a process that looks at the way in which the Creator God works in nature and the church – and, how we can release the potential that God has placed in every church (by which he brings about growth). *Emerging church* planters often use the language of NCD – environments, multiplication, relationships, seeing where God is working, cooperating with the Holy Spirit, etc.

Jesus told his followers to “*see how* the lilies of the field grow.” Matthew 6:28. From such study, observation and research we may learn and understand principles of God’s kingdom. Then Jesus told a story of a farmer sowing seed in the fields – explaining that, “*all by itself* the soil produces grain.” (See Mark 4:26-29.) The apostle Paul described this automatic or “*all by itself*” principle of growth, saying, “I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but **God made it grow**.” 1 Corinthians 3:6-9.

Between 1994 and 1996 researcher Christian Schwarz directed a comprehensive research project – involving more than 1000 churches on five continents – identifying the characteristics of healthy churches. These quality characteristics are true regardless of culture or theological persuasion.

1 *The Quality Characteristics*

Christian Schwarz’s project resulted in the objective identification of eight quality characteristics. These eight qualities are not new. These eight qualities should not surprise us – for we find them in the descriptions of the New Testament church.

1	<i>Passionate Spirituality</i>	Matthew 22:34-38
2	<i>Inspiring Worship</i>	Matthew 22:37
3	<i>Loving Relationships</i>	Matthew 22:39; John 13:34, 35
4	<i>Need-Oriented Evangelism</i>	Matthew 28:18-20
5	<i>Empowering Leadership</i>	Ephesians 4:8-11
6	<i>Gift – oriented Ministry</i>	1 Corinthians 12:1; Romans 12:1-8
7	<i>Functional Structures</i>	Acts 2:42-47
8	<i>Holistic Small Groups</i>	Acts 2:46 (last part). See Acts 2:42-47.

⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 12.

⁴³ See Sweet, Leonard. *The Church in Emerging Culture: Five Perspectives*. Emergent YS published Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2003.

The adjective is the key word. The adjectives – passionate, inspiring, loving, need-oriented, empowering, gift-oriented, functional, and holistic – encompass the biotic principles.

Christian Schwarz was able to demonstrate that all of these qualities are essential for a healthy church. Not one can be neglected.

2 ***The Principles***

Natural Church Development identifies principles – focusing upon the quality or health of church life as the key to church development. The emphasis is upon identifying and releasing the natural growth forces with which God builds his church. There are two vital principles:

1 The Biotic Potential Principle: A living organism has the inherent capacity to reproduce and survive. This is true of the church. Therefore, “The goal is to let God’s power of natural growth flourish, instead of wasting energy on man-made programmes.”⁴⁴ “We should not attempt to manufacture church growth, but rather to release the biotic potential which God has put into every church.”⁴⁵

2 The “All-by-Itself” Principle: Growth seems to be something that happens automatically. The plants in the field grow. The church grows. But, this is the work that God does by himself. We must ask, what can be done to release the biotic potential by which God grows his church? What can we do to remove obstacles that would hinder God’s work?

3 ***The Minimum Factor – A Radical Concept***

Christian Schwarz has developed a survey process by which the quality of church life can be measured. This survey results in a score for each of the 8 quality characteristics of healthy churches. Churches with a score of at least 65 for all eight quality characteristics are *always* growing churches – demonstrating that healthy churches are growing churches.

The lowest score for a quality characteristic reveals that church’s “minimum factor” or weakest quality. It has been found that if a church focuses upon improving the quality of the “minimum factors” (or weakest quality characteristics) there will be growth. The church will focus upon improving the weakest qualities rather than the strengths of the church. This is a radical concept, for usually (as in the area of spiritual giftedness and ministries) it is recommended that a church and Christians focus upon strengths.

4 ***Church Planters***

Because all eight quality characteristics are essential for church health and growth, church planters will plan and work to establish these qualities in the DNA of the new church plant. They – with the biotic principles for *Natural Church Development* – may be built into the strategic plan and/or values of the new plant. However, we would caution against trying to manipulate these qualities and principles into a controlling structure.

If You’re Not Falling – You’re Not Learning!

This is not only true of snow skiing. It is also true of an effective church. It is OK to try ideas that don’t work. Possibly three out of four ministry ideas fail. But, that means that one worked and led people to salvation. We need to learn from our mistakes, do more of what God is blessing, and be ready to change ministries and approaches as we move forward with the Holy Spirit. We won’t perish because we try new things to reach unchurched people - even if those things fail. But, we will perish if we have no vision and refuse to try new approaches.

⁴⁴ Christian A Schwarz, *Natural Church Development* (BCGA, England) p.7.

⁴⁵ Ibid., p.10

For Success



Planting New Churches

Philip Bryant, the planter who steered the Baptist Church planting initiative in Victoria, Australia through its first 7-8 years, outlined the lessons they learnt in a paper entitled *Church Planting - A Denominational Perspective* in the Australian Fellowship for Church Growth *Bulletin* in July 1993. I have added to his original list lessons we have learnt through fostering hundreds of church plants in the last 10 years - to suggest a list of 15 factors that are vital for success in church planting.

Fifteen Factors

1 **Choose the Planter & Team**

The success or failure of most church plants has a lot to do with the planter. This is the key person - and, hard to find. Some will be bi-vocational and have limited formal theological education. Most (including pastors) will need in-service training (with seminars and reading programs) in the skills necessary for church planting. All church planters will need support systems.

Often young adults who have a proven track record in local church and who show Christian maturity have the necessary vision, drive and creativity. The planter must have good people skills - along with the ability to cast vision and motivate others. Good planters are entrepreneurial and resilient - with energy and drive. Planting is time-consuming and a difficult task. Planters need good communication skills as teachers and preachers.

It is **highly recommended** that all potential planters and teams participate in a *behavioural interview* – to identify the potential challenges of gaps in experience or preparation; and, to better prepare an effective planting team. Such an interview process gives careful consideration to all characteristics of effective church planters - spiritual qualifications, spiritual giftedness, practical skills, character and personality traits, competence in ministry, and necessary experiences. (For more detail see the section HOW TO KNOW IF YOU ARE A CHURCH PLANTER.)

2 **Plan Well**

Good planning will give greater likelihood of success. This planning will include developing a **Project Plan** - which will include a:

- List - of all things that need to be done in planting the new church.
- Time line - indicating when certain steps are to be completed.

But, before developing timelines and ministry ideas – this planning will help the church planter and team identify God's purpose for their plant. The **Project Plan** will reflect this and will help the new church: (1) begin with a clear reason for existence, and (2) keep the life of the church focused in times of pressure.

This **Project Plan** should be developed by the planter and as many of the core group as possible as they work through the section KEY ELEMENTS IN DEVELOPING A PLAN. A steering group made up of the church planter, and one or two representative (including an experienced planter) from the parent/sponsoring church may provide advice and encouragement.

3 **Develop a Strong Core Group & Support Teams**

This is essential to establishing a new church. It is important that this core group be involved in training, planning and praying. As many as possible should be involved in

creating the **Project Plan** with the planter - for this will mean a shared vision. The core group must have a burden for the target people group - and, identify with the target area.

This will usually mean that the core group members will live in the targeted community - even moving house to obey the call of the Spirit of God to plant a new church. It is important that the planter and each core member be involved in community activities and life - spending at least 50% of the time they give to church work interacting with unchurched people.

There are three main teams that will be essential to the planting of a new church: (1) the **Core Team** (i.e. the team of planters) – and then two other support teams that must be developed early: (2) a **Prayer Team** (intercessors who pray regularly – and whose prayers are answered!), and (2) a **Steering Team** (with whom the planter in particular can ‘bounce’ ideas and challenges). One in the Steering Group may also be a coach to the planter and planting team.

Choosing Core Team Members: It is difficult to build a Core Team around people who: (1) never settle, (2) need lots of attention, or (3) large numbers from another denomination. Follow up all interests in the target community and share individually the vision, purpose and values. Challenge each person to be part of the new church - and to be faithful in attendance and their financial commitment. Invite people to be part of the Core Team. Bryant said, “It is advisable that at least six families comprise the core group prior to first public worship services.”⁴⁶ Some would now suggest that there should be 4-6 small groups meeting before the first public worship service. The **qualities** to look for in Core Team members are:

- An active prayer life.
- A concern for reaching unchurched with the gospel.
- A concern for being a disciples and making disciples.
- Agreement with the vision of the church.
- Dedication to the Word of God.
- A firm commitment to be involved in the new church.
- Persistence.
- Potential leaders.
- Firm commitment to the denomination.

Weekly Core Team Meetings: Mobilize the Core Team.⁴⁷ Decide on a meeting time and place - and start meeting each week. These meeting will include:

- Worship
- Prayer
- Planning – project planning & planning monthly activities with unchurched friends.
- Training - and fellowship to develop unity and focus
- Tithes & Offerings. It is vital that core members are totally committed.

Core Team Preparation & Studies: It is recommended that the planter and Core Team members gain experiences and background necessary for effective planting by:

1. Reading and praying through **Section ONE** is this book.
2. Working through the *Core Group Studies* in **Appendix C** for.⁴⁸ These opportunities will mould the Core Team together with a shared vision to plant a new church.
3. The planter and Core Team members will be guided by a coach through a **Behavioural Interview** and further necessary experiences with a *church-planting* church.

4 Start Contact Initiatives with New People – NOW!

If the planter and team have gotten to the point of discussing the possibility of planting a church – it is time to start ‘contact initiatives’ with unchurched people. Do not wait until the plan is fully formulated. Start now. Consider the following two questions – and plan relevant actions:

⁴⁶ Philip Bryant, *Church Planting Workbook*. Baptist Union of Victoria, Australia, 1992. p. 44.

⁴⁷ Bryant, *Ibid.*, pp. 43-45.

⁴⁸ Bryant, *Ibid.*, p. 46-62.

1. What could we do in the next week to interact with some community people?
2. What fun event will we plan (within the next 4-6 weeks) as a church planting Core Team to enjoy with some unchurched friends?

Interaction with a growing circle of people from your community will give meaning a focus to the planning process – but, do not be tempted to start worship services for your growing circle of friends. You are still in the planning process. (Most church planters have learnt from experience that they started their worship services too early. Many will suggest that to start public worship services in less than 12 months is definitely too soon!)

5 *Involve Friends in Planning*

It is never too early to involve your unchurched friends and contacts in your planning process. Ask for their insights and advice. Work with them as team members in planning initiatives to better your communities. Step away from a “them and us” approach and mentality.

To provide identity determine and define your group by your *values* (your attitudes towards each other and others and how you relate!). You will find that most in your community will appreciate Christian values.

And, remember: most of the key leaders for your new church plant are not in your group at the moment. Most are currently unchurched.

6 *Maintain a Conservative Theological Perspective*

To maintain a conservative theological perspective does not mean to be traditional and unchanging. It does not mean a host of rules. Yes, there will be rules – but they must be biblical and make sense. (Some of our rules do not make sense to believers - let alone the unchurched.)

Being theologically conservative is not living in the past. Rather it speaks of an unswerving commitment to the Word of God and Jesus Christ - calling people to make a commitment to Jesus and the fellowship of the local church. It means to recognize that Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit make a difference. It means a commitment to the fact that the Bible is inspired and God is active today - He performs miracles because Jesus Christ has risen and is coming again.

So the questions are: Do the members of the church planting Core Team speak often and naturally about Jesus and the baptism of the Holy Spirit? Is prayer a major item on the agenda of the church plant? How will friends and members be taught to pray? How will prayer be built into the DNA of this new church?

Other questions will include: Is a specific discipleship programme being developed? What value will be placed upon every member being regularly equipped for ministry? How will people develop and use their spiritual gifts? Will it be expected that all leaders will regularly receive in-service training? How important will it be for all to be involved in small groups for Bible study, nurture and witness? Is the Core Team setting aside significant time for prayer in planning, leadership and business meetings?

Unchurched people are attracted to churches that take these matters seriously. They are attracted to Spirit-filled, biblical churches. Is it time for the Core Team to plan a *Prayer Conference* or a *Holy Spirit Conference* – times to grow and learn the heart of spirituality and worship?

7 *Commit to Change - Adapt Worship Style to the Audience*

The worship style is basic. To maintain a conservative theological perspective does not mean to hold to traditional styles of worship or doing church. The style of worship must be both biblical and relevant to the needs of the community that you are trying to reach. For example, it is relevant to plan a family service if there are children in the area. It is not, if there are none. It is relevant to plan a worship services for Baby Busters - if they are the target group. It is not if the community is made up of Consumers and Survivors. These needs will become clear in the planning stage.

The style of worship determines whether a church grows. It is basic. Unchurched people (and Christians today) look for worship services that are relaxing, with modern easy-listening, up-beat music. A variety of instruments (keyboards, drums, saxophones, etc) are in. For some communities, organs are out. Many today express themselves with clapping - rather than with the term 'amen.' People are visual - and, so video and drama take their place beside readings, speeches and sermons. Music and presentations should be practised and professional.

Many church planters have found from experience that unchurched people expect good biblical preaching and teaching. People want to know what God says – and how that might impact life today – and this week. It seems that unchurched people have no difficulty focusing upon messages of 35-45 minutes in length if the themes are relevant. Generally, worship service should be no longer than 75 minutes and *seeker sensitive* - with announcements kept brief and focused. (Announcements that are of interest to the whole group – not those for a select group such as the elders or mother's club – are relevant!) It may be wise to have children's activities at the same time as worship services so parents can concentrate.

Three essentials of church life that attract and build worship attendance are:

- Visitation - by elders and pastoral care people (for nurture).
- Small mid-week groups - for teaching, discipleship and evangelism.
- Worship services with relevant music and careful teaching that addresses life issues.

One of the clearest messages from the church growth movement of the last ten years is this: people want to hear a message from God's Word - and this evangelical emphasis must be coupled with a willingness to call people to a commitment to Jesus Christ and to the fellowship and purpose of the local church. However, people do not like to be harangued, preached or shouted at. Nor do they appreciate having the worldviews of others ridiculed. But, they do look for opportunities to ask questions and explore their doubts – and will recognise that there is no simple and easy answer to most difficult life issues.

8

Plan to become financially self-supporting

Most church plants will need initial assistance from a mother church and/or their denominational headquarters. Remembering that churches (not denominations) plant churches, the roles of a sponsoring church include prayer support, interim leadership, members for a core group, oversight and encouragement - and, some financial assistance. The role of the denomination in church planting is to promote, create the vision, facilitate, resource with planning and back-up assistance - and, some financial assistance, which may include small grants and low cost loans.

Some observers would suggest that the two greatest threats to the success of planting new Seventh-day Adventist churches are:

- The financial security of the pastor - which reduces motivation to plant successfully.⁴⁹
- The financial dependence of the plant - which reduces ownership and effectiveness.

When a planter and core group do not foster total financial ownership of the new church the church is less likely to be effective in outreach and growth. There are a couple of important points to be made here:

1. Most of God's money is in the community – not at church headquarters. What ministries will the planter foster that will be so important to the community that funding will come from businesses, local government agencies, etc?
2. The ***Project Plan*** should include a financial plan and projections. When and how does the new church expect to be financially viable? (By this we mean - the local members will be returning to the conference sufficient tithes to totally cover the costs of their local pastor/s and staff. The offerings/donations from the newly developing group should cover all ministries - and, provide for some contributions to the wider spread of the gospel.)

If the community population is large enough to expect a viable church (perhaps over 20,000 people in a post-Christian environment) and yet there is neither growth in members nor tithes/offerings to fully cover the costs of the new church within a reasonable period (of say 3-5

⁴⁹ Both Bob Logan and Steve Addison have drawn attention to the negatives of the security of tenure for Seventh-day Adventist pastors – who do not need to baptize or disciple people to guarantee continued employment.

years) the whole project should be revised. Certainly, those churches that cannot fully cover the costs of their pastor should not expect a paid pastor.

9 Plan (and be Trained) to be Friendly

Surveys have shown that many unchurched people find Christians and churches to be unfriendly. In some cases, this is true. The planter and Core Team may need training in developing a ‘friendship plan’ and held accountable to model friendliness.

Roy Adams writes, “It seems to me that however pure our doctrine, however correct our day of worship, however solid our grasp of truth, however sincere our claim to be the remnant, if we do not know how to handle people courteously, then it all becomes a liability for the gospel.”⁵⁰ Ellen White said that “if we would humble ourselves . . . and be kind and courteous and tender-hearted and pitiful, there would be one hundred conversions to the truth where now there is only one.”⁵¹

It is important that a plan be followed to cultivate friendliness. The leadership team and core group should often review this plan. It might include:

- A careful review of everything said from the front.
- A strategy to care for people looking for food, accommodation, emergency care, etc.
- A welcoming procedure that does not invade people’s privacy or embarrass.
- Signage that is clear - from the car-park to every meeting area and facility.
- A plan for all leaders to care for newcomers immediately following services.
- A ‘prompt’ from the worship leader at the end of each service to ‘care for each other’!
- A person to ‘watch’ - introducing members to newcomers.
- A ‘gutter-patrol’ - to say, ‘Glad you could be here today! Hope to see you again!’

Modern data-base and computer systems can be used to prompt and support a planting team in providing regular contact in the form of cards, emails, letters, etc – to encourage people.

10 Use Advertising & Information Releases

We have found that you must not just rely upon word of mouth to create awareness of church plants. A monthly newsheet - outlining the sermon topics, Bible class themes, and other activities for the community - would be the absolute minimum for any church that wishes to reach the community. This newsheet would usually be no larger than an A4 printed back and front and folded for extra effect.

The newsheet needs to be simple - with an identifying appearance that will include the logo, the community-friendly name of the church, dates, times and address. Remember that this is advertising - not just a newsheet. It should go to every contact/interest by mail. Some should be distributed to every home in the neighbourhood. Members should receive a number of copies each month - for their friends.

Other forms of advertising that churches are using include tele-text, SMS messaging, websites and the entertainment pages of newspapers. Remember, there is little point in advertising on church pages to unchurched people.

The weekly church bulletin should be written with the unchurched in mind. Select the wording carefully - and, advertise sermon topics at least one month in advance. For a worship committee to plan carefully, the sermon themes and topics need to be in place 6-12 months. Some churches (their pastors and worship committees) expect a sermon outline to be provided to the worship committee at least six weeks before the event.

The topics and titles are extremely important. Bill Hybels says, “Unchurched people today are the ultimate consumers. We may not like it, but for every sermon we preach, they’re asking, Am I interested in that subject or not? If they aren’t, it doesn’t matter how effective our delivery is; their minds will check out.”⁵²

⁵⁰ Roy Adams, *Can We Learn From the ‘Gentiles’?* Adventist Review, February 1997. p. 5.

⁵¹ Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church*. Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1948. vol. 9, p. 189.

⁵² Bill Hybels, *Speaking to the Secular Mind* (Leadership/88) p. 28.

Hybels confesses, “Sometimes I’ll work for hours on the title alone. I do it because I know unchurched people won’t come, or come back, unless they can say, ‘Now that’s something I want to hear about.’ The title can’t be just cute or catchy; it has to touch a genuine need or interest.”⁵³

11 Make a Long-term Commitment

Church planting is tough work and requires a long-term commitment on the part of the planter and the supporting church or organisation. In most highly secularised countries the conference executive committee would be unwise to consider moving a church planter under 8-10 years – and, even then, it will be best for the planter to be planting new groups and churches from the original church plant. This is not to suggest that the planter becomes a pastor who hovers over a church. It should be expected that a planter will plant a church with a clear vision to plant another church – and, the planter will follow through on this strategy. In harmony with the Antioch church planting model (Acts 11-15) – the key leaders of a church plant could be expected to move on to plant further new churches when teachers, leaders and pastors have been equipped within that first plant (see Acts 13:1-4).

In large metropolitan areas a church planter may remain for a lifetime – either moving on and planting new churches or using the first church plant as a base to equip new church planting teams who are sent out to establish new churches to reach new people groups or territories.

12 Organise During the Term of the Supporting Leaders

Experience has taught that it is wise for a conference administrator who fosters church planting to work carefully with the church planters to bring their groups to “organised church” status within the administrator’s term of service. It is best for a church plant to be given the freedom to grow to being a viable church – with regards to leadership and finances – before organisation. However, we have learnt that this needs to be kept in balance.

Some planters have experienced the disappointment of a change of administration resulting in a loss of support for a creative church plant – leaving the newly planted church with no voice or future as an Adventist church for they had not been organised during the term of the supportive leadership. This has also proved to be a great disappointment to those conference administrators who had invested so much time and energy into supporting these initiatives to extend God’s kingdom – only to learn that those projects were not given the same support by their successors.

13 Beware of “Highjackers”

These are people with pet theological hobby-horses; those who were dissatisfied with their previous church; or, those who wanted to be a leader in their previous church (but - no one else recognized their leadership skills!)

This is one reason why it is important that the purpose, vision, mission and values of the new church be decided by the Core Team before the church starts. If a ‘highjacker’ does not like the direction of the new church, Philip Bryant says “they can be assured that there is a church somewhere that will meet their need.”⁵⁴ None should feel they can hold a church to ransom.

14 Churches for fringe-dwelling Adventists don’t win the Unchurched

We have also found that Adventist churches designed to minister to Adventist young people or backsliders don’t reach the unchurched. However, we have found that churches for the unchurched do appeal to Adventist youth as well as fringe-dwelling and backslidden Adventists.

⁵³ Hybels, *Ibid.*, p. 28.

⁵⁴ Bryant, *Ibid.*, p. 11.

15 ***Develop a Clear Discipleship Path - & Follow It!***

In developing their ***Project Plan*** the planter and Core Team will design a ***Strategic Path*** – the path it make be expected unchurched people in their community may walk to become fully committed Christ followers. This will provide the basis for establishing a ***Discipleship Path*** – a journey for the growth and development of each person (including the Leadership Team).

We have found that such a path for development is crucial for the vitality of the church plant and its relevance in the community. Although this path will be regularly revised and amended – it is important that a path be followed. Jesus indicated that we are to “make disciples” – and it is important to intentionally provide an environment for this development.

What is a Church?

This is a crucial question to church planters – and one that is under wide discussion at the present time. What is a church? What is the relationship between the kingdom of God and the church? How can we ensure that we are fostering the kingdom of God while planting a church?

The word *church* means **God's called out people**. However, the word has developed other connotations. Phillip Jensen suggests we would do well to clarify the nature of church by recognizing a “series of confusions.”⁵⁵ These include:

1 ***Confusion of the building complex with church***

Buildings are allowed to set the vision and define the church. Some do not want to worship unless it is in a *proper* building. Some feel that if there is an appropriate building, even if there are no people – there is still a church *witness*. Of course, if the building is full, we think we have a strong church. But, does a crowded building equal a healthy church?

Sometimes we let the services define what we mean by church. A Bible study at 9.30, a worship service at 11.00 and a fellowship time at 5.30 is church to many. We certainly think of regular attendance at such services as faithfulness!

Tragically, there may have buildings and services – but still not a church. The few people in those buildings may have a vested interest. It is their building. They are not interested in reaching and calling out lost people. They don't know how to reach out, they may not want others and they don't invite or welcome others. (Go and visit some of these buildings and services – and see how you are not welcome.)

There is evidence that church buildings may be the single most significant limiting factor for church growth.

2 ***Confusion of the denomination with church***

We believe that God has called us for a special purpose – and, that is true. This is how most in denominations feel. However, it does not then follow that there is no church present if our denomination is not in a city.

But, perhaps a more dangerous misconception is the idea that if we are represented in a city – we therefore have a church. I have heard people say, “Well, we only have three members there - but at least we have a church!”

And do 450 (or even 1,000) people in a city with a population of 520,000 indicate an effective church?

3 ***The confusion of the parish with church***

The concept of parish areas or territories comes from a former era. Today people travel from the parish where they live to different parishes for education, work, shopping and entertainment. Many have no commitment to the areas where they live. This can mean that the worshippers at a church in a particular city all travel from other cities. It can also mean that all the worshippers from one city travel to other cities to worship.

⁵⁵ Phillip Jensen in a presentation on *Church Planting* at the Fourteenth Evangelical Ministry Assembly, St Helen's Church, Bishopsgate, London: 25-27 June 1997.

When is a Group a New Church Plant?

In a paper entitled *Is Planting Churches in the Muslim World 'Mission Impossible'?* Dan Brown raises this important question: “What is a New Testament church, and how do we know when we’ve planted one?”⁵⁶ When can a church planter say, “I planted a church there?” What will the end product look like?⁵⁷

As a church planter, it seems to me that not all new groups should be called new church plants. In fact, some groups that we call (and have even organized as) churches - may never have been churches in a biblical sense.

This is not to underestimate the value of any group. And it may be that we will need to revise our definitions – especially as we relate to the many *emerging churches* and their potential impact. However, here are some possibilities to consider – and guidelines I have used:

1 *There will be a sustainable number & makeup of believers*

The New Testament does not give a precise number of believers in any local unit called a church. It seems that in some cases the numbers were quite small – certainly no more than could assemble in a home. It seems that the numbers may vary – but, there needs to be a certain ‘makeup’ to the group. A group of 20 whose primary interests are divided or elsewhere is perhaps not a church, while a fellowship of 12+ adults plus children may be a church. (See Acts 19)

It seems that a church will have enough people (critical mass) to provide leadership and teachers – and financial resources to support its ministries. A group could not be called a church if all teaching, leadership and finances come from outside the group or from one person.

2 *There will be two or more elders equipped & leading*

A church needs two or three people who *meet the qualifications* and *are willing to serve* as elders. If no one in the group is recognized as an elder, *with the ability to lead, teach and provide pastoral care*, a church has not been established. Because the New Testament teaches teamwork (going two-by-two) it seems reasonable that there should be at least two who qualify and are willing to serve as elders. And, three is always better than two.

Many church planters would not be satisfied that they had planted a church until at least two people have been equipped as *elders* – with recognised leadership authority and carrying their full responsibilities. If the believers are still relying on others (such as the denominational leaders) to organize the programme, provide funds or preachers and teachers, the group is not functioning as a church.

3 *There will be biblical, gospel teaching*

It is possible to build *churches* that are not Christian. For a group to be a Christian church there must be biblical preaching and teaching. Every church planter and Core Team will need to consider how the gospel is introduced to unchurched people and how the Bible story will be told.

With biblical illiteracy high planters must find answers to these questions: How will the teachings of Jesus be introduced and shared? In what context will the Bible stories be told? What resources will be used?

⁵⁶ Dan Brown suggests a minimum of three things - and also, a true church must be preaching the gospel. Dan Brown, *Is planting churches in the Muslim world 'Mission Impossible'?* Evangelical Missions Quarterly, vol. 33 no. 2: April 1997. p. 160-165.

⁵⁷ Brown, *Ibid.*, pp. 160-161.

4 *There will be a clear discipleship path*

In that a primary purpose of the church is to “make disciples” (Matthew 28:20) it seems basic to assume that for a group to be a church there will be a clear *Discipleship Path*. The process will be unique to each group – but would involve faith development, the identification of gifts, equipping, involvement, faith sharing, spiritual growth and maturity.

5 *They will be reproducing & planting new churches*

A study of New Testament churches reveals that local churches were planting churches. This is clearly a quality of a healthy local church. A church planter will not be satisfied that a new church has been planted unless it is evident that the new group has a plan and is involved in planting new groups and churches.

Failures in Planting - How to respond?

There are times when church planting projects fail. Just as the potential for success depends upon the planning process, so how denominational leaders, church planters and Core Teams react and respond will also depend upon the effectiveness of the planning process.

Some of the reasons for the failure of church plants include –

1. The planters and/or Core Teams become burnt out with overload or conflict.
 2. The response from the target community was less or slower than expected.
 3. Some of the key Core Team members move away because of family or work.
 4. By denominational action or individual choice – the planter moves after only a few years.
 5. Conflict or misunderstandings with parent churches or denominational leaders become all consuming.
 6. The breakdown of marriages or key relationships in the church planting team.
- A survey of these and other factors highlight the need for careful planning:

1 *Each planter should participate in a ‘behavioural interview.’*

Such an interview process gives an opportunity for the denominational leaders, parent church and planter to be aware of the preparedness and suitability of the planter, spouse and Core Team for the task of planting.

2 *Each planter should be equipped in a ‘church-planting-church.’*

In the environment of the ‘church-planting-church’ the planter and Core Team can be given experience in the range of skills needed for church planting. The planter can be mentored in developing skills for ministry among unchurched people.

3 *Each planter & Core Team should attend a Planting School.*

We have found it crucial for the planter and Core Team (no less than 4 people) to spend from 5-7 days in a residential “school” to study the basics of church planting, to worship and pray together, and to gain an overview of the planning process. These days give opportunity to develop the basics of a *Project Plan* and gives opportunities for networking with other teams.

It must be stated that assessment processes, mentoring systems and church planting schools must not be used as a tool to restrict the freedom and entrepreneurial giftedness of potential

planters. Rather these should be environments of encouragement, skills development and release for ministry under the Holy Spirit's direction.

4 Each planter should have a Coach & support system.

The denominational or parent church leadership should ensure that every church planter has a skilled coach – who maintains professional and regular contact with the planter. It will also be valuable if planters and Core Teams are included in a *New Church Incubators* network – especially for the support and encouragement of the planters in their first two years.

Planters and Core Teams also need the inspiration and support from regular training events and 'X-Changes' – where projects are reviewed, ministry ideas shared and encouragement given in 'major doses.' Pastors of established churches can also play an important role – encouraging and supporting planters and defending them against the accusations and criticisms that will come.

Because most church planters will be bi-vocational it will also be important for the denomination and/or supporting church to provide systematic instruction in Bible, theology, leadership skills and pastoral methods.

5 Funding & personnel should be planned according to 'growth.'

This is an absolutely crucial observation. It has frequently been observed that the effectiveness of a church plant does not depend upon large amounts of funding from the parent church or denominational headquarters. However, the cost of planting – especially when there is a failure – is a major concern.

Costs escalate when church plants depend upon paid pastors (or other paid personnel) and when the group moves to rent or purchase property. It is surprising that some denominational leaders (and often those who complain the most about the high cost of planting churches!) will allocate large sums of money to a project before a planter has been assessed, before contacts with the unchurched are made and relationships built, before a Core Team has developed, and before it is evident that the *Project Plan* is actually working.

Experience would suggest that it is best to encourage the planter and Core Team to:

1. Build relationships with the unchurched in 'low cost' ways.
2. Establish a network of small groups in homes, offices, schools and factories.
3. Identify and cooperate with community groups on meeting needs with community funds.
4. Launch evangelistic initiatives (seminars and workshops) to establish groups in community venues.
5. Develop a Discipleship Path for these people – and use community venues available.

The mission of the church in the great cities of the world cannot wait until there are sufficient funds to purchase new properties (including the provision of off-street car-parking) for each potential and needed church plant. And, it is my contention that if denominations and parent churches provide targeted funding according to the growth of each planting project – the planters will be held accountable and the funds not squandered on one or two failures.

Funding for most new church planting initiatives will provide for the equipping of the leaders and Core Teams. For example, if an *emerging church plant* takes the form of a drop-in centre for street kids – most funds can be raised from local businesses and government agencies. If it takes the form of a network of small groups – few costs will be incurred. However, some funds may be needed to provide training of the planters and Core Teams.

6 Each 'Project Plan' should include a contingency plan for failure.

The *Project Plan* should include a assessment process that is prepared by the planter and Core Team – with a contingency plan for the failure of the project.

One of the problems is how 'failure' is handled by denominational church planters and leaders. Do we need to think in terms of success or failure? Maybe we do when large sums of money are invested – or when the project is bound to property that cannot be sold. However, let us keep some things in perspective.

Not one of the churches planted by the apostle Paul exists today. Did he fail? Have those plants failed? If we think of the life-cycle of churches – and the contribution that those plants made to the extension of God’s kingdom – we would not judge too harshly.

Perhaps we need to (1) be wise and not invest large sums until we see that a particular planting project is going to contribute to God’s kingdom on a ‘greater scale’ and in a more strategic role – preparing other planters, developing as a community church, etc; and (2) learn to affirm each small initiative and identify the ways in which each project contributes to God’s kingdom during its life! It is my belief that if we did more of the latter (proactively providing affirmation and encouragement) we would see more of the former – more projects developing into longer lasting and substantial plants! However, at the same time, denominations and parent churches would be protected from financially investing in disappointing high-profile failures.

Biotic Principles : God’s Growth Plan

We have noted the eight quality characteristics of healthy growing church – identified by Christian Schwarz’s research. We have also explored the common characteristics evident in churches reaching secular unchurched people – and, the lessons learnt from church planting. Here is a summary of these qualities, characteristics and lessons -

Natural church Development – 8 Quality Characteristics

- 1 Passionate Spirituality
- 2 Inspiring Worship
- 3 Loving Relationships
- 4 Need-Oriented Evangelism
- 5 Empowering Leadership
- 6 Gift – oriented Ministry
- 7 Functional Structures
- 8 Holistic Small Groups

Churches for the Unchurched

- 1 They have Leaders with Vision.
- 2 They Believe the Gospel Makes a Difference.
- 3 They are Praying Churches.
- 4 They Believe in the Baptism of the Holy Spirit.
- 5 They have a Strategy for Reaching Unchurched People.
- 6 They Encourage Friendship With Unchurched People.
- 7 They Multiply Small Groups.
- 8 They have Creative Church Services – With Practical Bible Messages.

Lessons Learnt – 15 Factors

- 1 Choose the Planter
- 2 Plan Well
- 3 Develop a strong Core Group & Support Teams
- 4 Start Contact Initiatives with Unchurched People – NOW!
- 5 Involve unchurched friends in planning
- 6 Maintain a Conservative Theological Perspective
- 7 Commit to Change – Adapt Worship Style to the Audience
- 8 Plan to Become Financially Self-Supporting
- 9 Plan (and train) to be Friendly
- 10 Use Advertising & Information
- 11 Make a Long-Term Commitment
- 12 Organise During the Term of the Supporting Leaders
- 13 Beware of “Highjackers”
- 14 Churches for fringe-dwelling Adventists don’t win the unchurched
- 15 Develop a clear Discipleship Path & follow it

Six Biotic Principles

The emphasis of *Natural Church Development* is upon identifying and releasing the natural growth forces with which God builds his church. Schwarz writes, “We should not attempt to manufacture church growth, but rather to release the biotic potential which God has put into every church.”⁵⁸

We must ask, what can be done to release the biotic potential by which God grows his church? What can we do to remove obstacles that would hinder God’s work?

Christian Schwarz has identified 6 biotic principles. These *natural* principles are found in every church plant. They are all related.

1 Interdependence: Everything is Dependent upon Everything Else

The church of Jesus is a complex organism. Every aspect is interrelated according to God’s plan. Schwarz writes, “The biotic principle of interdependence states that the way the individual parts are integrated into a whole system is more important than the parts themselves.”⁵⁹ If there is a problem in the spiritual life of core members – it will affect all areas. If one person leaves a Core Team, it changes the dynamics and character of the whole group. If holistic small groups are in place it will impact inspiring worship etc.

How does this relate to church planting?

- Every decision will impact other areas (personnel, ministries etc).
- Hold regular meetings of ministry leaders to explore positive interdependence.

2 Multiplication: Multiplication is Normal

Every form of organic life reaches its natural limit. A tree does not keep getting bigger – it produces new trees. “The true fruit of a small group is not a new Christian, but another group; the true fruit of a church is not a new group, but a new church; the true fruit of a leader is not as follower, but a new leaders; the true fruit of an evangelist is not a convert, but new evangelists...”

⁵⁸ Schwarz, *Ibid.*, p.10.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p.66.

Reproduction through multiplication is simply a life principle of all God-created organisms, including the church of Jesus Christ.”⁶⁰

How does this relate to church planting?

- All ministry leaders/personnel will apprentice new leaders – for ministry will multiply.
- Establish a church planting mindset into the church plant.

3

Energy Transformation: All Energy Should Be Transformed

The destructive power of the waves - is used to build up the church. The experience of Paul on Mars Hill – who used the altar of the unknown god to turn thoughts towards the true God – illustrates this principle.

How does this relate to church planting?

- The non-spiritual needs and interests of non-Christians are taken seriously – and, these provide energy for service for God.
- Most of God’s money and “harvesters” are still in the harvest field – and, the wise church planter will use these funds and people in launching community ministries.

4

Multi-Usage: Nature Recycles Everything

There is no waste in nature. The leaves that fall – provide nutrients for the tree from which they fell. It is true that this principle is seen in multipurpose facilities and in the use of the pastor’s sermon notes providing a basis for small group discussions. However, “the point of the principle is that the results of work are transformed into energy, which in turn sustains the ongoing work.”⁶¹ This essential meaning of multi-usage is best illustrated by the principle of co-leadership. Jesus modelled this in working with his disciples. Leaders involve co-leaders in on-the-job training – rather than (1) leading and (2) providing training classes to those who will one day be leaders.

How does this relate to church planting?

- Learn from the experiences of all members.
- Always work in teams – to develop new leaders.

5

Symbiosis: Different Members (followers of Christ) Work Together

“Symbiosis, according to Webster, is ‘the intimate living together of two dissimilar organisms in a mutually beneficial relationship.’”⁶² Competition assumes dissimilar organisms – but, these harm rather than help. A monoculture assumes the domination of one type of organism – and, a lack of variety. This does not work in nature. We need different organisms. We are called to unity – not uniformity.

How does this relate to church planting?

- In what way can the everyday needs and interests of individual Christian (“What do I enjoy?” – example: shopping) and the needs of the congregation (“What will help our church grow?”) be used to complement each other?
- We work in teams.

6

Function: God Made Us to Be Fruitful

All living things are designed to bear fruit. Fruit preserves the species. Fruit is clearly visible. Where there is no fruit – something is wrong. The quality of an organism is revealed by the fruit.

How does this relate to church planting?

- The function of every church planter, leader and member is to be fruitful.

⁶⁰ Ibid., p.68.

⁶¹ Ibid., p.72.

⁶² Ibid., p.74.

- He made us to lead people to the Lord.
- There is a season for fruit.

Learn to Use These Biotic Principles – Ten Action Steps

These six biotic principles are all variations of one single principle: “How can we create an environment that will allow God’s growth automatism – with which he builds the church – ever-increasing influence?”⁶³ Whenever you are making a decision – or resolving a challenge – ask the question: “How would this decision or solution impact or foster these six biotic principles?” Christian Schwarz proposes 10 action steps.⁶⁴

- 1 Build spiritual momentum.
- 2 Determine your minimum factors.
- 3 Set qualitative goals.
- 4 Identify obstacles.
- 5 Apply biotic principles.
- 6 Exercise your strengths – maximum factor, spiritual culture, contextual factors & spiritual gifts.
- 7 Utilise biotic tools – materials that foster biotic thinking.
- 8 Monitor effectiveness – by doing regular NCD surveys of your church.
- 9 Address your new minimum factors.
- 10 Multiply your church.

Barriers to Growth

We have considered the qualities of healthy and effective church plants – and the implementation of biotic, God-given processes. Reflect upon these barriers to growth:

10 Common Barriers to Growth

- 1 Not inviting friends to share your activities or bringing them to church events
- 2 Fear that growth will ruin the fellowship
- 3 Rigidly clinging to traditions
- 4 Trying to appeal to everyone
- 5 Being program-oriented rather than process-oriented
- 6 Emphasising meetings rather than ministry
- 7 Preaching without application
- 8 Distrust of the leaders
- 9 Legalism
- 10 Structured for Control rather than Growth

⁶³ Ibid., p.81.

⁶⁴ Ibid., pp.106-125.

Different Ways



Start a New Church⁶⁵

There is no one way to plant a church – and, unless a church plant is intentionally cloned, each church planted will be unique.

Different - Models!

Here are some of the main models – but, in practice, there will commonly be a mix of some features of a number of these:

1. *Hiving Off Model*

A group, under the leadership of a planter, moves out to start a new congregation. The people have sometimes been living in the new target area. Sometimes the nucleus has been formed around a special interest such as contemporary worship; the desire to reach a particular ethnic or generational group, or the unchurched.

2. *Colonization Model*

This is where members hive off from existing congregations, move to a new area to find new homes and jobs with the specific intention of establishing a new church in that community.

3. *Evangelistic Model*

Many new churches have been planted as the result of an aggressive evangelistic plan - including public meetings, seminars and Bible studies. A new nucleus of people is formed from the community.

A variation of this approach is for a planter - with one or two other families - to follow a plan to reach out evangelistically to find new people to form a new church plant. They may establish small home groups. When the numbers have multiplied - the groups are brought together for weekly worship and ministry.

4. *Multiple Service Model*

This approach may simply mean multiplying the same worship programme - and, sharing all other ministries. Or it may involve targeting different people groups with a variety of services - with each congregation initiating ministries for their target group. Experience has shown that it can be divisive to conduct multiple worship services in the same building-complex at the same time.

6. *Church Splits*

Churches split over theological, personality, leadership or priority conflicts. Sometimes one faction pulls out and establishes another congregation. This is not the best way to start new churches - however, there are times when a new missionary-minded church arises through a split.

It will be important to carefully consider what type of church will best reach your community or people group. This will also determine the model used to plant – and will be determined not only by the community but also by the experience, skills and training of the planter and Core Team.

⁶⁵ See Doug Kilcher, *12 Ways to Plant Churches & 6 New Models of Ministry* (Seeds '96 – Church Planting Summit Notebook); Ron Gladden, *Eight ways to start a new church from Church Planting; key to growth* (Ministry: October 1988) p. 7.

Different - Plants!

1. ***Traditional Churches***

The term *traditional church* is somewhat judgemental – just as the term *contemporary church*. We may be better to use a term like *classical churches*. What we mean is churches that reflect the form and style of many established churches – but they are very intentional about the quality of music and presentations, excellence in décor and delivery, and building friendships with unchurched people. The ARK in The Hague (Netherlands) is typical. They ‘value add’ by ensuring there are opportunities for question and answer sessions (dialogue) at the close of each sermon, a discipleship path is being planned, small groups and opportunities to socialise are fostered. The style is intentionally and consistently *classical*.

2. ***Community Churches***

Community churches relate to members, their families and meet a wide range of needs for the wider community. Although often denominational (and proud of it) these churches establish a wider loyalty and see their mission encompassing all within their communities – as do Kennington Community Fellowship and Hope Community (both in London, England); and Central Coast Community Church (Wyong), Gateway Family Church (Frankston) and Mile End Community Church (Sydney) in Australia. These churches become more effective with increasing numbers who can be skilled to provide a broader range of ministries. Some suggest that *community churches* with 250 or more attendees are best placed to serve and provide the ministries expected of them.

3. ***House Churches***

The *house church* has the appeal of being a New Testament model.⁶⁶ Of course it is important to remember that the suburban family and house in a western city is very different to those of the cities of the Middle East in New Testament times – with their houses open to all who pass by on the streets and the extended family living either in the home or in adjoining (and equally open) properties. The *house church* is appealing because of its warmth and intimacy. However, this strength can become a weakness – for the group can enjoy their fellowship so much that they become insular and no longer reach out to new people. The *house church* movement has proved quiet effective in Australia.⁶⁷

4. ***Cell Churches***

This is not a church with small groups. Rather, every aspect of church life happens in and through cells. The cells network and cooperate as the cells of a living organism. “Cell churches are communities of Christians where all the main activities of church life take place in small home-based groups, groups which are linked together within a larger network for certain purposes. Cell churches have two main components: the *cell* and the *celebration*.”⁶⁸ Loren Pratt is planting Northpoint as a *cell church* in Melbourne (Australia) and both Middelpunt (Purmerend) and WATT (Bovensmilde) in the Netherlands are fostering the same principles.

5. ***Small Churches***

Most churches are small churches – with less than 40 attending. Instead of beating themselves for not growing numerically, an increasing number of small churches are recognising their strengths and celebrating what they offer. The British Church Growth Association has given strong support to a *small churches network* – and some planters are intentionally planting small.

⁶⁶ For example see Colossians 4:15.

⁶⁷ Murray, Stuart. *Church Planting: Laying Foundations*. Carlisle, Cumbria, UK: Paternoster Press. 1998. p. 150.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 151.

6. **Satellite Churches**

New congregations are established - but, there is still a link with a parent church. The senior pastor of the central church operates as the senior pastor of the satellites. There will sometimes be a combined worship service once a month. This model may take a number of forms either in the same building or in different venues – reaching a variety of language, cultural, generational or ethnic groupings. There may also be a variety of worship styles.

The *satellite* concept can form an umbrella over a number of *house churches*, *small churches* and even a cluster of cells or *cell churches*.

7. **Mega, Meta & Multi-campus Churches**

Mega churches (with more than 1,000 attendees each week), *meta*-churches (a term coined by Carl George to describe the mega church based upon multiple cells) and multi-campus churches are reaching thousands of people with the gospel. Denominational leaders find these models difficult to control – and in fact they are rarely seen (if ever?) in denominational structures where pastors are appointed and pastoral tenure is relatively brief.

8. **Café Churches**

Facing the challenge of sharing the gospel with their postmodern and post-Christian friends – and committed to the value *we'll come to you* – church planters must remain flexible, alert and innovative.⁶⁹ Church is taken into a variety of environments – including warehouses, restaurants, corporate board rooms, cafés and pubs. CaféKirken (Copenhagen, Denmark), Cornelius (Oslo, Norway), SEEDcafé (Helsinki, Finland), Cottage Beck Café Church (Scunthorpe, England), KORINTA (Riga, Latvia) and the recently opened Café Port (in downtown Znojmo, Czech Republic) provide interesting case-studies. Each is different to the other. Each represents believers taking (seeping) the gospel into their communities.

9. **Emerging Churches**

Whatever we call the transition society is experiencing, this is not just a transition from one generation to another – creating a generational gap. We are experiencing a philosophical transition that is changing almost all reference points for life, thinking, culture, organisations, decision making etc. The forms of church that have developed during the modernist and scientific era – based upon reasoned theologies and authority structures – will continue to reach some. However, the evidence is already before us that this form of church is not sufficient. If we do not involve the *emerging generation* the church will continue to become more marginalised!

Emerging initiatives and *emerging churches* are rising from the visions of those believers (who have themselves been influenced by postmodernism) who have a burning passion to share their relationship with Jesus with their friends.

There are countless initiatives⁷⁰ that I could list in Europe as illustrations of the three qualities that Frost and Hirsch suggest characterise *emerging church* – ie: (1) incarnational – seeping into society rather than attracting people to a holy space (church building) where all religious activities takes place, (2) messianic – seeing the world as the place for the activity of God rather than adhering to the Greco-Roman dualistic model (with the sacred being separated from the profane), and (3) apostolic – recognising spiritual giftedness rather than educated, hierarchical modes of leadership.⁷¹

Stuart Murray says, “More important than the models themselves are the fresh insights these are generating and the permission to question accepted traditions that they represent. The

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 158.

⁷⁰ Initiatives such as Remix and FaceOut (Denmark); Gausel and Ungdomsvisjon (Norway); Xpres.zo, AIMAARmere, Little Light, Uni&K and Alivio (to name just some in the Netherlands); re:vive and TimeOut (to name just two in England); Mosaic (Bosnia i Herzegovina); Alfa and Nova Sance (in the Czech Republic); TeaChurch and Kobanya (Hungary); and a large Adventist Community Services project (meeting the long-term community needs of flood victims) being led by Andy Clarke and Mayda Flores in Bridgeville, Pennsylvania (USA) – are all excellent illustrations of *emerging church*.

⁷¹ See Frost, Michael & Alan Hirsch. *Ibid.*, p. 12.

questions remain valid whatever our evaluation of the answers.”⁷² It is important to evaluate – and continue to look for the activity of the Holy Spirit. Fan the flame. Encourage. The greatest opportunities are yet ahead.

An important new initiative - NxCD

NCD-Australia has just launched NxCD to foster *emerging church* plants and initiatives that are fostering the environment of the *8 quality characteristics*. This is new – and illustrates how the opportunities and support systems for those committed to sharing the gospel are continually evolving. Go to www.ncd-australia.org.au and check for details.

An important Note!

Many resources and support systems (like NCD or *Natural Church Development*, NxCD, CRM or *Church Resource Ministries*, CoachNET, Alpha resources, FORGE, etc) are providing for churches and planters across denominational borders. Each planter can access these systems and apply their research and resources to their context. For some resources and links to key websites visit – www.newchurchlife.com.

⁷² Murray, Stuart. *Ibid.*, p. 161.

Section TWO



a Planning Process

Key Elements



Developing a Plan

“Every church is driven by something. There is a guiding force, a controlling assumption, a directing conviction behind everything that happens.”⁷³ Some church plants are driven by imported traditions and others by strong personalities. Some are obviously controlled by finances. The only question asked is, “How much will it cost?” Then there are those driven by programmes, and those controlled by buildings. Some seem to have the goal of keeping busy - they are driven by a programme of events. “Some churches allow the needs of the unbeliever to become their driving force.”⁷⁴ But, if the church is God’s and Jesus is its head, his purpose and vision for your church plant is what matters.

Purpose & God’s Vision

Here is a process that has worked in helping church plants (and even established churches) operate from a biblical mandate or purpose and a God given vision.⁷⁵ This plan can also be used for other church levels – either for an *emerging* initiative or for national or international planning.⁷⁶ It is purposely designed to give room for the creative influence of the Holy Spirit. It keeps focus upon the concept that the church is God’s and Jesus is the head. His purpose and vision for your church is what matters. Obviously, then, prayer is where it begins. And, that will include prayerful reflection upon the biblical reasons for the church.

Having an understanding of what God wants gives cohesion to the Core Team. “Where there is no vision, the people perish.” Proverbs 29:18. Warren notes that a clear biblical mandate and vision:⁷⁷

1. **Builds MORALE:** It gives harmony – unity in “thought and purpose.”⁷⁸
2. **Reduces FRUSTRATION:** It keeps the focus on the task of sharing the gospel.⁷⁹
3. **Allows CONCENTRATION:** It cultivates effectiveness. Paul said, “I am bringing all my energies to bear on this one thing (doing what God wants), forgetting what is behind and looking forward to what lies ahead.” Philippians 3:13 (LB). Efficiency is doing things right. Effectiveness is doing the right thing – what God wants.
4. **Attracts COOPERATION:** It builds team work
5. **Assists EVALUATION:** It allows you to reflect on the question: Are we pleasing God?

Many leadership teams, churches and pastors wrestle over issues such as buildings, ministries, methods and forms of worship before first determining God’s purpose and vision for their churches. Change for the sake of change creates unnecessary pain even on church plants. All Core Team members will bring a history to the planning process. However, when we are committed to being biblically authentic and to fulfilling God’s purpose - all changes will be with a purpose. And, make no mistake - he will ask us to change. The gospel and three angels’ messages challenge us to be on the cutting edge of change to build his kingdom. His purpose and vision gives focus to this change and our ministries.

⁷³ Rick Warren, *The Purpose Driven Church* (Zondervan, Michigan, 1995) p. 77.

⁷⁴ Warren, *Ibid.*, pp. 77-80.

⁷⁵ Some of the ideas have been adapted from *Strategic Planning for Christian Organizations: The Planning Model*, Institute for Christian Organizational Development, Fuller Theological Seminary, Pasadena, California. Also see George A. Steiner, *Strategic Planning* (Collier Macmillan Publishers, London, 1979); and, Patrick J. Below, George L. Morrissey, Betty L. Acomb, *The Executive Guide to Strategic Planning* (Jossey-Bass Publishers, London, 1989) and *The Executive Guide to Operational Planning* (Jossey-Bass Publishers, London, 1988)

⁷⁶ Further information and samples of such planning documents are available from the author.

⁷⁷ See Warren, *Ibid.*, p. 77.

⁷⁸ See 1 Corinthians 1:10 – *Living Bible*.

⁷⁹ See Philippians 2:27.

Understanding Each Step

Here is an overview of where we are going. Apply these questions to each step:⁸⁰ *How* will we get the information? *Who* will collect the information? *When* will we begin? *What* will we do?

ESTABLISHING THE VISION: (Strategic Planning)

- 1 **BIBLICAL MANDATE:** What is God's purpose for His church?
- 2 **VISION:** What does God want us to do? What future does God desire?
- 3 **MISSION:** Why will we exist? What does God expect a church plant to do?
- 4 **VALUES:** What values and attitudes will be important in the way we relate?
- 4a **BELIEFS:** Who are we & what beliefs mould our relationships?
- 5 **COMMUNITY/GROUP:** Who are we & who are we trying to reach?
- 6 **STRATEGY:** How will we reach the community or people group?
- 6a **DEVELOPING a Discipleship Path:**

ACTION PLANS: (Operational Planning)

- 7 **MINISTRIES:** What will we do to reach people – to make our strategy to work?
- 8 **GOALS:** What will be the long and short term barometers of progress?
- 9 **PERSONNEL & STRUCTURES:** Who will do the tasks and how?

ASSESSMENT: (Feed-back Loop)

- 10 **EVALUATION:** Did we achieve God's purpose? Are we pleasing him?

Developing a Project Plan!

Many elements of this plan develop together rather than sequentially. They form the basis for **Project Plan**. The **Project Plan** (with biblical mandate, vision statements etc) can be drafted by a working group of two or three (see page 63-64). However, it needs to be brought back to the whole team for clarification and revision so that there is consensus that the Spirit of the Lord is leading. This is an important document for that will provide your new church with a clear focus for prayer, decision-making and ministry. Be single minded in your commitment – but do not use these statements to manipulate or control each other.

⁸⁰ Adapted from *Strategic Planning for Christian Organizations: The Planning Model*. Institute for Christian Organizational Development, Fuller Theological Seminary, Pasadena.

Time line & Planning!

As you prepare to work through the planning process – spend a few moments brainstorming. Develop a list of important milestones for your church plant. Review the list below. Add to this list.

Use a video projector – with a spreadsheet planner so that core-group members can participate in developing a time-line for activities. (Or, write these activities on *post-it-notes* - and, arrange them into a logical time/calendar sequence on a large board.) Note that the time allowed for each activity and step will vary. Verify that you have sufficient lead-time for each step. The activities will include the following:

- Planter & Associate (two-by-two) - selected.
- Prayer Team - selected & mobilized.
- Steering Group - selected & mobilized.
- **FUN ACTIVITY WITH UNCHURCHED FRIENDS.**
- Demographic & Feasibility Study - completed.
- Target Area & People Group - identified.
- Biblical Purpose, Vision, Mission, Values, Strategy Statements - finalized.
- Core Group - enlisted.
- Church Name - chosen.
- **FUN ACTIVITY WITH UNCHURCHED FRIENDS.**
- Financial Plan & Budget - developed.
- Accountability & relationships with Conference - determined.
- Church Planting Proposal - presented to relevant committee / board.
- Core Group - training & studies completed.
- **SMALL GROUP WITH UNCHURCH FRIENDS – HELD.**
- Hall / venue for interest meeting - booked.
- Telephone, bank account - completed.
- Logo & stationary - developed.
- Networks of evangelistic contacts - identified.
- **FUN ACTIVITY WITH UNCHURCHED FRIENDS.**
- Ministries (evangelism & discipleship methods for unchurched) - decided.
- Leadership, Personnel & Structures - decided.
- **SMALL GROUP WITH UNCHURCH FRIENDS – HELD.**
- Job Descriptions - defined.
- Goals - determined.
- Evaluation Processes - agreed upon.
- Leaders - selected & equipped.
- **FUN ACTIVITY WITH UNCHURCHED FRIENDS.**
- Advertising for interest meeting - prepared.
- Interest meeting - advertised.
- Interest meeting - held.
- **SMALL GROUP NETWORK - MULTIPLYING**
- Contacts - followed up.
- Evangelistic & Worship Year - planned.
- First Ministries - launched.
- Venue for worship - booked.
- First worship service - planned.
- **FUN ACTIVITY WITH UNCHURCHED FRIENDS.**
- First worship service - advertised.
- First worship service - held.
- **FUN ACTIVITY WITH UNCHURCHED FRIENDS.**

1 **Biblical Mandate: God's purpose for Our Plant!**

To understand God's purpose for the church examine the words and commands of Jesus, reflect on his ministry, and study the metaphors and story of the church.

Many have found Rick Warren identification of five tasks or purposes as basic.⁸¹ The first church in Jerusalem was clearly committed to this purpose. (See Acts 2:1-47) The church exists to *edify, encourage, exalt, equip* and *evangelise*. Paul was committed to these purposes. He explained them in Ephesians 4:1-16. As Seventh-day Adventist Christians we believe that God has called us to accomplish this purpose within the context of end-times - preparing people for the glorious return of Jesus Christ.

1 **How will our plant relate to the 5 purposes outlined by Jesus?**

- THE GREAT COMMANDMENT: Matthew 22:36-40
- THE GREAT COMMISSION: Matthew 28:19-20

2 **Discuss & pray about what these verses say about church?**

Matthew 5:13-16	John 13:34-35	Galatians 6: 1-2
Matthew 9:35	John 20:21	Ephesians 1:22,23
Matthew 11:28-30	Acts 1:8	Ephesians 2:19-22
Matthew 16:15-19	Acts 2:41-47	Ephesians 3:6, 14-21
Matthew 18:19,20	Acts 4:32-35	Ephesians 4:11-16; 5:23-24
Matthew 22:36-40	Acts 5:42	Colossians 1:24-28
Matthew 24:14	Acts 6:1-7	Colossians 3:15-16; 4:2-6
Matthew 25:34-40	Acts 14:21-15:21	1 Thessalonians 1:3
Matthew 28:18-20	Romans 12:1-8	1 Thessalonians 5:11
Mark 10:4 3-45	Romans 15:1-7	Hebrews 10:24-25
Luke 4:18-19	1 Corinthians 9: 20-23	Hebrews 13:7,17
Luke 4:43-44	1 Corinthians 12:12-31	1 Peter 2:9-10
John 4:23	2 Corinthians 5:17-6:1	1 John 1:5-7; 4:7-21
John 10:14-18	Galatians 5:13-15	Revelation 14:6-12

3 **Which ideas from these verses would give purpose to our plant?**

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5

⁸¹ Warren, *Ibid.*, pp. 103-107.

2 Vision: Seeing the Holy Spirit's Vision

What future would God want for our church plant? Do not just think of an extension of the present. Rather, pray that the Spirit of God will develop a vision of what God wants. He has promised, “I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams, your young men will see visions.” Joel 2:28.

A Holy Spirit inspired vision will foster God’s purpose for his church – and will often be seen the youth. The older we get the more we are plagued by the perception that it can’t be done. Inspired by the Holy Spirit, young people are open to new possibilities for they don’t realize that it can’t be done.

What is God’s Vision? Be bold. Spend time as a Core Team in prayer and then discuss:

1

I think the single most important thing God wants our church plant to do is . . .

2

Imagine! As the Core Team for a new church plant – we are a team of reporters/journalists preparing a report on our church plant 10 years from now. Pray about the possibilities.

1

What impact is our church plant having in the community?

2

How would we describe the attitudes of people in our church?

3

How are lost people being reached?

4

How are our members being equippeded, cared for & involved in ministry?

- What is the place of small groups for fellowship, Bible reading and nurture?
- How are members being equipped according to their spiritual gifts and involved in ministry?
- What type of worship experiences can you picture? Would there be more than one worship service each week - and, what forms might they take?
- What process is in place to equip more teams to plant new churches from our church plant?

5

How would we describe the health of our church in the light of the eight quality characteristics of *Natural Church Development*?

6

What type and style of buildings would we need to minister effectively?

3 Mission: Our Reason for Planting!

Why will this new church exist? A good mission statement will:

1 **Be Biblical:** *What does God expect us to do?* (See Biblical Mandate.)

2 **Be Specific:** *Why will our church exist?*

1 What would be lost if our church was not planted?

2 How will our church differ from others? What will be distinctive?

3 What will be our single most important task?

3 **Be Clear:** A good mission statement is easy to remember and communicate.

1 What needs to be said? (Then edit out the unnecessary words.)

2 How would we summarise these points in one sentence?

3 Does our mission statement incorporate the biblical purposes for the Church?

4 **Our Mission Statement:**

The _____ church exists to ...

4 Values: Clarifying Important Attitudes

Organizational culture has received a lot of attention in recent times.⁸² Experience in refocusing churches and church planting confirms the need to spend time clarifying the biblical convictions that would mark the attitudes and actions of a community of believers. We are not speaking of doctrinal, denominational beliefs. Nor are we referring to what some speak of as church standards.

Organizational values describe how a church will act towards people within the church and the community. They reflect the attitudes of the fellowship and, in fact, define the church plant.

To illustrate, here are four of Willow Creek Community Church's ten the core values –

- We believe that lost people matter to God and therefore ought to matter to the church.
- We believe that excellence honours God and inspires people.
- We believe that loving relationships should permeate every aspect of church life.
- We believe that life change happens best in small groups.

These may or may not reflect your convictions. However, they illustrate the distinctive attitudes of Willow Creek and explain why that church ministers and acts as it does.

See **Appendix A** for a detailed Values Survey and more information on the ten core values of Willow Creek Community Church.

1 *What do we look for and expect from people in our group?*

2 *What attitudes & values do we think are most important to God?*

3 *What attitudes & values do we think are the most important –*

1 For our leaders who will be making decisions for the church?

2 For those who will be leading worship times (praise, prayer and teaching)?

4 *What do we see as the 3 most important attitudes in terms of how our new church plant will operate?*

1

2

3

5 *These are our values:* (list 8-10 values – in the language of the unchurched)

- We believe that ...
- We believe that ...

⁸² For the classic work on organizational values read Edgar H. Schein, *Organizational Culture and Leadership* (Jossey-Bass Publishers, London, 1987). Also read, Paul Hersey & Kenneth H. Blanchard, *Management of Organizational Behaviour* (Prentice Hall, New Jersey, 1988).

4A Beliefs: Who are we?

We have been looking at what *values* will give us identity. And, these are extremely important – for it is by our attitudes towards each other and others that unchurched people will define us. In fact when people ask who we are, we will start by sharing our values.

We also find identity in our *beliefs* – our understandings of God and the Bible; and our relationship with Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit and the church.

1 *What biblical teachings define who we are?*

2 *What beliefs change or impact our lives each day?*

3 *How does what we believe change our lives?*

My beliefs

Change my life – How?

-
-
-
-
-
-
-
-

4 *What beliefs positively influence how we relate to others?*

5 *Write a summary of key doctrinal beliefs – using relational language & words that unchurched people will understand ...*

5 Community/People: Understanding Who to Reach

Jesus said, "Look around you! Vast fields of human souls are ripening all around us, and are ready now for reaping!" John 4:35 (LB) Many who are ready for harvest may not have a positive perception of church or church institutions.

1 Understanding Ourselves:

- 1** What kind of people are we in our Core Team?
- 2** Which group in our community are we most like?
- 3** Who in our Core Team would best be able to reach a different group?

2 Understanding Our Community or People Groups:

1 Defining our community GEOGRAPHICALLY

- How many people live within our church plant area?

2 Define our community DEMOGRAPHICALLY

- **What type of people live in this area?**
 - Age :
 - Marital status :
 - Income :
 - Education :
 - Occupation :
 - Ethnicity :
- **Who are the people groups in our community?**
- **Who are the most unreached with the gospel?**
- **Who are the most open to faith development?**
- **What are the gateways?**
- **Who are the gatekeepers?**

- **How do they get their information?**
- **Who do they trust?**
- **What are their schedules?**
- **How can we get acquainted?**

3 Defining our community SPIRITUALLY

- What are the attitudes to religion and spirituality?
- What are their world views, beliefs, values and behaviours?
- How many are unchurched and how many are churched?

3

Understanding our Specific People Group!

If we try to reach everyone – we may reach no one.

- 1** Who has the Holy Spirit given us a special burden to reach and disciple?
- 2** Who do we have the abilities and personnel to reach and disciple?
- 3** Which unchurched people groups do we believe our plant should focus ministries?

6 Strategic Path: A Plan for Your New Church Plant

The *Strategic Path* reflects the steps that a person from our unchurched community would follow to become a committed follower of Jesus. It is the plan that will be followed to reach the target audience. It is our step-by-step *how to* statement. The methods and *ministries* are the action plans for each step of the strategy. Key ministry areas and action plans will be determined by this *how to* statement.

Paul's ministry illustrates how God's purpose for his church inspired a plan or strategy to contextualise. He was prepared to vary his methods so as to break down barriers to faith. (See Acts 17:16-34; 1 Corinthians 9:19-23.)

1 Who do we seek to reach, serve and disciple?

2 To develop a strategy we must understand - those we wish to reach and where we wish to lead them.

1 Write down: the name of a lost person from our target group:

2 Prayer: Spend 10 minutes praying for that person.

3 Ask the Holy Spirit to guide us in understanding:

- What attitudes and behaviours are most important to this person?
- What motivates this person to be involved in programs or activities?
- How does this person make decisions to participate and when?
- How does this person perceive Christianity?
- At what point and where could our friends be involved with Christians?

4 What steps do we believe a person from our target community may walk to enter a saving relationship with Jesus Christ & full discipleship?

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

See Appendix B for the *Steps Some Take*.

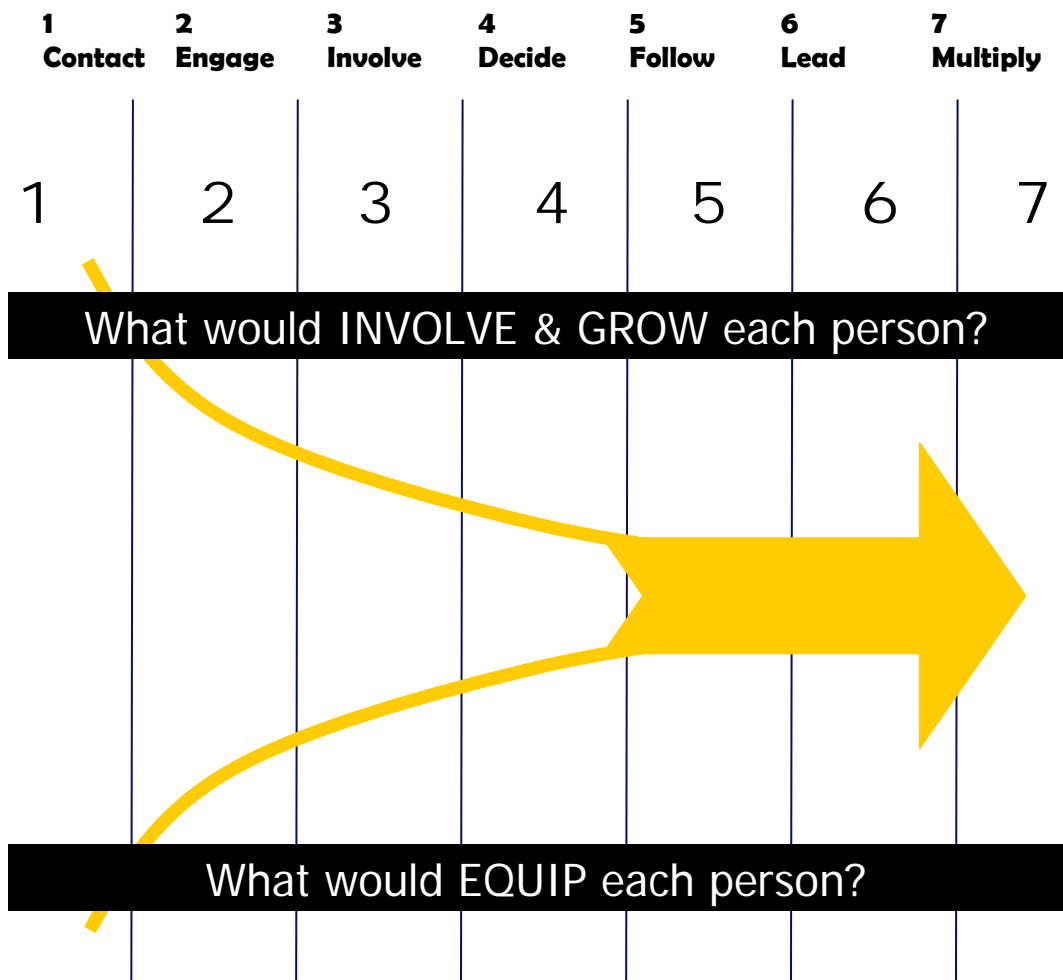
6 *Developing a Discipleship Path*

The *Strategic Path* provides the basis for the *Discipleship Path* – the path of faith development, personal and leadership growth for each person associated with this church plant.

Jesus made disciples – and then sent his disciples to make disciples. Each *Strategic Path* may be different – but there will be basic elements and the process could be summed up in this way:

- | | | |
|----|--|-----------------|
| 1. | He mingled with people | Contact |
| 2. | He sympathised as one who desired their good | Engage |
| 3. | He met the needs of the people | Involve |
| 4. | He gained their confidence | Decide |
| 5. | He invited, “Follow me” | Follow |
| 6. | He trained and equipped | Lead |
| 7. | He said, “Go and make disciples” | Multiply |

1 *What would a Discipleship Path look like?*



2 *What activities, workshops & equipping events will we do at each step on this journey to -*

- 1** **Contact, involve, grow & equip unchurched friends:**
- 2** **Provide a regular equipping track for members & leaders:**

7 Ministries: Action Plans

Key ministry areas are determined by the *how to* or Strategy Steps. What ministries and activities are needed to provide training and opportunities for each strategic step to reach unchurched people?

Methods change. If we are to relate the good news of salvation to the new generation in our community we will need to do church differently.⁸³ What will be good news to our community? How will new ministries be developed? How will ministries be closed once they have served their purpose?

1 What activities are needed to make our strategy work? *List the Strategy Steps and then list possible ministries for outreach and training.*

	Strategy Steps	Ministries
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		
7		

2 Action Plans: What will we do in the first 2 years?

Ministries	Activities (this year)	Activities (next year)

3 How will new ministries be developed?

⁸³ See Jon Paulien, *Present Truth in the Real World* (Pacific Press Publishing, Idaho, 1993) for a Seventh-day Adventist perspective on this issue.

8 Goals: Objectives that Matter

To be effective goals need to be: (1) specific and measurable, (2) challenging, (3) achievable, and (4) owned by the majority of members in the Core Team. This is where we translate the vision into specific attitudinal and numeric goals.

Keep in mind the principles that Jesus taught by his parables of the kingdom drawn from the world of the farmer. Goals that cultivate a healthy plant produce the fruit! It is therefore wise to concentrate on specific and measurable goals that cultivate the characteristics of a healthy church.

1 What will be our long-term goals – to foster church health?

Here are some examples:

- 1 Number of holistic small groups meeting each week:
- 2 A clear discipleship path and schedule established:
- 3 Number of new believers equipped & ministering according to their spiritual gifts:
- 4 Number of ministries & activities that involve & meet the needs of the community:
- 5
- 6

2 What will be our yearly goals & objectives for the next 10 years?

Ministries	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	etc
1						
2						
3						
4						
5						
6						

9 **Personnel, Structures & Facilities – that Work!**

It is important to be quite specific in this area. How will action plans be implemented? Who will put the plans into action? What staff will be needed? How will staff be supported?

1

Personnel

- 1 What personnel do you have to cast vision and provide your ministries?
- 2 What are the spiritual gifts and talents of the core group?
- 3 What abilities and spiritual gifts do your ministries need that the core group does not now possess? (Jesus said that we should pray to the Lord of the harvest for these "harvesters." Most of the church plant's leaders are still in the harvest field.)
- 4 What training opportunities are needed for your core group and/or staff members?

2

Structures

- 1 What changes in structure would allow greater ownership and involvement?
- 2 What legal processes do we need to be aware of?
- 3 Do we have the right processes in place to achieve the vision?

- **Ministry Structures:**

- How will new ministries start and be assessed?
- Who will decide that they end?
- How will networks be intentionally established?

- **Assimilation Processes:**

- How will we meet & care for people?
- How can a person become a member?
- How will members be equipped as disciples for their ministry?

- **Organizational Structures & Finances:**

- Keep structure as simple as possible.
- Have provisional leadership for 2-3 years.
- Determine sound financial policies and procedures.

- Determine cash flow projections.

It may be a good idea to have a *Church Manual* expert to remind the Core Team of established policies and to assist in finding the most effective structure.⁸⁴

3 **Facilities**

1 What facilities will be needed to start?

2 List areas of technology that will impact:

- a Your mission:
- b The needs you will address:
- c The services/programs you will offer:
- d The strategies you will use:

3 How will you provide facilities and technology to support your ministries?

4 What processes will provide facilities for developing ministries?

⁸⁴ James A. Cress, *Real Life Church Planting* (Ministry: February 1996) p. 30.

10 **Evaluation: Is God Pleased?**

1 **Are we making it?**

- 1 At what stages will we ask: Are we making it?
- 2 Who will do the assessment?
- 3 What standard will be used to measure success or failure?

How?	When?	Who?	What?
	Monthly		
	Quarterly		
	Yearly		
- 4 How are we scoring with the 8 quality characteristics of *Natural Church Development*?
- 5 What is our minimum factor? Are we following biotic principles?

2 **Is God pleased?**

- 1 Does the end justify the means?
- 2 Have we acted in a moral, Christian manner?
- 3 Have we prayed?
- 4 Have we seen growth?

3 **Questions to ask!**

- 1 What progress have we made in the last 3 months?
- 2 What progress have we made in the last year?
- 3 What trends do you notice in our church?
- 4 How well are we serving:
 - Our target group?
 - Our local community?
 - Our church?
 - Our newcomers or guests?
 - Others whom we should be serving?
- 5 What are our strengths? (What are our major sources of support?)
- 6 What are our weaknesses? (What do we need to change?)
- 7 How are we cultivating our values?

4 ***Planning for the Future***

- 1** What is our planning process for the future?
- 2** What do we need to change?
- 3** What ministry do we need to close or place in recess?

Drafting *the* Project Plan

It is now time to draft a working document – the ***Project Plan*** that will provide your church plant with a clear focus for prayer, decision-making and ministry. Choose a small, skilled working group - perhaps two or three people to work with a consultant to draft a working document using the input gathered from the widest number of people using the instruments on pages 46-62.

A Guide for Writing **the *Project Plan***

Steve Addison says: “Preparing a proposal will help you consider all the issues you need to face in church planting. This is not a final working plan, but the beginning of an ongoing planning process.”⁸⁵ Use these eight major seven major questions⁸⁶ as a guide to write a detailed ***Project Plan*** or *Church Planting Proposal*.

1 Why start a new church?

- Describe your calling – your biblical mandate.
- What is your vision?
- What are the reasons for your church plant?
- What is your mission statement?
- Why are new churches needed?

2 What kind of church are you trying to plant?

- What are your core values or basic ministry principles?
- What ministry model will you adopt?
- Draw the flow chart of how you will attract, disciple and mobilize people.

3 Who is your ministry focus group?

- What sort of people do you want to reach?
- How responsive are they to the gospel?
- How effective would you be in communicating with them?
- What are their needs?
- Include appropriate demographics.
- Describe the proposed location and why you have chosen it.

4 With whom will you plant this church?

- Describe your ideal launch team.
- Describe the specific roles that will need to be filled.
- How will you recruit new team members?
- Who will pay for your ministry and/or support you financially?
- To whom will you be accountable for support, training and correction – in your personal lives and ministry development?

5 How and when will you plant this church?

- What is your strategic plan for the first 18 months?

⁸⁵ Steve Addison, *How to Know if You Should Plant a Church* (Church Resource Ministries Australia: 1993); pp. 26, 27.

⁸⁶ Robert Logan and Steve Addison list seven of these questions (1-5, 7 & 8) – see Addison, pp. 26, 27.

- What is the time-line for what you want to see achieved?
- Which church planting model will you adopt?
- How will you reach the first 30-40 people?
- What essential ministries will you need to establish?

6 How will people grow?

- What will be your *Discipleship Path*?
- How will people grow in faith and life experiences?
- Who will train the trainers?
- What will be expected of leaders?

7 How much will it cost?

- What are your budget and cash-flow projections?
- Where will the money come from?
 - Will you have some financial sponsors?
 - Will you have some bi-vocational workers?
 - Will a parent church or your denomination provide financial support?
- What system of financial accountability will be in place?

8 How can others get involved?

- Prayer needs.
- Volunteer needs.
- Potential contacts.
- Equipment needs.
- Financial needs.

Once you have written your project plan, share it with a number of people - including an experienced church planter or church planting supervisor.

Submitted to:

Comments:

1 _____

2 _____

3 _____

Present the draft prepared by this working group and comments from an experienced planter and coach to the Core Team. It would be quite acceptable to invite others to participate in the discussion of the draft. Enlist as much input as possible to help clarify this working document.

Sharing The Vision!

Be courageous. Your biblical mandate, vision and mission must be constantly upheld. Experience proves that there will almost always be some who will try to block the direction to which the others are committed. (Sometimes, these folk will endeavour to "hold the church to ransom" by their threats, manipulation and promises that they will have the leaders or planter moved!) This is the time for Christian courage. If your direction is based upon the biblical purpose for God's church and a Holy Spirit inspired vision, show love and care for the distracters but press on to build God's kingdom. Establish goals. Equip and encourage people to work according to their spiritual giftedness. And, evaluate all by asking: Is God pleased? No vision, plan or strategy is valid if it does not achieve his purpose.

One of the primary tasks of the planter is to cast and recast the vision - in prayer, stories, visuals, and in the lives of fellow-believers.⁸⁷ That is a primary function of those with the spiritual gift of leadership. It takes less than a month for people to lose vision! And, “where there is no vision, the people perish” (Proverbs 29:18) for there is no focus. This is not to suggest that the church will cease to exist. But it will not be accomplishing God’s purpose. It will not be effective in extending God’s kingdom.

Philip Bryant makes some important points about leaders communicating and sharing vision. He notes that each leader needs to:⁸⁸

- Have a clear vision in their mind.
- Commit to the fulfilment of the vision.
- Pray through the vision until they are sure it is God’s will for their lives.
- Focus upon the fulfilment of the vision.
- Practically work towards the vision.
- See failure as a learning experience towards success in achieving the vision.

Bryant writes: “The vision needs to be continually reinforced. With all the information people receive today they will lose sight of the vision within 30 days if it is not reinforced.” He suggests seven ways to reinforce the vision.⁸⁹

1 Tell Stories. Encourage leaders and people to continue to follow the vision by recounting true incidents of where the vision has been upheld in worship services and weekly newsletters.

2 Monitor Short Term Goals. Show how they impact the big picture (the vision) - and, announce their achievement to both the congregation and leaders.

3 Give Appreciation Awards. Encourage people by giving small appreciation awards to people who have contributed towards the outworking of the vision.

4 Affirm People Publicly. Affirm to the congregation those who are making the vision a reality.

5 Build a Leadership Community. Continually bring leaders together to feed, refresh, and remind them of the vision - preferably monthly.

6 Send a Monthly Leadership Letter - to key leaders. This is not a newsletter, but rather focuses on the various ministries that play a part in fulfilling the vision. It updates on these ministries.

7 Give Leaders Books & Articles. Provide your leaders and people with a continual flow of articles that help give credibility to the vision.

⁸⁷ For a range of practical ideas on cultivating vision see George Barna, *The Power of Vision* (Regal Books, California, 1992)

⁸⁸ Philip Bryant, *Church Planting Workbook* (Baptist Union of Victoria, Australia, 1992) p. 33.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

Growth through Small Groups!

Holistic small groups are essential and basic to church planting. Before the birth (first public worship service) of a church plant it is important that a network of multiplying small groups be established. They provide an ideal environment for nurture and encouragement, skills and spiritual gift development, evangelism and spiritual growth.

1 Principles that Work

Small groups do not just happen. The planter, Core Team and all leadership type people must show their support for small groups by being involved – as group members. It takes consistent commitment to foster a healthy small group network:

1. Each group will have a leader and an apprentice leader.
2. Groups will meet once a week or every 2 weeks.
3. It is important to meet at the same time and same place
4. Each small group meeting must be no longer than 1.5 hours in length.
5. For effective interaction a group should multiple if there are more than 12 people.
6. There *must be* unchurched friends in each group.
7. Each group will plan a social event for other friends every 6-8 weeks.
8. Those in a group have chosen to be there – they were not assigned to the group.

2 How to Kill a Small Group!

Some of the things that kill small groups are:

1. Leaders who teach – rather than cultivate discussion.
2. Not keeping strictly to the agreed starting and closing times.
3. A lack of a consistent support system for leaders.
4. No unchurched people present.
5. A feeling that “we are not sharing or growing.”
6. Refusal to multiple – developing opportunities to reach others.

3 Support for Leaders

A carefully implemented system of support is *absolutely essential* for the success of small groups in a church plant. In fact, small groups will not survive unless there is such support. The basics will include:

1. A Small Groups Coordinator and Associate Small Group Coordinator – who are trained (seminars, resources, conferences, coached, etc), affirmed and supported by the planter and Core Team.

The Small Groups Coordinator will organise:

2. A monthly **training** and support event for all small group leaders and apprentice leaders. The planter and other key leaders of the church plant will be involved in providing some of the training. However, this monthly event will be the responsibility of the Small Groups Coordinator.
3. A monthly **feature in the worship service** to affirm small group leaders and their apprentices – arranged in coordination with the planter/pastor.
4. An annual **retreat** (paid for by the church plant) for small group leaders and their apprentices.

4 **Keep It Simple & Relational – Themes & Life Questions**

We suggest each person in the group receive a bookmark – which outlines the main features of each small group meeting. Here is a suggestion that can be adapted:

LIFEgroups

Purposes:

Welcome, Word, Witness, Worship

Group Meeting Outline

Welcome – 10-20 mins (sharing)

Who did I meet for the first time this week & what 2 things did I learn about that person?

Word - 30 mins (discovery learning)

Read/View: a scripture, book/article, DVD

Discovery Questions:

- 1 What is new to me?
- 2 What do I not like in this story?
- 3 What do I not understand?
- 4 How will I apply this story to life?
- 5 Whom can I tell this to?

Witness - 20 mins (outlook)

Plan **LIFEgroup social events**
to which new friends can be invited.
(every 6-8 weeks)

Discuss **LIFEgroup themes**
to which new friends may be invited.

Worship - 20 mins

- Prayer or quiet time (10 min)
- Discuss ways to affirm, encourage & support each other (10 min)

- Streams of Living Water -

The idea is to conduct the small group in such a way that all are relaxed – including the leader and apprentice leader. Here are some suggestions:

1. Every small group meeting will start with relaxed socialising (with some simple food) and with the question: *Who did I meet for the first time this week and what two things did I learn about that person?* This question can be answered by all in the group – including those present for the first time. It is a question that raises awareness of others – and so is equipping new contacts and established members to think of others and their needs.
2. Choose themes and resources that are relevant and easy to use. Many small groups flounder when the study becomes too complex. Here are some suggestions:
 - a. Choose topics that relate to the group:

For example, if the small group members have small children – the group may choose to watch a series on parenting; or if the group is made up of young couples – the group may choose a series on relationships. Another group may choose to view a series on topical concerns such as the *LIFEdevelopment.info Evidence* or *The Search* material.

Some groups will be ready to read a **Bible book**. The best way to read the Bible with unchurched postmoderns is to read a book at a time. Start with the story of Jesus – and read through the gospel of Mark. You could then move to Acts. The gospel of John provides a full coverage (in context) of the fundamental Bible teachings.

- b. The books of the Bible books provide the simplest and most readily available resources for a small group.
3. The small group leader does not need to prepare a presentation for the small group meeting. The process is simple. For example, once the group (including unchurched friends) has agreed to read through the gospel of Mark – the leader will simply ensure that the best reader in the group is ready to read the next story or stories.
 - a. Have one person read the next story or chapter. (Never read around the circle.)
 - b. If watching a series on DVD – simply make sure the equipment is ready to go.
4. The small group leader will then get people involved in discussion by quietly asking each person to reflect on the **5 bookmark questions** –
 - 1 What is new to me? (Is there anything new to you in this story or DVD?)
 - 2 What do I not like in this story? (Is there anything you don't like?)
 - 3 What do I not understand? (Is there anything you don't understand?)
 - 4 How will I apply this story to life? (What have you found to apply to life?)
 - 5 Whom can I tell this to? (What have you seen or heard that you would share with another person this week – and who will you share this with?)
5. The apprentice leader will keep an eye on time – moving the leader onto the next question so that discussion does not just revolve around one question.

5 Social Events

It is important for each small group to plan a social event at least every 6-8 weeks. This provides opportunities to invite other unchurched (and church) friends to share with you – and gives opportunities to include some of those new people that small group members are meeting each week. As friendships grow in these social events – others will be ready for an invite to a small group. These must be fun events – a barbeque, a visit to the zoo, fishing, bike-riding, mountain hiking, a visit to a museum or art gallery, an evening at a restaurant or show, a movie night, a meal in a home, a street party, etc.

6 Multiplying

Small groups do not remain healthy unless they multiply or reproduce. This takes planning – and, to avoid resistance, the idea will need to be established in the culture of the group from the time of its formation. It is important not to destabilise the developing friendships and trust in the small group. Therefore it will be important to plan the multiplication carefully – keeping the closest friends working together. Planned re-unions, combined social events and encouragement can make the multiplication process easier for small group members to accept – and, in fact make it a very positive growth experience.

Section THREE



a Time Scale

Phases Church Planting

We change from planting to the life-cycle metaphor for some of the most helpful church planting resources use this metaphor.⁹⁰ Here is the *life cycle* we are working within – highlighting the “to do” essentials involved when planting a new church.

1 **Conception Phase** (*What needs to be done early!*)

- 1.1 Identify the potential Church Planter & conduct a **Behavioural Interview**.
- 1.2 Start forming the Core Team.
- 1.3 Select Support Teams - Steering Team & Prayer Group.
- 1.4 Gain experiences & background necessary for effective planting (**Section ONE**).
- 1.5 Work through the Planning Process (**Section TWO**).
- 1.6 Develop & write the **Project Plan**.

2 **Prenatal Development** (*The 6-9 months prior to the first worship services!*)

- 2.1 Develop the **Discipleship Path** – start the process and equip leaders.
- 2.2 Continue building relationships with unchurched friends - start **Small Groups &** begin evangelistic activities.
- 2.3 Select a name for the new church.
- 2.4 Start community initiatives – to meet needs.
- 2.5 Re-evaluate the Time Line.

3 **Birth Phase**

- 3.1 Advertise the New Church.
- 3.2 Start Public Worship Services.
- 3.3 Start Children’s Ministry.
- 3.4 Implement Follow-up Strategies.

4 **Growth Phase**

- 4.1 Implement Follow-up Strategies.
- 4.2 Develop & Expand the Network of Small Groups.
- 4.3 Empower and Equip Leaders according to the **Discipleship Path**.
- 4.4 Cultivate the NCD Quality Characteristics & Target Ministries.
- 4.5 Increase Evangelistic Effectiveness.
- 4.6 Assimilate and Mobilize Newcomers.
- 4.7 Improve and/or Replace Existing Ministries.

5 **Reproduction Phase**

- 5.1 Cultivate a Commitment to Plant Another Church.
- 5.2 Establish a ‘Parenting Strategy’ to plant New Churches.
- 5.3 Start Another Church Plant.

⁹⁰ For detailed information see Philip Bryant, *Church Planting Workbook* (Baptist Union of Victoria, Australia, 1992); Robert E. Logan and Steven L. One, *The Church Planter’s Toolkit* (1991); and, Robert E. Logan, *Taking Our Nation for God - The National Church Planting Conference* (September 8 & 9, 1992). For a different model see **Appendix D** for Dick Scroggins and Dan Brown, *Seven phases of church planting phase and activity list* (Evangelical Missions Quarterly - Vol 33, No 22: April 1997) pp. 161-165.

1 Conception Phase

(What needs to be done early.)

If you have been working as a Core Team – and developing a church planting *Project Plan* as you work through this book – simply review the following!

- 1.1. **Identify the Church Planter - conduct a Behavioural Interview**
- 1.2. **Start forming the Core Team**
- 1.3. **Select Support Teams – the Steering Team & Prayer Group**
- 1.4. **Gain Experiences & Background necessary for Effective Planting**
- 1.5. **Work through the Planning Process (Section TWO)**
- 1.6. **Develop & write the Project Plan**

Are there any areas that need more attention?

- **Has each Core Team member built a wide circle of unchurched friends?**
- **Are unchurched friends involved in the planning process?**
- **How regularly does the Core Team enjoy fun activities with the community?**

2 Prenatal Development

(6-9 months prior to first worship)

A new church needs to develop essential systems and critical mass before its first worship service (or birth). A premature birth will usually mean difficulties that will impact upon the future health and growth of the church. Carefully review and further develop the following!

Develop the Discipleship Path – start the process & equip leaders

- What is the specific time line for the *Discipleship* Path?
- How are leaders being trained?

Continue building relationships with unchurched friends – start Small Groups & begin Evangelistic Activities

1 Start Small Groups: What regular support system is in place?

2 Develop Community Contacts:

- Conduct door-to-door surveys:
10 days after first contact call back on those who were friendly.
Develop a list to call on a third time and for follow-up.

3 Start Evangelistic Activities:

- **Start home Bible readings:** Train those with teaching and evangelistic gifts to give evangelistic Bible studies.
- **Start evangelistic seminars & meetings:** The church planter should conduct these programs, train members or invite a guest to conduct meetings that will reach the target community. These evangelistic activities need to be a part of the church plan each year.

4 Establish & Equip Ministry Teams.

- What ministry teams will need to be released after the *birth* of the plant (the first worship services)?
 - Children's ministry teams
 - Worship teams & planning teams
 - Care & hospitality teams
 - Promotion teams
 - Car park team, etc
- How will people be found & when will they be equipped?

Select a Name for the New Church

- 1 Develop a corporate logo and identity.
- 2 Establish telephone, E-mail, mail address, website, etc.

Start community initiatives – to meet needs

- What creative activities will meet immediate community needs?
 - Welcome Home
 - Kid's Zone or Kid's Club
 - Clayton's Pastor* (the pastor you have when you don't have a pastor)
 - Parenting Workshops; Stress Management Seminars; etc
- What equipping is needed for staff to meet needs?

Re-evaluate the Time Line

- 1 Is there a clear evangelistic outreach & plan for 1-2 years?
- 2 Is the sequence of the time line logical and the schedule realistic?
- 3 Have we assigned adequate personnel and resources?

Review the Yearly Planner ...

Sample Yearly Planner (for the first year)

The *Project Plan* is a flow chart which maps out on a calendar all the activities that will need to take place before the new church will hold its first worship service. It may include the events for the first year after this first service.⁹¹

January

- Demographic & Feasibility Study - start.
- Prayer Team - selected & mobilized.

March

- Biblical Purpose, Vision, Mission, Values, Strategy Statements - finalized.
- Church Name - chosen.
- Financial Plan & Budget - developed.
- Accountability & relationships with Conference - determined.

May

- Church Planting Proposal - presented relevant committee / board.
- Hall / venue for interest meeting - booked.
- Telephone, bank account - completed.
- Logo & stationary - developed.
- Networks of evangelistic contacts - identified.

July

- Goals - determined.
- Evaluation Processes - agreed upon.
- Leaders - selected & equipped.
- Advertising for interest meeting - prepared.

September

- Evangelistic & Worship Year - planned.

November

- Two Year Plan - in place.
- Dates in place for first evangelistic and worship activities, etc.

February

- Planter - selected.
- Steering Group - selected & mobilized.
- Feasibility Study - completed.
- Target Area & People Group - identified.
- Purpose, Vision & Strategy - start.

April

- Core Group - enlisted.
- Core Group - training/studies completed.

June

- Ministries (evangelism & discipleship to methods for unchurched) - decided.
- Leadership, Personnel & Structures - decided.
- Job Descriptions - defined.

August

- Interest meeting - advertised.
- Interest meeting - held.
- Contacts - followed up.

October

- First Ministries - launched.
- Venue for worship - booked.
- First worship service - planned.

December

⁹¹ Bryant, *Ibid.*, pp. 22, 23.

3 Birth Phase

Advertise the New Church

Start Public Worship Services

- 1 Will the worship be seeker-sensitive or seeker-focused?
- 2 What principles are important for effective worship?
 - Culturally appropriate.
 - Leaders model: if want people to kneel - kneel.
 - Clear biblical theme and response goal.
 - Effective transitions (flow).
 - Integrate announcements into worship.
 - Maximize participation: preparation and presentation.

Start Children's Ministry

- 1 Are facilities safe, secure and clean?
- 2 Will the ministry provide enjoyable & happy experiences?

Parents will ask: Did you have fun?
If the answer is "No" - the parents won't come back.

Parents will ask: What did you do and learn?
Always give proof of learning.

Implement Follow-up Strategies

- 1 Follow-up every newcomer - according to the *Assimilation Process*.
- 2 What is the *Assimilation Process*?

4 Growth Phase

- 4.1 ***Implement Follow-up Strategies***
- 4.2 ***Develop and Expand the Network of Small Groups***
- 4.3 ***Empower and Equip Leaders according to the Discipleship Path***
- 4.4 ***Cultivate the NCD Quality Characteristics & Target Ministries***

A new church plant will grow when there is a healthy environment and a clear strategy to relate to unchurched people is cultivated. It is now time to cultivate special ministries targeting some of the needs and hurts of new worshippers and their friends:

- 1 Ministries of Social Concern - food, housing, etc.
- 2 Support/recovery Groups - parents of teens, alcohol/substance abuse, etc.

4.5 ***Increase Evangelistic Effectiveness***

- 1 Keep working on increasing networking potential.
- 2 Provide more evangelism training.
- 3 Encourage lots of activities with non-Christians.

4.6 ***Assimilate and Mobilize Newcomers***

We must have a clear system that helps people find relationships and service:

- 1 Making new friends.
- 2 Finding a meaningful small group.
- 3 Discovering a significant ministry. (Ministry is not elected jobs.)

4.7 ***Improve and/or replace existing ministries***

Pruning is biblical. Pruning produces more fruit.

- 1 Evaluate everything every year.
- 2 Re-plan the action/activities plan for next year.
- 3 Review the administrative process. Be honest. How effective are we?

5 **Reproduction Phase**

Church plants wait too long before they start to plant new churches. It has been observed that unless a church starts a new church within 3-4 years, it usually won't do it.

5.1 ***Cultivate a commitment to plant another church***

To be a *church planting church plant* the commitment to plant another will be developed early by the church planter and Core Team.

5.2 ***Establish a 'Parenting Strategy' to plant New Churches***

- Develop a planting strategy for your local church plant.
- Mobilize a church planting team in your church plant – and provide experience for leaders, equipping needed, and encouragement.
- Provide a coaching support system and resources for the team (the planters, their spouses and key lay leaders) and the new church plants that they establish. Develop a NCI (New Church Incubators) support system for new plants.
- Learn from the parenting relationships and process:
 - The excitement and apprehensions of expecting the first child
 - The pain and hard work at birth
 - The weariness and work as baby grows to young adulthood.
 - The giving away of the young bride
 - Daughter churches want & need to be adult.
 - Don't subsidize for long periods – and, don't try to control.

5.3 ***Start another church plant***

Section FOUR



a Behavioural Interview

How to Know if You are a Church Planter!

The Church Planter Profile 13 Qualities

Each healthy church will be involved in planting new churches and equipping planters. We know that the most significant factor for the success of church planting is the church planter. Therefore this section is crucial.

Every potential church planter (and Core Team) needs to participate in a **Behavioural Interview** to ascertain the level of experience and training that the person (and team) has for the task. With the understandings gained from this interview process – the potential planter and team can be advised on (1) when and how to move forward, (2) what further training is needed, and (3) how the team and leadership may relate. If you do plant a church, what types of people do you need on your team to balance your experience, personality type and leadership style?

The Charles E Fuller Institute organized a consortium of 13 denominations to conduct a research project to determine the profile of a successful church planter. Dr Charles Ridley, an organizational consultant and a recognised authority in psychological assessment, interviewed 50 church planters (successful and unsuccessful) to determine the essential performance dimension for effectiveness.

Thirteen Crucial Qualities for effective church planters were identified – and these provide the basis for *behaviour interviews*. Logan and Ridley have identified the following:⁹²

1. Has a 'visionising' capacity

- Projects into the future, beyond the present
- Develops a theme which highlights the vision and philosophy of ministry
- Persuasively sells the vision to the people
- Approaches challenges as opportunities instead of obstacles
- Copes effectively with non-visioning elements
- Does not erect artificial walls to limit the capacities of God, self, or others
- Establishes a clear church identity related to the theme and vision
- Believes in God's capacity to accomplish great things

2. Is intrinsically motivated

- Is committed to excellence
- Is relentlessly persistent
- Aggressively, yet positively, takes the initiative
- Is a self-starter and is willing to build from nothing
- Is willing to work long and hard

3. Creates ownership of ministry

- Helps others "buy in" and feel responsible for the growth and success of the ministry
- Wins the commitment of the people to the vision
- Establishes a congregational identity

⁹² This material comes directly from Robert E Logan, *How to Daught a Growing and Reproducing Church*, 60-64

- Avoids imposing unrealistic goals on the congregation

4. Relates to the unchurched

- Communicates in a style easily understood by the unchurched
- Understands the ‘psychology’ or mentality of the unchurched
- Moves and functions in the ‘personal space’ of the unchurched without fear
- Quickly gets to know the unchurched on a personal level
- Breaks through the barriers erected by the unchurched
- Handles crises faced by the unchurched

5. Has spousal cooperation

- Has an explicit agreement regarding each partner’s respective role and involvement in ministry
- Has explicit rules regarding the use of the home as an office
- Evaluates the consequence of ministry demands upon the children
- Functions as a team with spouse through individual and corporate action
- Has a strategy for dealing with strangers
- Models wholesome family life before the church and the community
- Agrees upon and shares ministry vision with spouse
- Deliberately plans and protects private family life

6. Effectively builds relationships

- Responds with urgency to expressed needs and concerns of others
- Displays godly love and compassion to others
- Gets to know others personally
- Makes others feel secure and comfortable in his presence
- Does not respond in a judgmental or prejudicial fashion to new people
- Appreciates and accepts a variety of persons
- Spends quality time with present parishoners without overlooking them for the sake of new people

7. Is committed to church growth

- Believes church growth is theologically valid
- Appreciates steady and consistent growth without looking for “quick success”
- Is committed to numerical growth within the context of spiritual and relational growth
- Recognizes that non-growth is threatening and self-defeating
- Establishes the goal of becoming a financially self-supporting church within a specific period of time
- Does not fall into a ministry of mere maintenance
- Sees the church project within the larger context of God’s kingdom

8. Is responsive to the community

- Understands the culture of the community
- Identifies and assesses community needs
- Organizes internal and external church resources to respond to community needs
- Efficiently utilizes resources on a basis of the needs priority
- Determines effectiveness of other organized attempts to respond to community needs
- Does not confuse community needs with what the church has to offer

- Learns the character and “pulse” of the community
- Adapts the philosophy of ministry to the character of the community

9. Utilizes the giftedness of others

- Releases and equips people to do the task of ministry
- Discerns the spiritual gifts of others
- Matches people with ministry needs and opportunities according to giftedness
- Delegates effectively in areas of personal limitation
- Avoids assigning ministry responsibilities before others are adequately prepared
- Does not place unwarranted restrictions on the spiritual giftedness of others

10. Is flexible and adaptable

- Copes effectively with ambiguity
- Copes effectively with constant and abrupt change
- Adapts the methods to the uniqueness of the respective church planting project
- Readily shifts priorities and emphases during the various stages of church growth
- Does “whatever” is necessary “whenever” necessary

11. Builds a cohesive church body

- Develops a nucleus group or groups as a foundation
- Quickly includes newcomers into a network of relationships or meaningful church activities
- Monitors the morale of the people
- Uses groups effectively

12. Has resilience

- Experiences setbacks without defeat
- Rides the ups and downs (eg: attendance)
- Expects the unexpected
- Rebounds from loss, disappointments and failure

13. Exercises faith

- Possesses a conviction regarding the call to church planting ministry
- Believes in God’s action
- Is marked by expectation and hope
- Is willing to wait for answers to specific prayer requests

Preparing for the *Behavioural Interview*

Steve Addison has written *How to Know if You Should Plant a Church* - a workbook for those who are trying to decide if God is calling them to be church planters. And, Philip Bryant has an excellent section on *Selecting a Church Planter* in his *Church Planting Workbook*.

The following three areas come from these workbooks – (1) Seeking God’s Will, (2) Spiritual Qualifications, and (3) What Will It Cost? It is recommended that the planter and Core Team members work through these and then participate in an assessment process (*Behavioural*

Interview) organised by their coach in dialogue with their sponsoring church or denominational leaders.

1. Seeking God's Will

“In the church at Antioch there were prophets and teachers ... while they were worshipping and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, ‘Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.’ So after they had fasted and prayed, they placed their hands on them and sent them off.” (Acts 13:1-4) God leads people differently – however, certain principles apply to all who try to understand God’s will. Paul lists the qualifications of an elder of a church – and, no one should be considered called as a planter (regardless of how academically qualified) if these essentials are not met. Read –

- Mark 8:34, 35
- 1 Timothy 3:1-7; 2 Timothy 2:2
- Titus 1:5-9

1. **Reflect on the biblical qualifications for church leadership. Gather input from others to assess your total conformity with these:**⁹³

Qualities of Church Leadership

How My Life Compares

2. **Is there any area of life that could disqualify you from pastoral & evangelistic ministry?**
3. **List the names of key leaders & mentors with whom you have discussed your thoughts of church planting. Have they affirmed your call to planting?**
4. **Why do you think God has called you to the ministry that you are presently in?**
5. **What would be your motivation for leaving?**
6. **What do you still need to learn & achieve before you are ready to leave your present assignment?**

2. Spiritual Qualifications

Philip Bryant highlights six important spiritual qualifications for a church planter:

1. **A Person of Prayer:** The church is God’s and therefore a church planter must be in constant communication with God concerning the building of His church. “Prayer must be consistent, scheduled, specific and focused on both personal life and ministry.”⁹⁴

⁹³ The six questions in this section come from or are adapted from Steven Addison, *How to Know if You Should Plant a Church* (Church Resource Ministries, Australia, 1993), pages 17-18.

⁹⁴ Bryant, *Ibid.*, p. 17.

2. **Called to Ministry:** It is necessary that a person is fully convinced that he/she is called into Christian ministry and called to plant a new church. Bryant also comments, “It is also extremely helpful if the Church Planter has a sense of call to a specific location. It can produce in the Church Planter a sense of optimism and comfort as they face the normal tensions associated with beginning a new work. Having this call to a location often leads to a long-term commitment to the new church.”⁹⁵ This sense of call to ministry and location should be affirmed by others.
3. **Fruit of the Spirit:** It is important that a Church Planter give evidence of spiritual maturity (see Galatians 5:22-23) for in the church planting process many difficult situations involving people of different backgrounds will be faced.
4. **Reliance upon the Holy Spirit:** When we know the Holy Spirit as a person, we have confidence in depending upon him and seeking his counsel. It is not possible to be an effective Christian witness unless the Holy Spirit is controlling and working through us.
5. **Mature Theology:** People from diverse backgrounds will come to the new church and it is important that the planter has a mature and balanced understanding of theology so as to facilitate unity.
6. **Counts the Cost:** Because church planting is pioneering, the planter and family will be put into many challenging and sometimes tense situations. Often church planting can involve very great sacrifice on the part of the planter and family.

3. What will It Cost?

Jesus said, “Suppose one of you wants to build a tower. Will he not first sit down and estimate the cost to see if he has enough money to complete it?” (Luke 14:28) Paul wanted the church to understand the cost of being a church planter – “We do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, about the hardships we suffered in the province of Asia. We were under great pressure, far beyond our ability to endure, so that we despaired even of life.” (2 Corinthians. 1:8)

Steve Addison provides a worksheet for the potential planter (and spouse) to rate the level of stress they expect to experience - and, their willingness to accept the following costs:

1. **The cost of transition:** Will you need to leave your current employment or ministry?
2. **The cost of financial insecurity:** How will you provide for yourself and family?
3. **The cost of moving:** Will you need to move house and form new relationships? If you have a family, what will be the impact on them?
4. **The cost of long hours:** Church planting often requires hard work without immediate results.
5. **The cost of possible “failure”:** As Paul discovered, church planters are not guaranteed immediate success. How do you feel about the risk of *failure* in the eyes of others?
6. **The cost of the battle:** Church planting is spiritual warfare. Satan knows where we are vulnerable. The battle is the Lord’s but as Jesus demonstrated, victory comes at a price.
7. **The cost of uncertainty:** The life of a church planter is full of uncertainties and constant change. Are you willing to face a sustained period of instability?

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

- 8. *The cost of loneliness:*** The church planter does not have an existing congregation which provides support and affirmation. In the early days of pioneering, rejection or apathy may be the most common response of those to whom he/she is ministering.

Checklist ...

- Have you talked to an experienced church planter the costs of church planting?
- If married, have you shared openly and honestly about any fears you both have?
- If you have children, have you talked the matter through with them and allowed them time to come to terms with the decision?
- What are your conclusions about your willingness to accept the cost of church planting

Assessment: *The Behavioural Interview*

The assessment will be conducted by a trained team.⁹⁶ The team will rate your specific past behaviour in the 13 crucial areas identified by Ridley. This will give a clear predictor for future settings – including church planting. Behaviours occurring in one setting give an indicator of whether they will be evident in another setting. For example, conflict resolution skills effectively used in a machine workshop could also be used to resolve conflict in a church planting team. The skills used to implement systems to support a network of junior football clubs can indicate behaviours that will be used effectively in building teams in the church plant.

⁹⁶ National Church Planting Coordinators and coaches are trained (by *Church Resource Ministry*) teams to use Charles R. Ridley and Robert E. Logan's *Training for Selection Interviewing*. ChurchSmart Resources, 1998.

Appendix A

Core Values

This Appendix provides a more detailed outline and the biblical support for Willow Creek's 10 Core Values – as well as “Values Survey” and “Values Interpretation” instruments from Philip Bryant's *Church Planting Workbook*.

Willow Creek's Core Values

Organizational values describe how a church will act towards people within the church and the community for they reflect the attitudes of the fellowship. The Willow Creek Community Church articulates ten distinguishing core values. These may - or, may not, reflect your convictions. However, they illustrate the distinctive attitudes of Willow Creek and explain why they minister and act as they do.

This list of values grew out of multiple discussions between Willow Creek Community Church and Association staff members. As more and more churches wanted to know what they believed, Dan Webster, Sharon Wells, Wendy Guthrie and Russ Robinson hammered out eight “core values” that attempted to answer the question, “How is Willow Creek distinctive?”

Bill Hybels later clarified and expanded the original list to include 10 values. These became the basis for the main session at the inaugural Willow Creek Association Member Conference and the outline for a series of articles that appeared in the Willow Creek Association Monthly. These values are what make Willow Creek, Willow Creek.⁹⁷

- 1 WE BELIEVE** that anointed teaching is the catalyst for transformation in individuals' lives and in the church.
This includes the concept of teaching for life change – Romans 12:7, 2 Timothy 3:16-17, James 1:23-25.
- 2 WE BELIEVE** that lost people matter to God, and therefore, ought to matter to the church.
This includes the concepts of relational evangelism and evangelism as a process – Luke 5:30-32, Luke 15, Matthew 18:14.
- 3 WE BELIEVE** that the church should be culturally relevant while remaining doctrinally pure.
This includes the concept of sensitively relating to our culture through our facility, printed materials, and use of the arts – 1 Corinthians 9:19-23.
- 4 WE BELIEVE** that Christ-followers should manifest authenticity and yearn for continuous growth.
This includes the concepts of personal authenticity, character, and wholeness – Ephesians 4:25-26, 32, Hebrews 12:1, Philippians 1:6.
- 5 WE BELIEVE** that a church should operate as a unified community of servants with men and women stewarding their spiritual gifts.
This includes the concepts of unity, servanthood, spiritual gifts, and ministry callings – 1 Corinthians 12 and 14, Romans 12, Ephesians 4, Psalm 133:1.
- 6 WE BELIEVE** that loving relationships should permeate every aspect of church life.
This includes the concepts of love-driven ministry, ministry accomplished in teams and relationship building – 1 Corinthians 13, Nehemiah 3, Luke 10:1, John 13:34-35.

⁹⁷ Lynn & Bill Hybels, *Rediscovering Church* (Zondervan, Michigan, 1995) pp. 183-194.

7 WE BELIEVE that life-change happens best in small groups.
This includes the concepts of discipleship, vulnerability, and accountability – Luke 6:12-13, Acts 2:44-47.

8 WE BELIEVE that excellence honours God and inspired people.
This includes the concepts of evaluation, critical review, intensity and excellence – Colossians 3:17, Malachi 1:6-14, Proverbs 27:17.

9 WE BELIEVE that churches should be led by men and women with leadership gifts.
This includes the concepts of empowerment, servant leadership, strategic focus, and intentionality – Nehemiah 1-2, Romans 12:8, Acts 6:2-5.

10 WE BELIEVE that the pursuit of full devotion to Christ and His cause is normal for every believer.
This includes the concepts of stewardship, servanthood, downward mobility, and the pursuit of kingdom goals – 1 Kings 11:4, Philippians 2:1-11, 2 Corinthians 8:7.

The *Mission* of Willow Creek (What We're Doing)

Our mission is to turn irreligious people into fully devoted followers of Jesus Christ.

The *Vision* of Willow Creek (What We're Becoming)

Our vision is to be a biblically functioning community of believers so that Christ's redemptive purposes can be accomplished in the world.

Values Survey

From Philip Brvant's Church Planting Workbook

Answer the questions according to how you think or feel.

Agree Neutral Disagree					
1	2	3	4	5	
✓					Sample: I believe Jesus is the head of the Church.
					1. The Bible is a good guide for Christian living but is not the final authority for the Church.
					2. Preaching in our church will be showing how the Word of God can meet the everyday needs of life.
					3. This church believes that all the gifts of the Holy Spirit mentioned in the Bible should be used by the Church today.
					4. I feel this church should allow members to come and go as they please.
					5. Our Sunday worship should aim at building up the Christians.
					6. We will most effectively win people to Christ by meeting their emotional, physical, intellectual and spiritual needs.
					7. We believe that when a person becomes a Christian God will enable them to grow through His Word.
					8. This church will develop programs that meet community needs.
					9. A good church is one that doesn't promote giving money but allows God to tell people what to give.
					10. This church will be a church that aims at reaching a particular group in the community.
					11. The church that prays and makes plans for the future is likely to know where it is going.
					12. Every church should concentrate on reaching its own area and not become involved with other denominations.
					13. I believe the primary focus of the church should be those outside the church.
					14. Most of the time this church's decisions will be based on what seems logical as opposed to scriptural principles.
					15. During worship services the preaching will all be directed towards helping Christians grow in their relationship with God.
					16. All the gifts of the Holy Spirit mentioned in the Bible are valid for today except the signs and wonders gifts, which are not needed today because we have the written word of God.
					17. Membership in this church means a commitment to worship and involvement in a ministry.
					18. Sunday services should be attractive and easily understood by the outsider.
					19. The most important thing for this church is the number of people it wins to Christ.
					20. This church has a planned process by which new Christians can grow in their faith and become effective in ministering to others.
					21. The most effective church is one that develops programs that build up its members so they can survive as Christians.
					22. Members in this church will be encouraged to give generously through tithes and offerings.
					23. This church is one that will have something for everyone in the community.
					24. This church will be more concerned with getting on with the job and not getting caught up in making plans.
					25. This church will assist others to evangelise our area.
					26. The Church's only role is to build up the saints.

Values Interpretation

From Philip Brvant's *Church Planting Workbook*

While the values seem to be presented as extremes it needs to be recognised that often the church will settle on a value in the middle or towards one end of a continuum. This is designed to get you thinking about values in these areas.

1. Authority

Biblical vs. Human Q. 1,14

On what will the church base its structures, accountability and everything it does. Growing churches have a strong Biblical basis for all they do.

2. Preaching

Seeker Sensitive vs. Christian Centred Q. 2,15

Preaching emphases can vary greatly. While a church may cater specifically to meeting the needs of one group it will also have to deliberately plan decisions to meet the others needs if it is to grow and develop.

3. Holy Spirit

Visibly Active vs. Invisibly Inactive Q. 3,16

The interpretation of the role of the Holy Spirit will also vary and a church may have one of the extremes or a value somewhere between. It will be helpful to define this so that the teaching and practice of the church is clear to all who come and join. The role of the Holy Spirit as He relates to worship services could be particularly crucial.

4. Membership Standards

High Expectation vs. Voluntary Involvement Q. 4,17

The level of commitment expected from members should be clearly defined. Where a reasonable but high commitment and involvement in ministry is set as a standard churches usually grow.

5. Worship

Seeker Sensitive vs. Christian Centred Q. 5,18

Worship is the shop window of the church. Being sensitive to the outsider is one issue but another is the traditional verses contemporary issue. This should really be determined by the community you are trying to reach.

6. Evangelism

Holistic vs. Soul Centred Q. 6,19

There are many approaches to evangelism ranging from an approach that takes into account the needs of the whole person to the other extreme which views prospects as scalps. Growing churches tend to show the compassion of Christ through a holistic approach.

7. Equipping

Unplanned vs. Planned Q. 7,20

Some people assume that if a person becomes a Christian they will automatically grow. This is very rare and most churches need to put in place a planned equipping process that helps the individual develop skills and gifts and find their ministry. Where people are involved in ministry their commitment level is usually high.

8. Programs

Community Driven vs. Christian Driven Q. 8,21

Most churches develop programs to cater for perceived needs. Some will be determined by the community, others by the Christian needs. Both are needed, but the growing church tends to balance in favour of community needs rather than Christian needs.

9. Giving

Unguided vs. Tithing Plus Q. 9,22

This value can be contentious. It is important to establish the church's value in this area as it is very hard to change. When God's people tithe to the church His work never lacks finance and the people open themselves up to God's blessing.

10. *Target Group*

Specific vs. General Q. 10,23

Many churches attempt to reach all people and often tend to reach very few, especially if they don't cater for individual needs. Targeting a church to reach a specific group but welcoming all often leads to more sustained growth.

11. *Planning*

General vs. Specific Q. 11,24

Some people consider planning to be un-spiritual. However, right from creation God has planned. The church that fails to plan very seldom achieves much and even if it does it very often doesn't realise it has.

12. *Mission Field*

Empire vs. Kingdom Q. 12,25

Jesus is the Head of the Church universal and individual. While it is unwise to get caught up in hyper-co-operativism the individual church needs to have a Kingdom perspective. This may range from assisting other local churches to planting new churches to overseas missions.

13. *Focus*

Unchurched vs. Churched Q. 13,26

Underlying all the values is the need to focus the church generally. Do you intend to focus on the unchurched or churched? This does not mean that one group is excluded at the expense of the other.

Appendix B

Steps Some Take

It is helpful to study the steps that unchurched people may take in becoming disciples of Jesus Christ. The methods that Jesus used will prove effective - and, give success in reaching the people.

5 Step Strategy

Jesus “The Saviour *mingled* with men as one who desired their good. He showed His *sympathy* for them, *ministered* to their needs, and won their confidence. Then He bade them, ‘Follow Me.’”⁹⁸



1. **Mingle**
2. **Sympathize**
3. **Meet needs**
4. **Win trust**
5. **Invite to follow**

7 Step Strategy

Willow Creek Community Church Willow Creek Community Church builds all ministries around a seven-step strategy. The process varies in length - but, should not be seen as short. It may take two years to make any type of commitment to Jesus Christ. Many would take 6-7 years to walk the seven steps. They presuppose that people are secularised - and, don't really think about going to church. Therefore members are trained to:

1. **Build authentic relationships with an unchurched person.**
2. **Share a verbal witness.**
3. **Invite the person to a weekend seeker service.**
4. **Invite to the midweek believers= service - called, New Community.**
5. **Involve their unchurched friends in a small group.**
6. **Lead people to discipleship and service - using their area of spiritual gifts.**
7. **Become faithful stewards of time, body & money - leading others to Jesus.**

8 Step NCD Strategy

The 8 quality characteristics of *Natural Church Development* can be arranged in an order that provides an 8 step strategic path along which unchurched people may walk -



1. **Loving Relationships**
2. **Need-Oriented Evangelism**
3. **Holistic Small Groups**
4. **Passionate Spirituality**
5. **Inspiring Worship**
6. **Gift – oriented Ministry**
7. **Empowering Leadership**
8. **Functional Structures**

⁹⁸ Ellen G. White, *The Ministry of Healing* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press, 1942) p. 143.

New Contact Track

The important question is: How many people are involved at each level? It is noted that people are led to salvation through Jesus Christ during 1-3.

Commitment

Involvement

1	Contacting	Relationship Building
2	Visiting & Looking	Attraction events - sports, seminars, etc Personal Bible Studies
3	Attending & Considering	Worship Service
4	Joining & Serving	Small Group & Ministry
5	Networking	Evangelizing - getting others involved

“Whatever may have been your favourite practice, it is not necessary to repeat it again and again in the same way. God would have new and untried methods followed. Break in upon the people -- surprise them.”⁹⁹

Spiritual Indicators: Adventist – Muslim Relations

Jerald Whitehouse¹⁰⁰ has developed a process that reflects how Muslims may grow spiritually. This process provides valuable insights for the Christian wishing to share in this journey. Again, this is a process involving years of sharing. (See pages 94 & 95 for more detail)



- **Establishing Credibility.**
- **Spiritual Discussion.**
- **Serious Inquiry.**
- **Belief for Salvation.**
- **Religious Life / Practice.**
- **Full Fellowship.**

⁹⁹ Ellen G. White, *Evangelism*, p. 125.

¹⁰⁰ Dr Jerald Whitehouse is the Director of the *Global Centre for Adventist Muslim Relations*.

TABLE I

Spiritual, social and economic objectives suggested for each level of activity:

Faster time line	Months 0 – 6	7 – 12	13 – 18	19 – 24	25 – 30	31 - 36
Slower time line	Months 0 – 24	25 – 36	37 – 48	49 – 60	61 – 72	73 - 84
Spiritual objectives for each level	1. Establishing credibility	2. Spiritual discussion	3. Serious inquiry	4. Belief for salvation	5. Religious life/practice	6. Full fellowship
	1. Create an awareness, acceptance of the “change agent” as one who exhibits wholistic godly living through an incarnational ministry to felt/heart needs. 2. Create an interest in discussion of personal spiritual concerns.	Objectives of this level are covered in Part I of the Barakat Allah studies 1. Increase the desire to know Allah better and worship Him more meaningfully. 2. Develop trust in all the Holy Books 3. Create a desire for the “new heart” from Allah.	Objectives covered in Part II of the Barakat Allah studies. 1. Develop a trust in Allah for freedom from fear of evil forces. 2. Inspire a trust in Isa as ones mediator. 3. Develop a commitment to godly living in preparation for the last day.	Objectives covered in Part III of the Barakat Allah studies. 1. Create an acceptance of the tremendous sacrifice as Allah’s gift to man to reconcile him to Himself. 2. Create an acceptance of Isa as the tremendous sacrifice, Allah’s gift for victory over sin. 3. Elicit a confession of faith as a new believer.	Objectives covered in Part IV of Barakat Allah studies. 1. Develop the practice of good stewardship in the new believer. 2. Establish the knowledge, attitude, practice of Sabbath observance. 3. Involve new believers in sharing their faith.	Objectives covered in Part V of Barakat Allah studies. 1. Membership in Allah’s end time people. 2. Members lead others to faith.
Social, economic objectives (Applicability of these will vary according to the setting)	Capacity building	Cooperation for self reliance	Cooperation for self reliance	Consolidating	Structure, sustainability	Relation to world body
	1. Literacy to ___% 2. Local capacity to solve community problems collectively increased. 3. Local management committee meeting regularly and addressing local problem solving. 4. Basic maternal child health indicators improved. 5. Food security improved. 6. Particular felt needs being met through increasing local capacity to address the needs.	Same as level 1. plus: Increase in family income	Same as level 1,2.	Same as level 1. plus: Small business cooperatives	1. Local believer group organized. 2. Credit and income generation cooperatives established. 3. Believer stewardship evident.	1. Formal or informal linkage with world body.

TABLE II

Indicators for each level to measure achievement:

Levels	1. Establishing credibility	2. Spiritual discussion	3. Serious inquiry	4. Belief for salvation	5. Religious life/practice	6. Full fellowship
General Spiritual Indicators	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Change agent accepted as “fellow believer” 2. Change agent participates in significant community and personal events (feasts, weddings, funerals, etc.) 3. Engages in personal spiritual discussions 4. Shares interest arousing literature. 5. Change agent characterized by community as caring, godly person. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Regular attendance at an inquirers study group. 2. Studies all the Holy Books. 3. Expresses desire to know Allah. 4. Understands sin as a broken condition of rebellion. 5. Expresses need and desire for a new heart from Allah. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Decreased trust in power objects, places, people. 2. Trust in Allah for freedom from fear of evil forces 3. Desires to be a part of Allah’ special people preparing for the last day. 4. Engages in a meaningful prayer life daily. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The sacrifice is Allah’s gift to man, a symbol of His covering of our sin 2. Restoration of honor in the family of Allah, involves sacrifice for reconciliation, not force or revenge. 3. Confession of faith in Isa’s great sacrifice. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Belief in the Holy Spirit as the presence of Allah for godly living and witnessing. 2. Practice of stewardship in tithing and zakat. 3. Abstinance of harmful health practices. 4. Sabbath observance. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The larger picture of the Great Controversy. 2. Purpose of the day of judgment. 3. The Elijah message – come out of her 4. Last day prophets. 5. Fellowship with Allah’s worldwide end time people. 6. Baptism
Indicators of belief in Isa	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Isa as prophet. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Isa as prophet. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Trust in Isa for power over evil forces. 2. Trust in Isa as mediator in day of judgment. 3. Looking forward to Isa as coming Messiah. 4. Isa as power for godly living. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Isa is th eonly one who can give me a new heart. 2. Isa is the one who restores honor in the family by giving himself, accepting and forgiving sinners, he forgives my sins. 3. Isa is the great sacrifice, which he gave voluntarily. 4. Isa, victor over death. 5. Isa is Lord of my life. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Isa is Lord of the Sabbath, the symbol of creation, recreation, eternal rest. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Allah is One, but we experience Him in Isa as our Mediator and Saviour, and we experience His Presence in the Holy Spirit.
Social, economic indicators	Indicators specific to the initiatives implemented	Same	Same	Same	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Believers integrated into local church, or 2. Organized believer group – committee. 3. Believer group self reliant for spiritual nurture, outreach, caring for disadvantaged. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Believer group making some contribution to the world body. 2. Believer group interacting in some way with the world body.

Appendix C

Core Team Studies

101

When a Core Team is formed its primary function is to form the nucleus of the new church. Many will come from different backgrounds and experiences. They need to develop unity in the midst of fellowship.

The Core Team studies are designed as guides for the planter to help mould the team together by sharing the purpose, values and vision of the new church. At the same time the studies can also be used as a training time when people come back to the basics found in the studies. The planter should feel free to include practical exercises with the studies and adapt them to suit their situation.

The Core Team meetings are also an opportunity for planning the new church and delegating responsibilities to its members.

It must also be remembered that once the church begins public worship services the Core Team becomes absorbed into the activities and roles of the new church – with others often taking over as leaders. They will spread themselves among the new attendees, welcoming them and involve themselves in their lives. In this way they become the ‘leaven’ that unites the new church.

The Kingdom of God & the New Church

Bible Study No. 1

1 Putting Thing in Perspective

- 1.1 Why are we here? Where are we going? How do we get there?
- 1.2 Today, there are many ideas/meanings attached to the word church.
- 1.3 What did Jesus have in mind when he said “Upon this rock I will build my church and the gates of hell will not overcome it. (Matthew 16:18).

2 The Kingdom of God

- 2.1 The primary focus for Jesus was the Kingdom of God
 - Mark 1:14-15
 - Matthew 26:64
 - Luke 13:18-21
 - Luke 11:2-4, Matthew 6:9-15
- 2.2 Definition of God’s Kingdom: both a present and future reality. Present in Jesus and in all those surrendered to Him. Future in that it will only be completed when Christ returns.
- 2.3 Our commitment is to the King (Jesus) and the Kingdom (Matthew 7:21).

3 The Church and the Churches

The Church is a part of the Mission of God whose purpose it is to reveal God’s Kingdom, invite others to participate through faith in Christ, and to warn of the impending reign of God to come when Christ returns.

Universal Church – total body of all believers of all ages and all places, (Ephesians 1:22, 3:20-21, Colossians 1:2)

Local Churches – specific, local, organised entities of Christians. (Romans 16:5, 1 Corinthians 1:2, 4:17)

101 These outline studies are found in Philip Bryant’s *Church Planting Workbook*.

Church = *Ekklesia* (used 114 times in the N.T.)

Used 5 times to describe a physical assembly of people, normally a political gathering.

Used 19 times to refer to the community of all believers, the Church universal.

Used 90 times to refer to a physical, local assembly of believers in Christ – a local church.

4 How Does All of This Relate?

- 4.1 The Kingdom of God is the primary focus and goal.
- 4.2 The Church is the spiritual body of Christians that extends throughout the world in all ages.
- 4.3 The Churches are local groups of Christians, voluntarily organised to carry out the Mission of God – which is to extend His Kingdom into the world and to all peoples.

5 Why Are We Here? What is All of This Saying to Us?

- 5.1 We are here as an extension of God's Kingdom.
- 5.2 We are here to be a local community of Christians voluntarily congregated and biblically organised, meeting to worship God and under the direction of the Holy Spirit carry out the great commission of Jesus Christ at home and abroad.
- 5.3 We are here to be a self-giving, serving, witnessing community.

Prayer & the New Church

Bible Study No. 2

1 A Local Church is God's creation and Jesus Christ is its head.

- 1.1 The life and growth of a local church is from God, not human effort. (1 Corinthians 3:5-9)
- 1.2 "Unless the Lord build the house, its builders labour in vain". (Psalm 127:1). This is also true of a church. Unless the Lord builds the church, those who organise it, program it, and finance it do so in vain.
- 1.4 We must keep the right perspective between what God does and what we do. (1 Corinthians 3:10-15). At best we are planters, 'waterers', or builders. Always remember – God supplies the life and growth.

2 How does this relate to prayer?

- 2.1 Jesus, the Head of the Church, based His whole earthly ministry upon prayer (Luke 5: 16, 6:12, 9:18, 28-29, 11:1, 22:41-46).
- 2.2 If we firmly believe that God brings life and causes growth in the local church, then we must be in touch with God. (John 15:1-17) We can do nothing apart from Jesus. The early church was a praying church (Acts 1:14, 2:42, 4:31, 8:15, 13:3, 16:25 are among the numerous examples). Paul also encouraged praying (Ephesians 6:18, Philippians 4:6, Colossians 4:2, 1 Thessalonians 5:17, 1 Timothy 2:8).
- 2.3 We must depend upon God in everything we do. Our adequacy is from God. The focus is not on what we can do, but what God can do (2 Corinthians 3:4-6).
- 2.4 How much we pray is an indication of how dependent we are upon God and how firmly we believe that God is the source of all life and growth in the church.

3 Through prayer people are brought to faith in Jesus Christ and established in the Church.

- 3.1 Pray for those who do not know Christ in a personal way so that the Spirit would bring them to conviction and conversion (John 16:8-11, Titus 15).
- 3.2 Pray for an irresistible urge for Christians to go out to share their faith (Matthew 9:35-38).

- 3.3 Pray for opportunities, courage, and words to say in reaching other people with the good news of Christ (Ephesians 6:19, Colossians 4:34).

4 Through prayer the church continues to grow and have life.

- 4.1 God, who brings people to faith in Christ and establishes the church, is the source also for continued life and growth (Philippians 1: 16).
- 4.2 We must pray for the continued growth of individual Christians and the church as a whole (Ephesians 3:14-19).

5 Implications for prayer in the new church.

- 5.1 Prayer is the key to the evangelism, life, and growth of the church.
- 5.2 Prayer must be a number one priority both for the individual Christians and for corporate life of the church as a whole.
- 5.4 Prayer must be joined with an active faith.
 - We must pray, but we must be willing to act.
 - We must **aim and act** in prayer. (eg. set "faith statements" = goals and work toward them).

The Holy Spirit & the New Church

Bible Study No. 3

1 The Holy Spirit is the life of the church; He is the One who gives vitality and purpose.

- 1.1 Acts 1 & 2 - The presence of the Holy Spirit was essential for the Church to begin and to fulfil its ministry of being witnesses to Jesus, penetrating the world with the gospel of new life. (See also Luke 24:49).
- 1.2 The presence of the Spirit within the church expressed itself primarily as a missionary movement. (Acts 2:37-47).
- 1.3 The presence of the Holy Spirit in the early church was for mission, not for personal gratification. The chief function of the Spirit in the church was to prod and lead it to extension. (Acts 8:14, 10:1-48, 13:1-4, 15:12-35, 20:22, 28:23-31).

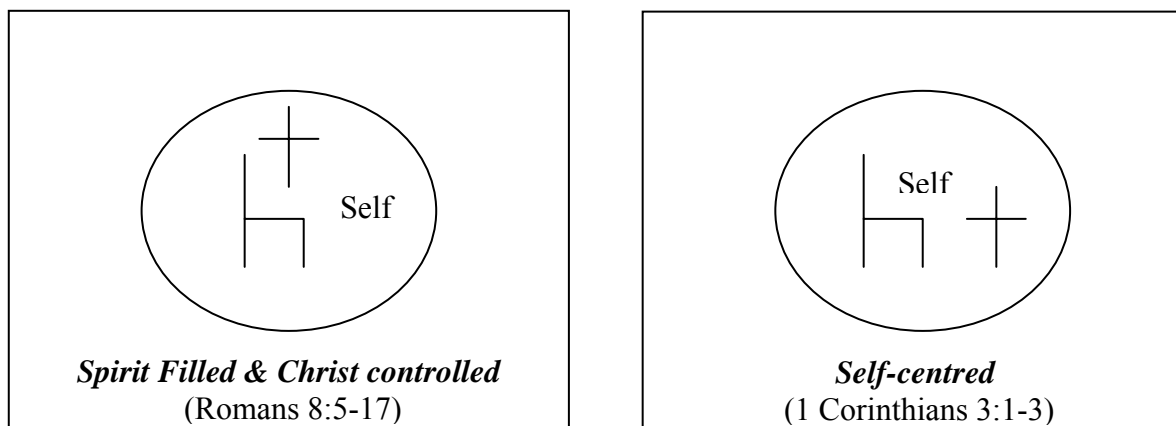
2 Who is the Holy Spirit? (Today there is so much misunderstanding of the Spirit that we need to focus momentarily on the person and the work of the Spirit).

- 2.1 God makes Himself known to us in three persons: Father, Son, and Spirit. They are real distinctions, but share a common identity. No rigid distinctions can be drawn between God the Father, God the Son, and God the Spirit. What is true of one is also true of the other two.
- 2.2 The Holy Spirit is the presence of Jesus (2 Corinthians 3:17) and is present in the individual believer and in the church. The work of Jesus is, in turn, the work of God the Father.
- 2.3 The primary function of the Holy Spirit is to lead the individual Christian and the church in missionary expansion, reaching people with the message of Christ and serving others in His name (John 14:5-27).

3 What is the role of the Holy Spirit in the Christian life?

- 3.1 The **Spirit is given** to the believer as a seal, (Ephesians 1:13-14, 2 Corinthians 1:21-22), to produce the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:13-26), to lead the believer in living daily (Romans 8:14), to equip the Christian for mission and service (Ephesians 4:1-16) and to give power for mission (Acts 1:8).

- 3.2 There are two kinds of Christians. The Christ controlled/Spirit filled Christian and the Self-centred Christian.



- 3.3 As Christians, we are encouraged to live a Spirit filled life and let Christ be in control (Ephesians 5:18, Galatians 5:16-26, Romans 8:1-17, 1 Thessalonians 5:19, 2 Timothy 1:7).
- 3.4 To live a Spirit filled/Christ controlled life you must:
- Confess/repent of any known sin (Colossians 2:13-15, 1 John 1:9)
 - Present yourself totally to Jesus Christ (Romans 6:14, 12:1-2)
 - Ask to be filled (1 John 5:14-15)
 - Walk by faith, continuing to confess your sin and living daily in fellowship with Jesus (1 John 1:5-2:6).

4 What is the role of the Holy Spirit in the Church?

- 4.1 The primary role of the Spirit is to give the church a vision and to lead it into being a missionary movement (John 16:8-11, Acts, Ephesians 4:7-13).
- 4.2 The Holy Spirit provides the power for mission (Acts 1:8).
- 4.3 The Holy Spirit provides the motivation for mission (Acts 13:1-3)
- 4.4 The Spirit provides the gifts for the mission (1 Corinthians 12:1-31, Ephesians 4:11-16)
- 4.5 The Spirit provides for the harvest (Romans 15:17-22)

5 Implications of the Holy Spirit and the New Church.

- 5.1 The new church must teach about the person and work of the Spirit (based on solid scriptural foundation) and encourage every Christian to live a Spirit filled/Christ controlled life.
- 5.2 The church must rely upon the Spirit for its vision of mission, its motivation for mission, its resources for doing mission, and its harvest results.
- 5.3 Above all, as a Spirit filled people and church, *the Mission God has given us to extend the name of Jesus should be the central focus* of all we do.

Discipleship & the New Church

Bible Study No.

4

1 The local church exists for the purpose of "making disciples" of all people. (Matthew 28:18-20)

- 1.1 The only command given in the Great Commission is to "Make Disciples" (Matthew 28:19a).
- 1.2 To "Make Disciples" means to lead people into a new relationship with God through faith in Christ and to develop them into His likeness (Ephesians 4:1-16, Philippians 3:12-21).

- 1.3 The early Christians were known as people of the Way because they patterned their life after the Way of Christ (Acts 16:17, 18:25-26, 19:23).

2 What does it mean to be a disciple? (The whole of the N.T. speaks to this question, but we will look at one passage - Luke 14:25-35).

- 2.1 Jesus must have priority over any other person (Luke 14:26).
 2.2 Jesus must have priority over any other possession (Luke 14:33).
 2.3 Jesus must have priority over any other purpose (Luke 14:27).

3 How is discipleship done? (2 Timothy 1:3-2:7)

- 3.1 We must **model** (live) what we believe. We must live and give witness to the gospel in the home and in the work place (2 Timothy 1:3-13).
 3.2 We must **multiply** ourselves by "making disciples" of others (2 Timothy 2:1-2).
 3.3 We must be involved in **ministry** (2 Timothy. 2:3-7)

4 The local church is God's method for fulfilling the Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20), which is to "Make Disciples".

- 4.1 We must pray for and lead people to faith in Christ and help them develop in His likeness (Ephesians. 3:14-19).
 4.2 Spiritual gifts need to be exercised so that the church can be built up and grow "as each part does its work" (Ephesians 4:16).
 4.1 We must care for one another as the scriptures teach (Romans 12:3-13, Ephesians 4:2, 25, 32, 1 Peter 1:22, 3:8, 4:9). It is this mutual care that creates a climate of discipleship".

5 Building a Discipling Church - what must we do?

- 5.1 Our priority is to "Make Disciples". (Bring people to a new relationship with God through faith in Christ and develop them into His likeness).
 5.2 A "Climate for Discipleship" must be created within our church. (Discipleship is not just one program among many. Broadly speaking, everything that the church does must contribute to the discipleship of people).
 5.3 Programs and organisations (worship, small groups, Sunday School, service groups, diaconate, business meetings, etc.) should all be planned to promote and encourage "Discipleship".

The Laity & the New Church

Bible Study No. 5

Leading Your Group

Preparation

- Pray for God's leadership and guidance
- Study the notes and scriptures for the Bible study ahead of time, letting the Spirit prepare your own heart.
- Make notes of anything you may want to emphasize, comment upon, or ask.
- Ask at least two other people to pray for you as you lead the group.

Leading the Group

- Encourage people to feel at ease and assure them that their questions, comments, etc. are welcome.
- Make some introductory remarks concerning the study about lay involvement in the church.
- Go through each of the sections of the study, looking at the scriptures and emphasising the main points (every Christian has a gift, the role of the pastor is leader + equipper, and the health of our new church will depend upon the committed involvement of its members).
- Use the discussion questions to stimulate people to share ideas.
- Remember your time limits, don't get too far off course, and try to avoid letting any one person dominate discussion.

Closing the Group

- Be sure to allow enough time at the end of your group time for prayer.
- Either you lead, or ask others to pray with you, asking God to help each of you discover your special gifts and to become more committed members of the local body of Christ.

Christians often think that they "hire" the pastor to do the work of ministry. That idea is even ingrained in the word that we use to refer to the leader of a church – the word *minister*. But in actual fact, involvement of every member in meaningful ministry is a clear Biblical teaching. So often we ignore the teaching or are ignorant of it. Pastors try to do all of the work, along with a few committed workhorses; and the rest of the people are only spectators. But in God's Kingdom and in the Church of Jesus Christ there are no spectators, only participants!

The main focus for this study will be found in 1 Corinthians 12-14 and Ephesians 4:1-16.

1 Every Christian is responsible for exercising his or her own personal gift/s, given by God.

- 1.1 "Each" person is given a gift (something they can do to build up and encourage the body of Christ) 1 Corinthians 12:7, 11, 18.
- 1.2 These "gifts" are given for the common good and for the building up of the whole church (1 Corinthians 12:7, 20, 25, and 1 Corinthians 14:26).
- 1.3 Only as we all do our part can the church grow both in number and quality (Ephesians 4:16).
- 1.4 The failure to contribute according to one's gifts causes the breakdown of the whole fellowship (1 Corinthians 12:21-26).

Questions for discussion:

- A. Are you convinced that every Christian has been given a "gift" (something to do) within the Church?
- B. Is it wrong for a church member to make no, or only a token, contribution to the ministry of their church?
- C. How can the church do a better job of helping people find a place of service/ministry to use their gifts?
- D. What can you do to discover and begin to use your gifts?

2 The role of the Pastor is to be Leader + Equipper.

- 2.1 God has given gifted people to lead the church (Ephesians 4: 11).
- 2.2 A pastor's primary task is to lead, (1 Peter 5:2-3) without lording it over others (Mark 10:41-44).
- 2.3 Church leaders/pastors are also to help equip/prepare God's people for works of service (Ephesians 4:12).
- 2.4 The role of the pastor is as Leader/Equipper. He must lead in order to know how to equip the people, and must equip them in order to lead them where God is going. In other words the

pastor is the manager who provides the resources and training to enable the members to minister.

Questions for discussion:

- A. How do you view the role of a pastor as a leader/equiper?
- B. How can the church leaders/pastor assist you in being more prepared to serve God?
- C. If God has called people to lead, then there must be those who are committed to following. How can you become more committed as a follower and servant?

3 The health of any church will depend upon the laity's involvement in the ministry of the church. Here are some practical ways you can learn to use your gifts and minister:

- 3.1 Study what the scriptures teach about spiritual gifts and service.
- 3.2 Take time to discover the gifts that God has given you. (What do you like to do most for the Lord? What do others respond to most that you do? Pray for God to help you! Plan to do something for God on purpose! Read a good book on spiritual gifts).
- 3.3 Offer your gifts and abilities to the Lord and to the church.
- 3.4 **Get involved** in some service/ministry. You can never discover what God wants you to do until you are willing to get involved. You may try doing several things before you find the one you feel "right about. Every Christian should seek to have a least one job that contributes to the life and ministry of the local church!

Evangelism & the New Church

Bible Study No. 6

1 God's desire is for people everywhere to come to know and enjoy a personal, eternal relationship with Him, through faith in Christ (2 Peter 3:8-9, John 6:28-29).

- 1.1 All people are sinners and fall short of God's standards. (Romans 3:23)
- 1.2 We are put "right with God through a personal experience with and trust in Christ Romans 3:21-22, 5:6-11, Acts 4:12).
- 1.3 In the final analysis there are two categories of people. There are those who have said to God, "Your will be done". And there are those to whom God will say, "your will be done" (Matthew 7:21-23, Matthew 25:31-46).

2 The extension of the "gospel" (*the message of good news about what God has done in Christ*) to the world beyond the walls of the church is our mission.

- 2.1 The emphasis in the book of Acts is on the influence of the church in ever widening circles until the whole world would feel the impact (Acts 1:8).
- 2.2 Paul expresses thanks for the way the church at Thessalonica has shared their faith in an ever-widening circle (1 Thessalonians 1:2-10).
- 2.3 We, as Christians and as a local church, are called to be a part of extending the message of the gospel to an ever-widening circle of contacts (2 Corinthians 5:17-20).

3 Evangelism is a process whereby GOD BRINGS A PERSON from being His enemy to becoming His friend (Colossians 1:21-23).

- 3.1 **Conviction** Is the first part of the process, which is the supernatural awakening of God that creates a desire and a thirst for Him in a persons life (John 16:7-11).
- 3.2 **Conversion** is the fruit of conviction. It is the point where God brings a person from darkness to light (Colossians 1: 13).

- 3.3 **Growth** is the final stage of the process (1 Peter 2:2). Just as natural birth is followed by growth, *so* too should spiritual birth. No growth may indicate no birth.

4 God's method of evangelism is to use people gathered in a local church as instruments for reaching people.

- 4.1 Jesus often sent his followers out to preach and witness (Luke 10:1-17, Matthew 28:18-20, John 17:18).
- 4.2 The early church was evangelistic in nature as they reached out to more and more people (Acts 2:47, Acts 13:1-3, Acts 28:30).
- 4.3 Evangelism was not a program, but an audiovisual process of living and sharing the good news (John 13:34-35, 1 Corinthians 15-11).
- 4.4 Every Christian should be able to explain to someone how to become a Christian (1 Peter 3:15-16), but some Christians will have a special gift to do so called the gift of "evangelism" (Ephesians 4: 11, Acts 21:8, 2 Timothy 4:5).

5 What are the Implications for making evangelism a part of a new church?

- 5.1 Our primary desire should be for people to come to know and enjoy a personal, eternal relationship with God through faith in Jesus Christ.
- 5.2 We must equip and train every member of the church to be an active witness for Christ both in lifestyle and in word.
- 5.3 We need to create ministry programs and plan events that actively take us beyond ourselves and the walls of our own church.
- 5.4 We must become a contagious congregation! (When Christians are genuinely excited about what is happening in and through their church, it will be hard to keep non-Christian people away).

Growth & the New Church

Bible Study No. 7

A fundamental principle to all of life is that living organisms grow. Growth is a natural, spontaneous expression of life. The only way to stop growth is through disease or death.

1 The church is primarily a living organism and secondarily an organisation.

- 1.1 The church is built of people who have been made alive spiritually as a result of being born anew through a personal experience of faith in Jesus Christ (John 3:313, Ephesians 2:1-3).
- 1.2 Both individually and corporately, the church is inhabited by a living Spirit (John 14, 1 Corinthians 3:16-17) and is governed by a living book (Hebrews 4:12).
- 1.3 Since the church pulsates with the life of Christ, we should expect the church to grow, unless it is inhibited by disease or death. There is no other choice but growth, because living things grow. To decide not to grow is to decide to die.

2 In the N.T. we see the church growing and developing in three ways: in number (quantity), in quality, and in organisational strength.

- 2.1 Numerical growth is often mentioned in the N.T. (Acts 1:15, 2:41-47, 4:4, 5:36, 6:1&7, 11:21, 16:5). The Great Commission implies numerical growth as we are called to "make disciples" (Matthew 28:18-20).
- 2.2 The people in the early church grew in the quality of their relationship with Christ and with one another (Acts 2:42-43, 18:23). Christians are encouraged to grow in Christ's likeness and unity (Ephesians 4A-6, Philippi 2:1-18, 3:12-16).

- 2.3 As the new church grew in number and in quality it had to develop new organisational structures in order to maintain healthy growth (Acts 2:42-46, 4:32-35, 6:1-7, 11:1-3, 1 Corinthians 3:10-11, Ephesians 4:7-13, 1 Timothy 11-16, 1 Peter 5: 1-11).
- *The key to healthy growth in the church is to have a balanced growth in number, quality, and organisational structure.*

3 Some of the common diseases that hinder churches from healthy growth are:

- 3.1 **People blindness** - not being able to see and meet the needs of people around you.
- 3.2 **Fellowship inflammation** that excludes others. "I like a small church and want to keep it that way."
- 3.3 **Ethnic elitism** - Unable to see that the church community has a large number of people of the same ethnic group rather than reflecting the community.
- 3.4 **Nominal commitment** - When Christians are only so in name and are not alive in Christ.
- 3.5 **Arrested spiritual development** - churches which are not well fed with the Word of God. (To grow we must learn).
- 3.6 **Maintenance complex** - let's keep what we've got.
- 3.7 **Overcrowding** - not enough seating, parking, fellowship groups, etc.
- 3.8 **Structure strain** - lack of organisational structure to keep the church developing healthily. Structures should constantly be reviewed to allow maximum growth potential.
- 3.9 **Leadership tension** - lack of harmony among leadership or just a lack of leadership all together.
- 3.10 **Failure syndrome** - lack of vision and possibility thinking.
- 3.11 **Old age** - when a church is in a declining/changing neighbourhood and it refuses to relocate/restructure its ministry.

4 As a new church, we must seek healthy growth. (If the church is alive in Christ it will grow. Our task is to ensure that we remain healthy so growth can take place).

- 4.1 We must want to grow and we must find leadership that will lead toward growth.
- 4.2 We must be willing to pay the price to grow - time, money, sacrifice, and willingness to accept change, etc.
- 4.3 Organisational development must occur to facilitate growth. (It will be important to create new "units" to reach new people, add staff, develop lay leadership, increase facilities, do forward planning, etc.)

Fellowship & the New Church

Bible Study No. 8

Fellowship is the item most people are searching for in a church. Just as every living thing depends upon climate for its growth; the church depends upon fellowship. Fellowship is the climate of "friendliness" and "companionship" within the church. Without good fellowship the church will flounder. With it - the church will flourish. Fellowship cannot be programmed but unless it is present, the church can wither and die.

1 Definition of Fellowship

- 1.1 Fellowship is the combination of factors, which determines how it feels to be a part of the church. For a visitor it is the sense of warmth, acceptance, and vibrancy that is important. For the member it is a sense of love, purpose, belonging, and involvement that makes the difference.

- 1.2 Fellowship is the "climate" of the church. The fellowship climate can either be negative or positive. It can either repel or attract. The emphasis is not on appearances, but on the spirit of genuineness and reality of life within the people.
- 1.3 The early church enjoyed a positive climate of fellowship that enhanced their growth: "Enjoying the favour of the people" (Acts 2:42-47), "One in heart and mind" (Acts 4:32-35), "They were highly regarded" (Acts 5:12-16).

2 There are three levels at which meaningful fellowship must occur.

- 2.1 **Celebration** - this is the worship service where people feel their needs for worship are met. It is meeting the need of people to be a part of something greater than themselves - a fellowship with their Maker.
- 2.2 **Sub-congregation** - this level is made up of people in groups between 12-60 people who are involved in service or a special interest task. At this level, people find meaningful social fellowship. People know first names and enjoy relating together. These groups are most important to church outreach and assimilating new members.
- 2.3 **Small Groups** - these are small groups of 6-12 people who meet regularly to share in heart to heart fellowship. There is both a sense of intimacy and accountability in the group. The group will spend time in worship, learning, praying, sharing, and mission.

3 Three important factors that produce a healthy fellowship climate in a church.

- 3.1 **Love** - (John 13:35, 1 Corinthians 13) These verses tell us that we will be known as Christ's disciples by our love. Love is not a feeling, but an action. Love must be demonstrated by:
 - The leadership of the church.
 - The membership living out "one another" relationships. (1 Corinthians 12:25 care for one another, Hebrews 10: 24 stimulate one another, 1 Thessalonians 5:11 encourage one another, Colossians 3:13 forgive one another).
 - The welcome and care of visitors.
 - Unconditional acceptance of each other (Galatians 3:26ff and James 2:1-13).
- 3.2 **Vision/Faith** - In Matthew 16:13-20 when Jesus pronounced the coming of the church, He did so with great purpose and vision. Several factors contribute to this in a church.
 - Sense of purpose: Jesus called us to a purpose. People are attracted to a group with a purpose.
 - Sense of expectancy: people must be trusting God to work among them and to change their lives and others lives.
 - Positive spirit: People are attracted to positive attitudes. Throughout the N.T. the emphasis is on rejoicing, thankfulness, and similar attitudes. (Philip 4:8-9)
- 3.3 **Involvement** - (1 Corinthians 12:12-31) In the N.T. all are involved in the work of building up the body of Christ.
 - People are most content and positive when they productively involved.
 - Visitors are impressed when members are committed and involved.

4 Two questions must constantly be asked:

- 4.1 How does a visitor "*feel*" coming into our church?
- 4.2 How does it "*feel*" to be a member of our church?

Worship & the New Church

Bible Study No. 9

A church can plan and not grow. It can program and not grow. But It will never truly worship and stay the same. The service of worship and Instruction must be inviting. Time, effort, and money must be expended to make worship an attractive part of the life of the church. Worship more than anything else, determines the climate or atmosphere in which a church can grow. Worship is central to our purpose of *Lifting up Jesus Christ and Glorifying God*.

1 Biblical definition of Worship.

- 1.1 There are at least six Greek words in the N.T. which can be translated worship. Each word reveals some aspect of worship. All are related to serving. Worship is a lifestyle.
 - Proskuneo = to kiss towards, adore, to bow the knee to (Matt 4:10, 1 Cor 14:2)
 - Sebazormai = to revere, an act of reverent awe or fear (Romans 1:25)
 - Eusebeo = denotes piety or reverence (Acts 17:23)
 - Sebomai = to revere (Mark 7.7, Acts 16:14)
 - Latreuo = service rendered to God by all (Philippians 3:3)
 - Leitourgeo = service rendered to God by a representative.
- 1.2 The N.T. meaning of worship is adoration toward God accompanied by some sort of service/action rendered to God. In other words worship is both honouring God and serving Him in our daily lives (Romans 12:1-2).
- 1.3 Worship Involves three things (See Mat. 8:14, the story of the leper):
 - Realising the Lordship of Jesus Christ
 - Recognition of His sovereign will
 - Recognition and submission to His power
- 1.4 The pattern of Christian worship taught In 1Cor 14:6ff.
 - Based upon the Truth revealed by God (vs. 26)
 - Participation of the believers (vs. 26)
 - Everything must clearly be understood (vs. 33)
 - Orderliness must prevail (vs. 27)
 - Response to the message (vs. 29)
- 1.5 The relation of the Holy Spirit to Worship (John 4:23, 1 Corinthians 14).
 - The Spirit both motivates and equips the believer for worship
 - True worship is not offered until the worshipper is controlled by the Spirit (John 4:23) and is using the gifts of the Spirit (1Cor 14:26).

2 Hindrances to True Worship.

- 2.1 There are several *cultural* hindrances that keep us from true worship.
 - We are *too rushed*. We are not able to wait on God in expectancy and hope (Is 40:31).
 - We are *not prepared*. We live in an instant age with easy and quick solutions.
 - We are *too self-centred*. Reflected in the comment, "I don't get anything out of church."
- 2.2 Worship is often *unbalanced* in respect to the mind, heart, and will.
 - We must learn and know God with our mind.
 - We must feel deeply about God with our emotions.
 - We should make practical decisions involving our will that affect our relationship to God and our daily living.
- 2.3 *Lack of private worship* keeps us from corporate worship.
 - We must be thankful, praising, worshipful people in our daily lives.

- You don't "go to worship", you take it with you from your daily life (Romans 12:1-21, Colossians 3:15-4:6)

3 How can the new church have a meaningful service of worship & instruction.

- 3.1 The ingredients of true worship are:
 - The Word of God (Colossians 3:16, Ephesians 5: 19).
 - Music (Colossians 3:16; Ps 100:2).
- 3.2 Pray & plan creatively & carefully for worship to meet the needs of the mind, heart, and will.
- 3.3 Must meet the expectations/needs of a variety of people:
 - Old Believers
 - Young Believers
 - New Believers
 - Visiting Unbelievers
 - Visiting Believers
- 3.4 We must teach, explain, and instruct people to practice true worship. Worshipping God is not a part of our nature but we can learn.
- 3.5 We can create and provide an atmosphere culturally conducive to worship. (There is no spot or place more sacred than any other. At the same time corporate worship does need a place and will be affected by the atmosphere of that place).

Living Worship

In John 4:23-24 Jesus said: *"A time is coming and has now come when true worshippers will worship the Father in Spirit and Truth, for they are the kind of worshippers the Father seeks. God is Spirit, and His worshippers must worship in Spirit and Truth"*.

You might say that the whole of the Bible is the struggle to get people to worship the true and living God as opposed to worshipping dead, false gods. Worship has a central place in Scripture. The principle always seems to be, as Jesus mentioned in the passage above, that those who are rightly related to God and the world around them are people who know how to worship. Worship must have priority in our lives as Christians. St. Augustine many years ago said that the purpose of mankind was to "Glorify God and enjoy Him forever."

Many people today have given away, or at least felt they could, any need to worship. Often the comment is - "don't give me all of that church stuff, I want something that's practical, something that helps me get on with life". Yet all around us both personal lives, homes, and society seems to be in great trouble. As people get on in life without worship, their lives often seem to be falling apart.

Jesus seems to indicate that there is "true" worship and false worship. "True" worship would be when we really focus our lives and living around God. False worship is when we centre our lives around the gods of our day such as pleasure, materialism, possessions, home, family, social life, etc.

What happens at worship on Sunday is a key to the life of the church! Worship is central to all else we do. We cannot, and will not live out our faith in practical ways unless we worship God in "Spirit and in Truth". We must see worship as something of vital importance. We must seek to understand how to worship in "Spirit and in Truth". We must learn how our attitudes, abilities, and actions can encourage others to really worship God. We must expect God to transform our life and the lives of others through our worshipping together.

Understanding Worship

In his book *Real Worship*, Warren Wiersbe points out three things that are vital to worship:

1. **Worship Involves Wonder:** Worship is a time when we recognise the greatness of God. We come not to be entertained or to entertain. We come to praise God just because He is God. We come realising the wonder of life - that we do not know everything. Someone has

said, "When wonder is dead, the soul becomes a dry bone". We worship in awe and reverence.

2. **Worship Involves Witness:** We go to church not so that we can worship God alone, but publicly and corporately. When we worship we give witness to the Lord Jesus, to the Church, and to the World. Through prayer, singing, giving offerings, reading the Bible, preaching, communion, we give witness to the presence of God in our midst. By our caring, loving, serving, and encouraging one another we give witness to God's love in us.
3. **Worship Involves Warfare:** We are engaged in struggle. As it indicates in Ephesians 6:12-18 - it is a cosmic struggle. People come hurting, broken, worried, and looking for victory in life. Worship is a victory celebration. We remind ourselves of the battle of life - but also remind ourselves of the true nature of a victorious life which we have in Jesus Christ.

Practical Steps to Worship

1. **Maintain Your Own Private Worship.** If public worship is to be a meaningful experience, it will be so as it flows out of your own love and surrender to Jesus on a daily basis.
2. **Make Public Worship a Priority in Your Life.** This is often hard in our fast pace world. We find it hard to give ourselves to anything in a disciplined way. However, worship must take priority. That may mean some sacrifices!
3. **Arrive Early.** It is often hard to prepare yourself for worship when you have to rush in at the last minute.
4. **Make Sure to Greet Others and Welcome Them to Worship.** The scripture admonished the early Christians to "greet each other with a holy kiss." Maybe that doesn't fit our culture, but certainly a big smile, a warm hello, and a hearty handshake would be just as good.
5. **Come With Expectancy.** If we don't expect God to do anything during worship then He probably won't. We must believe that God wants to change lives and transform people through worship. We must expect that people will become followers of Christ and make commitments during worship.
6. **Pray For The Service.** Not only do we need to pray before the service, but also during the service.
7. **Invite Others to Come to Worship.** Each of us comes into contact with people during the course of our lives that would be willing to come to a worship service. The only thing they are waiting for is an invitation. Ask somebody to come. You might be surprised.
8. **Offer Your Service to Help in Worship.** You may like to read the scriptures, take up the offering, pray, lead music, share a testimony, help serve tea or coffee, set up the hall. There are always plenty of ways to be involved in worship, and many of them don't involve being in front of people.
9. **Stay for the Tea & Coffee Time.** Some of the most important things take place following the service.
10. **Get to Know Someone New.** Following the service is a great time to meet someone and get to know them. Many people come to church with needs. You may be just the person who can offer some help. It may be a practical need like fixing something at home, or it may be an emotional or spiritual need like someone just to talk to. Be sensitive to people – listen, care, and be willing to involve yourself in ministry with others.

Stewardship & the New Church

Bible Study No. 10

Stewardship has to do with all that a Christian "possesses" - time and talent as well as treasure. However in this study we are concerned with money and material wealth. When looking through the Bible, it will come as a surprise to many that God has much to say about money and material possessions.

1 The essence of Biblical teaching on stewardship can be reduced to three very simple but important statements.

- 1.1 All that we have is given by God 2 Corinthians 4:7).
- 1.2 That which God gives us is really ours to do with "as we please" (Acts 5:4).
- 1.3 Since God has given freely to us, we should also freely give to God and those in need (Matthew. 10:8, 1John 3:17).

2 From 2 Corinthians 8 & 9 we can draw some basic principles about giving in the New Testament church.

- 2.1 The basis of stewardship is that God has given bountifully to His people.
- 2.2 The most important giving is the commitment of one's own life to God (8:9).
- 2.3 All Christian giving should be voluntary, eager, and cheerful (9:7).
- 2.4 Giving is in accordance with one's ability and the needs of others (8:11-14).
- 2.5 Giving entails the possibility of sacrifice (8:1-3).
- 2.6 Voluntary, cheerful giving results in praise to God and creates a bond of fellowship (9:13-14).
- 2.7 We reap what we sow (9:6-11).

Every Christian has a stewardship responsibility.

- 3.1 Every Christian should work diligently and voluntarily determine within themselves to become a cheerful giver 1 Thessalonians 4:11-12, Ephesians 4:28).
- 3.2 Tithing is a Biblical principle and an effective, practical way of supporting the ministry of a local church. Jesus spoke in favour of tithing as long as it was not done to avoid serving God with your whole life (Matthew 23:23-24).
- 3.3 A Christian should give regularly and generously *through* the ministry of their local church. Each believer is encouraged to develop a systematic plan to become a cheerful giver 1 Corinthians 16:1-2).

4 As a Church we can do the following to encourage healthy, cheerful, systematic stewardship.

- 4.1 Develop a budget that becomes a creative investment into the work of the Kingdom of God.
- 4.2 Provide all believers with information and materials designed to encourage them to exercise generous stewardship on a regular basis.
- 4.3 Develop a program of giving through the church, which would include the use of offering envelopes and regular weekly offerings.
- 4.4 As a church we must be good stewards of our resources, participating with our finances in the broader work of God's Kingdom through programs beyond our local scene - such as Overseas Mission, Home Mission, Social Service, World Aid and Evangelistic denominational initiatives.

Leadership & the New Church

Bible Study No. 11

A Church needs leadership! A ministry will rise or fall according to its leadership. A church will never be stronger than its leaders. But we must always remember there is a *difference between leaders and leadership*. You can have many leaders but no leadership. A leader is someone recognised because of his or her personality or position as being able to lead. ***Leadership is the ability to motivate, organise and guide people towards common goals.***

1 Leadership was a key factor in the expansion, growth, and development of the early church.

- 1.1 Jesus trained a number of men who saw themselves as witnesses to the resurrection and leaders of a new movement centred around Jesus Christ (Acts 1:15-26).
- 1.2 Others were appointed as time went on to provide various types of leadership (Acts 6:1-7, 11:19-30, 13:1-3, 15:1-19).
- 1.3 At least five roles of leadership are developed and mentioned in the N.T.
 - Apostle
 - Prophet
 - Evangelist
 - Pastor (Elder, Overseer, Bishop)
 - Deacon/Deaconess
- 1.4 Specific functions of leadership in the early church were:
 - *To govern* the congregation (1 Timothy 5:17, 1 Peter 5:3)
 - *To minister* the Word of God (Acts 20:28, 1 Peter 5:2)
 - *To equip* believers so they could minister and build up the body (Ephesians 4: 11)
 - *To protect* the congregation from false teachers (Acts 20:28-30)
 - *To visit and care* for those in need (James 5:14)
- 1.5 The qualifications of local church leadership are given in scripture as:

Pastors (Elders, Overseers)

When looking at Scripture the qualifications can be broken down into four areas, those of Character, Spiritual state, Family Relationships, and Gifts.

Character

Above reproach - can't point the finger at
 Sober - not an excessive drinker of wine
 Self-Controlled - sensible, just
 Orderly - not disorganised
 Hospitable
 Gentle - not violent or quarrelsome
 Generous - not greedy or a lover of money
 Good witness to unbelievers
 Lover of good
 Not self-pleasing
 Sexually pure
 Just

Spiritual

Mature Christian
 Devout

Family Relationships

Husband of one wife

Manager the family well - children obey and respect
Children not prodigals

Gift

Teaching
Able to refute false teaching

Deacons (and Deaconesses as appropriate): As with pastors, the scriptural qualifications for deacons can be broken down into the areas of: Character, Spiritual state, Family Relationships and Gifts (Acts 6:1-7; 1 Timothy 3:8-12).

Character

Good reputation with unbelievers
Dignified
Truthful - not double-tongued
Sober - not an excessive drinker of wine
Honest in business - not a lover of sordid gain
Lives out Christian faith
Not a gossip
Trustworthy

Wife

Worthy of respect
Not a gossip
Dignified
Trustworthy

Spiritual

Full of the Holy Spirit
Full of wisdom from God
Have a strong personal faith
Mature Christian

Family Relationships

Husband of one wife
Manages children and household well

Gifts

Competent in administration

2 We have much to learn from relevant research and study about leadership.

- 2.1 There are four kinds of leadership:
- Hereditary - leadership given based on inheritance
 - Bureaucratic - leadership given based on experience and seniority
 - Charismatic - unique leadership that arises in certain people during times of crisis
 - Representative - chosen to lead by their followers, either by consensus or election.
- 2.2 There is a difference between Natural and Spiritual Leadership:

The Natural Leader

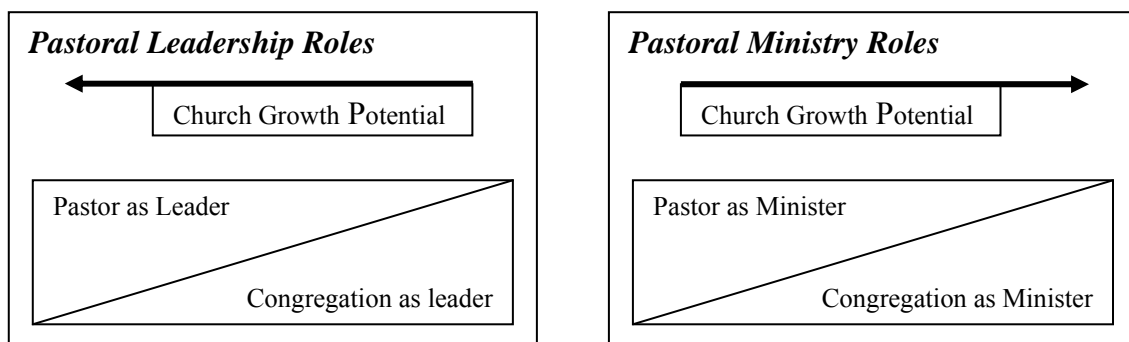
1. Self-confident
2. Knows people
3. Makes own decisions
4. Ambitious
5. Originates own methods

6. Enjoys commanding others
7. Motivated by personal consideration
8. Independent

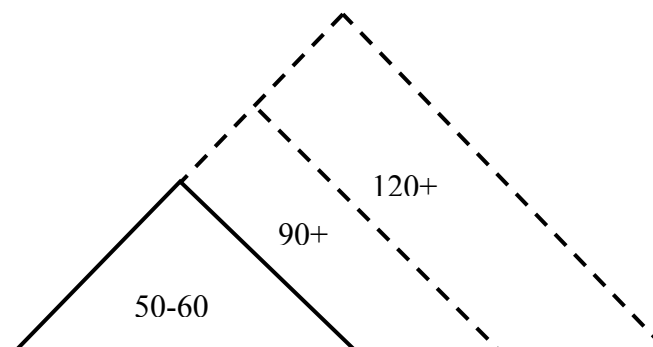
The Spiritual Leader

1. Confident in God
2. Knows people and God
3. Seeks to find God's *will*
4. Self-effacing
5. Finds and follows God's methods
6. Delights to obey God
7. Motivated by love for God and people
8. God-dependent

- 2.3 Studies indicate certain factors in relating church growth potential to leadership and ministry roles:



- 2.4 The Pyramid Principle: Before a church may add to its mass of members and adherents, it must expand its base of leadership:



- As more and more people come to know Christ and are brought into the church, more and more ministries must be developed, meaning more leadership is necessary.

3 Leadership in the local church must be organised so that it is both functional and relevant to the people.

As Adventists we organise our leadership at the local level in the following manner:

- 3.1 **Christ the Head** - is the real leader of His body. (We are not democratic, autonomous bodies).
- 3.2 **Pastor/s** – including the concept of elder & overseer serving as representative leadership of the congregation to provide spiritual/practical vision, motivation, and organisation leadership to help the congregation carry out its divine mission.

- 3.3 **Deacon/Deaconess** - serve as representatives of the congregation to assist, support, and work with the pastoral leadership in seeing that the church carries out its mission. (Deacons/Deaconesses provide both spiritual and administrative leadership roles)
- 3.4 **Functional Leadership Roles** - appointed positions of leadership to carry out specific tasks (eg. Bible School Director/Teachers, Small group leaders, Children's Club, Youth Group, Choir, Playgroups, etc.).
- 3.5 **Congregational Leadership** - the final authority in decision making rest with the people. This can be done either by the "discuss and vote" method, or the more effective method of "consensus." Equally as important, the ultimate responsibility for carrying out the mission of the church rests with the congregation as a whole.

Note: Within this organisational model there is ample flexibility so that each local church can develop leadership that will be both functional to the mission of the church and acceptable to the cultural ways of the people.

Appendix D

7 Phases of Church Planting: Phase & Activity List

By Dick Scoggins and Dan Brown

Phase 1:

Launching the team

Definition: Preparing the team. Initial church-planting plans and strategies.

When begun: When the aspiring team coordinator has officially been "knighted" by the general director to become a designated team coordinator.

- 1 Research best information available on language, history, and culture of country and target group.
- 2 Prepare a vision statement.
- 3 Develop memorandum of understanding.
- 4 Get church approval, support for each team member.
- 5 Plan a strategy paper.
- 6 Each team member secures adequate prayer, financial support.
- 7 Recruit a team.
- 8 Get the team to own the vision and strategy for church planting.
- 9 Complete team coordinator checklist.

Phase 2:

Preparing to sow

Definition: Learning the language, adjusting to the culture, becoming "belongers" in society.

When begun: Most of the team is on-site (& usually engaged in aggressive language learning).

- 1 Team members "land," secure suitable housing, arrange for their initial entry strategy.
- 2 Resolve conflicts arising in the home.
- 3 Address team conflicts.
- 4 Develop a team life, which spiritually sustains members.
- 5 Goal-setting and planning for the team.

Language and culture adjustment

- 6 Team members work hard at learning the target language.
- 7 Language-learning program and accountability in place.
- 8 Learn how to survive in area chosen, get comfortable, and enjoy life in the country.
- 9 Enable a family to do the same.
- 10 Start residency procedure on basis of strategy.
- 11 Develop multiple relationships of varying depth with target persons.
- 12 Enable family members (wives and children) to develop relationships with target persons.

- 13 Bring redemptive elements into your relationships.
- 14 Enhance character through the stress of adapting personally, as a family, and as a team to culture.
- 15 Discover and collect any evangelistic tools available in your target language.

Phase 3:

Sowing

Definition: The noble work of evangelism.

When begun: Most members of the team are spending most of their ministry time on evangelism, as opposed to language learning.

- 1 Memorize parts of the Bible (e.g., parables or miracles, etc.) in the target language.
- 2 Learn to share biblical truths in the language.
- 3 Develop sympathy for the gospel in friends.
- 4 Develop a strategy for reaching receptive people and their closest relationships (family or friends) as a group.
- 5 Begin evangelistic Bible studies (e.g., using Discovery Course material).
- 6 Encourage contacts to bring some committed relations.
- 7 Prayerfully evaluate your friends for a prospective man of peace: Can he bring others with him?
- 8 Prayerfully identify one or more potential men or women of peace among your relationships. (You may more readily identify women, especially where men are not responding but women are.)
- 9 Lead someone to commit to follow Jesus.

Phase 4:

Discipling begins

Definition: Discipling one or more Muslim-background believers (MBBs) from the target group. Both parties should recognize this as a process toward the maturing of the MBBs in character and service for Christ.

When begun: Begin regular discipleship with a MBB regardless of how he/she came to Christ.

- 1 Challenge one or more believers (man or woman of peace, if possible) to be disciplined by you or other team member, so they might grow unto the full measure of Christ."
- 2 Model Christ's life style before this man and his network.
- 3 Have believer include some of his family or friends in the discipling.

Disciple the believer(s) to:

- 4 Fully understand his new identity, as a child of God by faith, not works. (Are there tendencies to return to the "works" mindset of Islam?)
- 5 Understand the purpose of baptism as an outward sign of the death of self and rebirth in Christ
- 6 Relate Bible stories that will impact life.
- 7 Develop a regular habit of turning to Scripture to deal with specific problems as they arise.

- 8 Recognize sin in personal life and respond by repentance, confession, and developing new patterns.
- 9 Live out Christ's life in extended family (eg: Matthew 5-7).
- 10 Develop godly patterns of loving spouse (eg: resolving conflict, forgiveness, and reconciliation).
- 11 Develop godly patterns of child rearing.
- 12 Implement godly patterns of conflict resolution with others.
- 13 Understand the place and function of suffering in believer's life and be able to apply it to own life.
- 14 Practice godly response to those hostile to his faith (eg: government, family, employer, friends).
- 15 Understand the biblical perspective on local occult practices and godly alternatives and responses.
- 16 Be ready to give a reason for their faith in a non-fearful, non-combative but prepared way.
- 17 Share the good news with family and friends.
- 18 Begin to identify gifts and calling.
- 19 Become familiar with God's plan for the extension of his kingdom in the book of Acts.
- 20 Team women begin discipling women in Titus 2:3-5 skills and in submission to husbands.

*Phase 5:***Beginning the church**

Definition: The ministry of gathering Muslim-background believers (MBBs) together - growing the fellowship into a church or having such work with more than one group. During this phase the church planter exerts significant influence in the community.

When begun: Three or more MBBs begin meeting regularly together for fellowship in Christ, teaching, prayer, etc. (with at least two from the target group).

- 1 Family and friends begin to explore the good news together.
- 2 Three or more believers agree to follow Christ in a committed community.
- 3 Church planter shares God's plan for forming kingdom communities among family and friends.
- 4 Believers embrace God's plan for forming kingdom communities and, together with church planter, decide on a culturally meaningful pattern for regular gatherings.
- 5 Believers learn to recognize and maximize spiritual gifts in the emerging community of believers.
- 6 The older believers understand the "one another" verses of the Bible and how they define Christian community.
- 7 Older believers have settled on an appropriate way to determine fellowship in their community (e.g., covenant).
- 8 Community has become identifiable (eg: via covenant).
- 9 The community celebrates the Lord's 'table'.
- 10 The community meets together regularly for meaningful worship, instruction, and prayer.
- 11 The believers do the work of evangelism.
- 12 Community gatherings are culturally relevant.

Church planters begin to phase out

- 13 Responsibilities between church planter and leaders defined.
- 14 Withdrawal of most of church planters from meetings.
- 15 Withdrawn church planters focus on starting new communities of believers (Phase 4).
- 16 Remaining church planters take lower profiles in meetings.

Phase 6: **Training leaders**

Definition: Last steps so that the MBB fellowship is a complete church. Mainly leadership development and installation. In this phase, any remaining church planters will target leadership development.

When begun: Leadership development is now the main work of the team. Team expects to conclude its role in the appointment of plurality of biblically qualified elders in six months or less. Any elder appointing after that is the responsibility of existing elders (in what ever decision-making model they choose).

Leaders emerge

- 1 Older believers have baptized new believers.
- 2 Older believers are discipling new believers.
- 3 Older women teach newer women Titus 2 skills.
- 4 Older, more mature men trained to take leadership of community gatherings.
- 5 Believers take responsibility for biblical instruction.
- 6 Older believers preside at the Lord's table.
- 7 Initial leaders emerging and functioning as shepherds.
- 8 Growth in godliness in their homes sets pace for others.
- 9 Gifts encouraged and developed for edification.

Peacemaking skills exercised by the community

- 10 Forbearing and forgiving one another.
- 11 Confronting, exhorting, reproving erring members.
- 12 Shunning, "disfellowshipping" those persisting in sin.

Train and recognize leaders

- 13 Character developed in context of marriage.
- 14 Team leadership concepts taught, implemented.
- 15 Discerning the will of the Lord by leaders and community taught and practiced.
- 16 Leaders' place in conflict and peacemaking in the community taught, practiced (peacemaking, Phase 6).
- 17 Emerging elders recognized (provisional leadership).
- 18 Mature women recognized in ministry.
- 19 Conflicts about leadership appointment dealt with.
- 20 Leaders begin shepherding and church discipline.
- 21 Leaders looking for new men to develop as leaders.
- 22 Leaders begin discipling new leaders. (See discipling, Phase 4 and above, this phase).
- 23 Church planter often absent from community meetings: leaders lead.
- 24 Church planter often absent from leadership meetings.
- 25 Elders formally ordained.

*Phase 7:***Reproducing and exiting**

Definition: Developing church reproduction, other new church planting efforts, or assisting the new church for a temporary period. The church planters are not making a career out of working with the one church they have planted, but are working with national believers to plant more churches.

When begun: Plurality of biblically qualified elders recognized and installed in the first church, which is of sufficient "critical mass." Local authority and responsibility for shepherding that church rests solely in the hands of indigenous leaders.

Reproduction begins

- 1 Intense teaching on reproducing communities.
- 2 Community embraces goal of reproducing.
- 3 Members begin to look for new men of peace around whom to start another community.
- 4 New gathering (Bible study) started or owned by church (if started by other church planters).
- 5 Leaders begin to network with emerging leaders of new gathering, taking some responsibility for training.
- 6 Leaders formally recognize newer emerging leaders (provisional elders).
- 7 Leaders of two communities start meeting regularly.
- 8 Elders take more responsibility to develop leaders in the new community.
- 9 New community meeting started.
- 10 Communities care for each other; resources shared.
- 11 Peacemaking skills among leaders (of different communities) practiced.
- 12 Elders (possibly with church planter) lay hands on new elders in the newer community.
- 13 Relationship between communities and leaders worked out, formalized (e.g., covenant).
- 14 Peacemaking skills between communities and leaders of different communities exercised.
- 15 Church planter commits the old community to God and leaves community. Sometimes visit.
- 16 Church planter redefines relationship to leaders as coach. No longer attends leadership meetings unless invited.
- 17 New churches started without at a church planter.

Great Commission vision

- 18 Vision developed to plant churches beyond local area.
- 19 Vision includes recognizing, training, and sending national church planters to other cities and countries.
- 20 Vision given by leaders to congregation.
- 21 Means of sending teams of nationals devised.
- 22 Church planters sent out either with Frontiers team or other teams.
- 23 New clusters of communities started.
- 24 National teams of church planters sent out.

Dick Scoggins has trained church planting teams in the Muslim world with Frontiers and other agencies. His training materials are used in over a dozen languages. He is the author of four books about church planting.