

Planting Churches that Multiply
new environments to experience God & community

conversation guide

Peter Roennfeldt

For more church planting resources or equipping opportunities
contact Peter Roennfeldt

peter@newchurchlife.com
www.newchurchlife.com
www.facebook.com/newchurchlife

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Preface

The Seventh-day Adventist Church is a movement – a movement of church planting. This is how it started, and this is how it will complete its work. God has called us to plant new and multiplying communities of faith in the un-entered places. Ellen White said this is the work of ministry –

*Our ministers are not to spend their time laboring for those who have already accepted the truth. With Christ's love burning in their hearts, they are to go forth to win sinners to the Saviour. Beside all waters they are to sow the seeds of truth. Place after place is to be visited; **church after church is to be raised up**. Those who take their stand for the truth are to be organized into churches, and then the minister is to pass on to other equally important fields. (7 T 19, 20)*

This *Conversation Guide* is designed to equip your team to plant 'church after church' – churches that multiply. This is what the apostle Paul did. He planted multiple churches, and they were churches that multiplied. His two years and three month's work in Ephesus resulted in churches multiplying across what is Turkey today – and 'all the Jews and Greeks who lived in the province of Asia heard the Word of the Lord.' (Acts 19:10)

This *Conversation Guide* does not present a *one-size-fits-all* approach. It is a conversation guide. It starts with God's **kingdom** – and our relationship to his kingdom values. It then looks at where God has placed us – and how to enter our **society and world**. Jesus said, '**make disciples**' in 'every nation, tribe, language, and people.' (Matt 28:19; Rev 14:6-7) Gatherings of these disciples are **churches** – to which are given 'the keys of the kingdom' (Matt 16:18) for others! Rapidly **multiplying churches** (or gatherings of disciples) makes a movement – the Adventist movement!

Consistent with Jesus' teaching and modeling, planting churches is done in teams – with two to four companions. During this training time –

1. Learn to **pray together conversationally**.
2. Read and re-read **your textbook, the book of Acts**.
3. Work through this *Conversation Guide* and **put into practice** what you sense the Holy Spirit is saying to you as a group. In other words, obey God.
4. Don't let the training days go by without **looking for a 'person-of-peace'**. Check out what Jesus said to do in Luke 10:8-9 – and do it! See what happens!
5. Share your journey with other believers and **encourage them to form more church planting teams or groups**. Watch for the activity of the Holy Spirit in the lives of others – and fan that spark of interest and multiply your work. So, make a list of those who you could encourage, even while you are training, to form another group – that will multiply into another, and another!

Multiplication Movements

This *Conversation Guide* is not simply about church planting. It is about the multiplication of churches – to open God’s kingdom to un-reached people.

Why is this so important? It –

- Puts us in tune with God’s missionary heart.
- Places us where the Holy Spirit is at work among those outside the church.
- Is *the way* to hand faith to next generations.
- Engages with where the future church is!

It puts us in touch with our New Testament and faith heritage. A church movement reaches new people, with newly planted churches extending God’s kingdom. Ellen White wrote –

*Upon **ALL** who believe, God has placed a burden of raising up churches.* (Medical Ministry 315)

This *Conversation Guide* provides a frame for you to develop a planting team – that plants churches that multiply, opening up God’s kingdom, its values and life, to new people!

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Our Conversations

TEAMS

Who will record the decisions of the team?

TEAM VALUES

Discuss these values for a church planting team –

1. **God's glory**
2. **Team work**
3. **Prayer & worship**
4. **New Testament textbook**
5. **Networking & affirmation**
6. **Being active missionaries**
7. **Multiplying churches:**
 - Each team commits to training a new team within a year.
 - Each trainer commits to training another trainer within a year.

Why plant churches?

1. To reach new people.
2. To equip new leaders.
3. To build a fresh relationship with God – for all as missionaries (Acts 1:8)
4. So established churches can experience new life (Acts 8-10, 14-15)
5. To put us in tune with God's missionary heart – at work outside the church.
6. To take us to where the Spirit is working outside the church (Acts 10-11, 16:9, 17)
7. To remind us of our origins as a planting movement – to put disciple making back on the agenda.
8. To hand on faith and church to next generations (Acts 13:1-4)

It is the way the next generation takes ownership of the church.

Church planting is not a program – it is the way the next generation of church is cultivated by the next generation of believers.

Young people find a new relationship with Jesus and the Holy Spirit as they plant new churches.

9. To compel the church to engage with the culture (Acts 17)

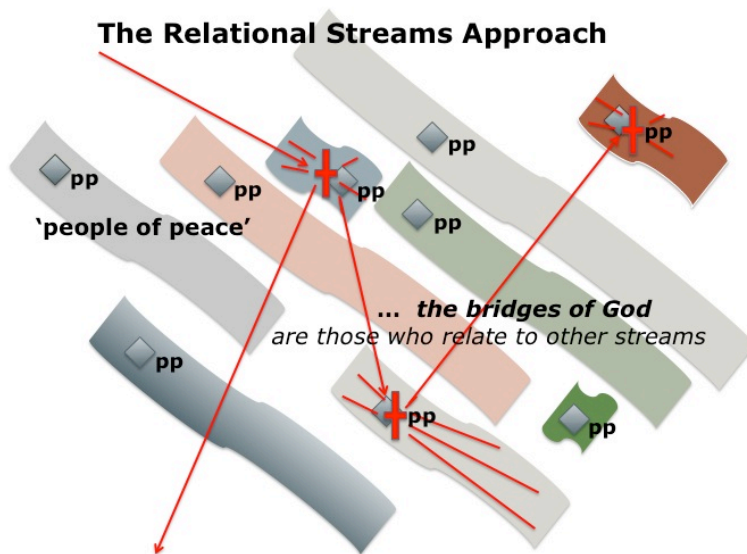
What are some of theological foundations for church planting?

1. *God's Triune Being & Activity*: John 17:21. Created 'in his likeness' (Gen 1:26) he seeks to dwell with us, as his 'body' – in the world.
2. *God is the missionary (missio Dei)*: John 3:16. Mission is not primarily a human activity. It flows from God's heart – and is his activity.
3. *God became 'flesh & blood' to save us (incarnation)*: John 1:14. God 'became flesh and blood and moved into the neighborhood'. God saves us through complete identification with us – and the method for sharing this is: our incarnation/identification in our communities.
4. *God's kingdom vision*: Luke 4:18-19. Church planters are challenged to grow God's kingdom in people's lives – an imperative for established and new churches.
5. *God's temple/body*: Eph 2:19-22 – we are God's household.

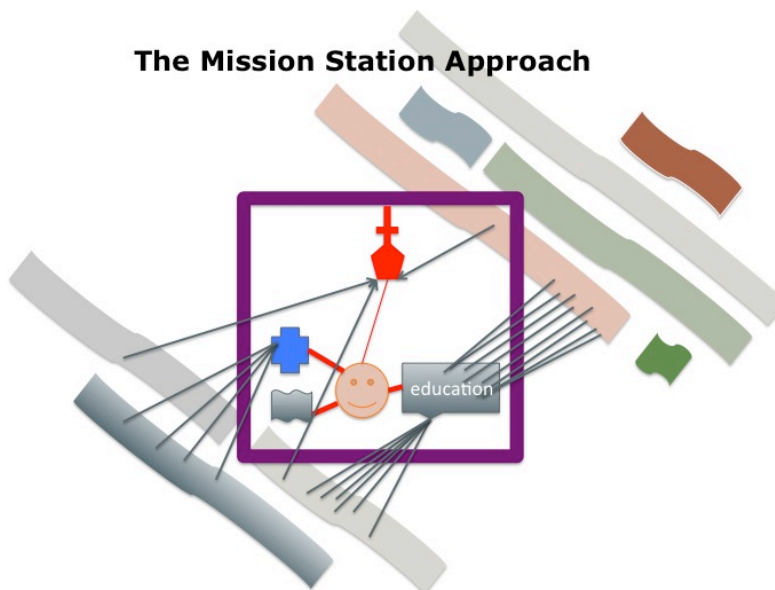
Foundational Biblical Concepts

Jesus' commission (Matt 28:18-20)

1. What did Jesus say disciples are to do?
2. Who are the *ethne* (nations) in which Jesus said to make disciples?



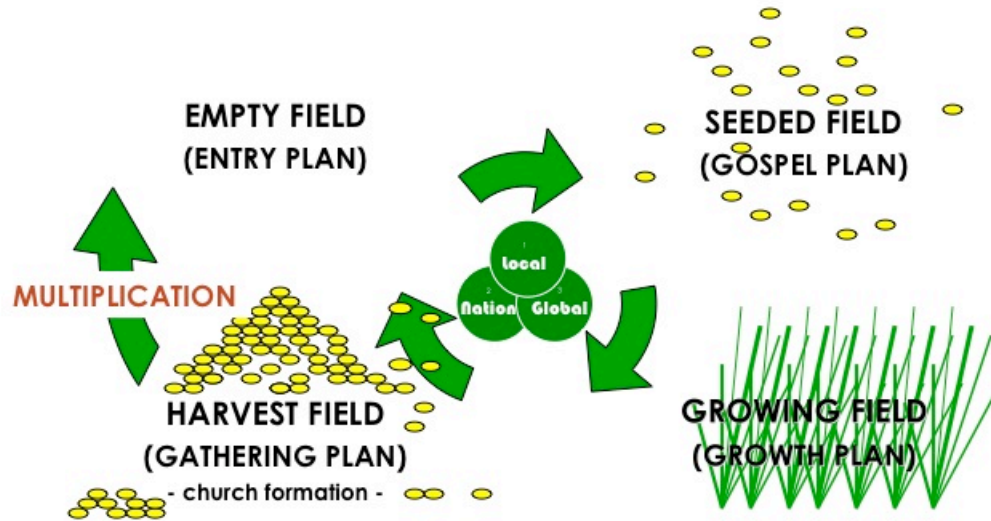
Compare the approach we have sometimes used -



The Four Fields Harvest Model (Mark 4:26-29)

This Conversation Guide follows the *4 fields, harvest model* of making disciples and planting. (Shank 2007) The kingdom parables disclose 'the secret of the kingdom of God' – and the 'good soil' – full of manure, produces a 'multiplying' crop. (Mark 4:8, 11)

Mark 4:26-29: The 4 fields in which farmers/planters work –



1. Discuss this story from -

1. The **farmer's** perspective:

2. A **church planter's** perspective:

2. We will look at these key questions –
 1. How do we enter the empty field?
 2. What do we sow?
 3. How do we cultivate the growth of disciples – ‘all by itself’ (Mark 4:28)?
 4. How do we gather the harvest to form a church?
 5. And, why do we gather the crop?

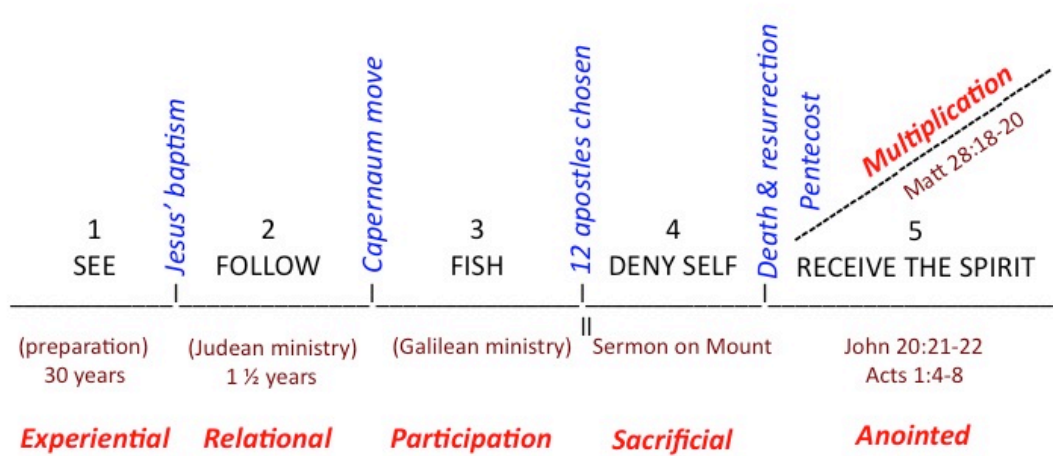
Farmers in the Middle East harvest to sow into the fields in the next season. They keep the best to plant again – to multiply. They even ‘sow in tears’ – going out ‘weeping’, for their families are hungry; but unless they plant, they will starve. (See Psalm 126:5, 6) This is a foundational idea.

Jesus’ disciple making (Luke 10:1-24)

1. Jesus taught and modeled how to make disciples in the 4 *fields* using a relational streams approach –

Christ's method alone will give true success in reaching the people. 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." (MH143)
2. What insights do we gain from Jesus’ teaching on making disciples that will guide us? Luke 10:1-24

3. How did Jesus cultivate a movement of disciple making?



4. How will Jesus' method shape your disciple making and church planting?

Review pages 8-11 – discussing the main themes of the *harvest model* of disciple making and church planting:

End-vision: What is the end-vision?

Jesus did his work with the end in mind. The apostle Paul did the same – and could say the work of sharing the gospel from Jerusalem to Illyricum was completed. (Romans 15:14-20) From a Bible map, what do we discover about the area Paul covered? He started with a vision. What future does God see for your church plant?

1. **VISION: a multiplying disciple making movement**

- **Matt 28:19-20** (Also Mk 16:15-18; Lk 24:45-49; Jn 20:21-23; Acts 1:4-8)

The church is given *the great commission – to make disciples*

- **Rev 14:6-12**

The Adventist church shares *God's special message*

- **Matt 16:13-20** - Jesus used the word 'church' on 2 occasions. (Matt 18:15-20)

The church is given *the keys to kingdom*

- **Matt 22:36-40**

The church is to obey *the great commandments*

Write a simple sentence that expresses the end-vision for your plant:

2. **MISSION: why you will your church plant exist?**

- **Acts 2:42-47:** What characterized the Jerusalem church?

- **1 Cor 14:26:** What were key elements of Paul's churches?

From the end-vision of Jesus and these mission verses list 4 or 5 reasons why your church will exist – and organize them in an order that may suggest a strategic plan for your church plant (for example: serve, disciple, equip, etc):

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

3. **VALUES:** handing on values & beliefs!

VALUES – examples

- **Bible-based:** beliefs and practices
- **Christ dependent:** empowered by prayer
- **Seeker oriented:** passionate about reaching seekers
- **Discipleship modeling:** committed to mentoring
- **Safe place:** valued and respected
- **Equipping:** for witnessing
- **Accountability:** personal and group

List **values/attitudes** that you consider essential, distinctive and realistic to how you must relate to each other and the community –

What specific actions will you follow to cultivate each value?

Value:

Action:

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

7.

BELIEFS (your faith in Jesus) –

List your key biblical beliefs – and write a summary of them using language that people who are not Christians will understand.

Who & Where? (Luke 10:1-24)

Jesus first formed teams to go ahead and make disciples –

WHO: the core team

1. Where did Jesus find and build his team of disciples?

Compare John 1:35-51 with Matt 4:12-22

2. Where will we find the workers? Compare Matt 9:35-38 and Luke 10:2

Who has God put on your mind to ask to join you?

3. Know each other in the team.

Spiritual Gifts

Heart passion

Abilities

Personality

Experiences

4. How is a core team equipped?

During this time of training the core team will be involved in connecting with new people ...

WHERE & WHO: the community

Jesus sent the teams 'ahead of him'. (Luke 10:1) Where will you go to make disciples? Where do you believe God wants you to make disciples and plant a church – and, who will you connect with?

- a. **What** does your community look like? How would you describe your community?

- b. **Who** are some of the key people who can help you know your community?

- c. **What** do you see God doing in your community?

- d. **Who** has he put on your heart? (Muslims, Jews, rich, poor, kids, etc?)

- e. **What** are you 'shaped' to do?

- f. **What relational streams** are you involved in?

Six steps to plant churches that multiply (Mark 4:26-29; Luke 10:1-24)

Using an overlay of the *four fields harvest model* (Mark 4:26-29) and Jesus' teaching in Luke 10 on how to enter new fields and make disciples – we find six steps to planting multiplying churches. We are now ready to examine these –



- 1. Pray** for the harvest and workers. Luke 10:1-4

Prayer and the presence of the Holy Spirit: Luke 10:16-24

Read and discuss John 14:12-23 –

Some ways of praying –

- 1) 10.02 Prayer
- 2) Conversational prayer
- 3) Prayer walking
- 4) Listening prayer
- 5) Scripture prayer
- 6) Prayer Team
- 7)

2. **Connect** through the 'person of peace'. Luke 10:5-9, 16

1. How will you connect with your community?

2. How did Jesus connect?

3. What is the place of public meetings?

4. **What are the qualities of the 'person of peace'? (Luke 10:5-7)**

- Hospitable
- Receptive
- Reputation
- Influence

Look for these qualities in –

- The Samaritan woman: John 4:1-42
- Zacchaeus: Luke 19:1-10
- The demon possessed man: Mark 5:1-20

Why concentrate on this person?

Who did you meet for the first time this week – and what two things did you learn about that person? Can you identify a ‘person of peace’?

When you meet a ‘person of peace’ what are you to do? Luke 10:8, 9

1.

(LISTEN TO THEIR STORY)

2.

(SHARE YOUR STORY)

3.

(INTRODUCE JESUS’ STORY)

Story telling: their story, our story & Jesus' story!

To make disciples Jesus said to (1) eat, and while you are eating (2) heal, and while you are healing, say (3) the kingdom of God is near you. (Luke 10:8, 9) As we visit we start from their story (listening), move to our testimony, and share Jesus' story:

LISTEN TO THEIR STORY (while you eat listen – identify their need for healing)

SHARE YOUR STORY (briefly share your testimony – connecting to Jesus' story)

'Return home and tell how much God has done for you.' So the man went away and told all over town how much Jesus had done for him. Luke 8:39

Sharing your story can help family and friends, and people you meet understand how they too can follow Jesus. Write down a few points under each heading –

1. Your life before you met Jesus (or your early years).

In one word (fearful, searching, angry, lost, etc – or spiritual home)

2. How you met Jesus.

In one sentence –

3. How your life has changed.

In one word (peace, secure, know God's care, etc)

ACTIVITY

1. With another, practice telling your story in three minutes.
2. A good place to begin sharing your story and God's story is with the people you know – your circle of relationships including family, friends, coworkers, and neighbors. List the people you know who are not yet followers of Jesus.
3. Identify five people you can pray for every day and begin sharing your story with each one. Carry a list of their names in your wallet or purse.
4. Is there a 'person of peace' among them?
5. Who will you share your story with this week?

INTRODUCE JESUS' STORY - the gospel presentation

Listening to their story and sharing your story provides opportunity to share the gospel – God's story! Paul's summary of the gospel story is in I Cor 15:1-8.

Choose a bridge to sharing –

- Family and friends of a new disciple: 'I have made a decision to become a follower of Jesus. I would like to tell you about it.'
- Family and friends of an existing disciple: 'I have never shared with you why I became a follower of Jesus, and the difference he makes in my life. I would like to tell you about it.'
- Someone you meet: 'If you could know God personally, would you be interested?'

Say: 'I would like to briefly share my story with you.'

Say: 'I would like to show you from the Bible how you can know God personally.'

For those with some knowledge of God: Let God's Word speak –

- Mark these verses in your Bible beforehand.
- Ask your friend to read each verse aloud.
- After they have read a verse ask: 'What does this say to you?'
- Listen to the person.

John 3:16 'What does this say to you?'

Romans 3:23 'What does this say to you?'

Romans 5:8 'What does this say to you?'

Romans 6:23 'What does this say to you?'

Romans 10:9 'What does this say to you?'

- If your friend interprets a passage incorrectly, don't argue or offer your interpretation, but ask him to read it again, and then explain your understanding a second time.

Check understanding by asking:

- Are you a sinner?
- Do you want forgiveness for your sin?
- Do you believe that Jesus died on the cross for you – and rose again?
- Are you willing to surrender your life to Christ?
- Are you ready to invite Jesus into your heart and into your life?

If the person says yes, they are ready to invite Jesus into their heart and life –

- Ask them if this prayer says what they want to say in their heart to God: Heavenly Father, I have sinned against you. I want forgiveness for all my sins. I believe Jesus died on the cross for me and rose again. Father, I give you my life to do with as you wish. I want Jesus Christ to come into my life and into my heart. I ask this in Jesus' name.
- Ask, do you want to use these words or your own?
- Have them pray a prayer of commitment.

When the person accepts Christ –

- Ask, who else needs to hear about Jesus? When will you tell them?
- Make a time to begin discipleship. Take the person through: (a) Sharing Your Story, sharing (b) Sharing Jesus' Story.

For those not ready or with no knowledge of Jesus: but is willing to meet and learn more about Jesus – ask: When can we meet next to learn more about Jesus? – Or: share how to read the Gospel of Mark.

See p 22 for working with educated – and p 23 for educated (p 22)

3. **Sow** gospel seed – say: ‘the kingdom of God is near’. Luke 10:9

SHARE YOUR STORY (testimony)

INTRODUCE GOD’S STORY

- (1) **FOR THOSE WHO CAN READ** – reading Mark

1. After each story/section use these five **bookmark questions** to cultivate **observation**, identify **principles**, and foster **application** or obedience:

Observation

- (1) What is new in this story that we have not heard before?
- (2) What surprised?
- (3) What do we not understand?

Principles

- (4) What will we apply to our lives?

Application

- (5) What will we share with others this week – what and with whom?

2. Visit and listen - to what they are discovering in Mark’s Gospel.

3. **Share Elementary Teachings (Heb 6:1-2)**

Identify elementary teaching of the Christian faith – the starting point for faith:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.

Explore other stories from the life of Jesus that illustrate **‘the elementary teachings about Christ’** (the **commands of Jesus**) – repentance,¹ faith, baptisms, ‘laying on of hands’, resurrection, and judgment.

Here are some that cover these *elementary teachings* in the Gospels –

1. Repent & believe – Luke 19:1-10
2. Pray – Luke 11:1-13
3. Receive the Holy Spirit – John 14:1-23
4. Be baptized (water/Spirit) – Acts 8:26-40
5. Go make disciples – John 4:1-42
6. Love (new life/obey) – Luke 10:25-42
7. Share Lord’s Supper – Luke 22:7-20
8. Give – Mark 12:41-44

¹ The ‘goodness’ or ‘kindness’ of God leads to repentance. (Rom 2:4)

(2) FOR THOSE WHO CANNOT READ – memorizing the stories of Mark

Find a ‘person of peace’ – a tribal elder; influential person in a town, village, or suburb; a key person among street people, etc – and (1) eat, (2) heal, and (3) share the kingdom of God. This person could bring their relational stream to Jesus:

1. Read the first story of Mark to this person, twice.
2. Get the ‘person of peace’ to tell the story to you in their own words.
3. You then tell the story in your words.
4. Read the story again – and again have this person tell the story to you.

Once the story is memorized, this person can go to their relational stream, gather them and ‘tell the story’.

Work through the whole Gospel of Mark in this way – and this person will be equipped to tell and re-tell these stories (and so will you). The ‘person of peace’ will be the key to sharing faith and leading his or her whole household or community or village to Christ.

(3) FOR BIBLE WORKERS/GLOBAL MISSION PIONEERS:

Use of Bible study outlines – telling the story of Jesus each time:

Use of Bible seminars & evangelistic meetings:

4. **Grow ('all by itself')** - through service, making disciples & the Word.

After reading the Gospel of Mark, encourage the 'person of peace' with his or her *relational stream* to explore other Bible books – Acts, John, the Epistles, etc. Those within the *relational stream* gather for food and grow in their relationship with Jesus through reflecting upon the Word of God and in prayer.

Encourage these friends to follow Jesus and equip them to:

- Choose a Bible book: (after Mark – maybe Acts, John etc)
- Read 1 chapter each day:
- Form their own small group with friends or family:
- Use the **5 bookmark questions** as a basis for application/obedience:

John's Gospel explores all the great teachings of Adventist & Christian faith:

The being and nature of God	1:1-18
The Word of God	1:1-2; 5:31-47
Jesus - Creator & Saviour	1:3, 4, 10
Sanctuary ministry	1:29; 2:12-25; 6:1-15; 7:1-43; 19:28-42
Baptism	1:29-34; 3:5, 22-36
Human nature & Salvation	3:1-21
Forgiveness, new life & witness	4:1-38
Sabbath - life through Jesus	5:1-47
Death & resurrection to life	5:21-29; 11:1-44
Two resurrections	5:28-29
Resurrection on the last day	6:25-71
Holy Spirit - Counselor & Presence	7:25-43; 14-16
Commandments & grace	8:1-11
Real disciples - the 'church'	8:31-47
Sabbath - sign that Jesus is God	8:48-10:42
The glory of God & judgment	12:20-50
Foot-washing & Lord's Supper	13:1-38
Second coming of Jesus	14:1-3
The presence of Jesus - 'Christ in Us'	14:12-23
Prayer	17:1-26
Salvation story	18:1-20:9
Resurrection body	20:10-31
Great commission	20:21-23; 21:1-25
Restitution - restoration	21:15-23

Use seminars, workshops & evangelistic meetings to consolidate faith:

5. **Gather** people who are part of the relational stream.

Disciples seek to gather. This is the meaning of the word *church*.

Acts 11:19-26: Who planted the church in Antioch – and how was it planted?

WHAT IS A CHURCH? (Matt 16:13-21; 18:15-20; Acts 2:42-47)

WHO will lead the new church plant? Discuss the following possibilities –

- The natural leader:
- The planting team:
- Invited and itinerant preachers:

WHERE to gather? Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of –

- The home where the group has been gathering up until now:
- Other homes:
- The outdoors:
- Facilities that can be used without cost (for groups/worship):

WHAT type of church? Discuss the strengths and weaknesses of –

- Churches in communities
- Small & simple churches
- Multiple worship services
- Other

Key elements of a simple household churches –

- Food (keep it simple)
- Fellowship
- Participation
- Conversation
- Needs
- Encouragement
- Discussion around the Word
- Prayer
- Care and healing
- Planning witness – & to plant another church

Sustainability: Discuss these factors –

- Leadership within versus leadership from without
- Equipped disciples able to lead people friends to Jesus & multiply
- Facilities & debt burden
- Type of church plant
- Values – attitudes & beliefs

6. **Multiply** into new relational streams (fields) through the 'bridges of God'.

JESUS laid the foundations of a *sustainable* and *multiplying* movement.
What did he hand on?

PAUL: How did Paul multiply leaders and churches? Acts 19:1-20

OUR MULTIPLICATION PLAN: Every healthy church **reproduces & multiplies**.

Who are we equipping to plant another church?

Where will they plant?

Are they multiplying? –

a. Spiritual leaders:

b. Prayer:

c. Fishing ponds:

d. Disciples:

What environments cultivate multiplication 'movements'?

1. Encouragement (fan every interest)
2. 'Grand-parenting' (releasing)
3. Simple church models (reproducible)
4. Cultivate Holy Spirit presence
5. Search for another 'person of peace'

Steve Addison lists **five key factors** –

1. White hot faith
2. Commitment to a cause
3. Contagious relationships
4. Rapid mobilization
5. Adaptive methods

FUNCTIONAL STRUCTURES:

Personnel: Who will do the tasks and how?

1. How will decisions be made?

2. How will the church be organized?

Network: How will this gathering relate to the Field/Conference?

3. Is this a direct relationship or through a 'parent' church?

4. Is there a district pastor who encourages and coaches?

Finances: Why and how will funds be collected and used?

5. How will tithes and offerings be collected?

6. How will accounts and records be kept?

Legal: What moral, legal and ethical responsibilities need to be met?

7. What legal issues do we need to be aware of?
 - Working with Children

 - Safe Places

 - Boundaries

 - Insurance

Plan Evaluation and Feedback times:

1. Discuss this with you Field/Conference planting coordinator or President:

2. Some suggestions –
 - What do we need to change?
 - What ministry needs to closed or be placed in recess?
 - Where do we see the ‘fires’ of the Spirit ‘spotting’ in our community?
 - How do we ‘fan the fires’?
 - What are our strengths/weaknesses?
 - Are we connecting to other *relational streams*?
 - Are we multiplying – how many other churches are we currently planting?

Review: Five Foundation Scriptures

1. Disciples multiply in relational streams (Matthew 28:18-20)
2. Kingdom parables – working the four fields (Mark 4:26-29)
3. Evangelism, gathering & multiplication (Luke 10:1-24)
4. Holy Spirit activity (Acts 1:1-2:47)
5. Church is to be ‘the body of Christ’ (Phil 2:1-11)

CHURCH PLANTING PROJECT PLAN

Name:

Place:

Team: (usually 4)

1. Community: Describe the people you and place where you will work:

Can you identify a 'person of peace'?

2. Mission: Why do you need to plant this church? Why will it exist?

3. Bible purpose: List 3 or 4 scriptures that support your mission:

1. Matt 28:18-20

2. Matt 22:37-40

3. Rev 14:6-12

4.

4. Vision: What is your vision for your new church plant?

How many churches will your new church plant in the next two years?

Will you plant a second church in your town? Will you plant into the next village - and then a third and fourth?

Name the places –

5. Beliefs: List key beliefs that will define your church plant:

In Christian background places:

- 1 God Father, Son & Holy Spirit
- 2 Scripture
- 3 Jesus is our Saviour
- 4 Holy Spirit draws us to God
- 5 Second coming – Jesus is coming
- 6 Standard to live by (ten commands)
- 7 Sabbath – a gift from God
- 8 We make disciples for Jesus

In Muslim places:

- 1 Holy books
- 2 Faithful to God
- 3 Prayer
- 4 Obedient life (no unclean)
- 5 Judgment – Isa is coming
- 6 God forgives and saves

6. Values & Actions: List your values – and actions to cultivate them:

Values

Actions - examples

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- 6

7. Type of church: Describe the type of church you will plant:

- 1 Small
- 2 All members trained to make disciples
- 3 Plans to plant other churches
- 4

8. Discipleship path: List specific steps you will take to meet and disciple people:

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

9. Reproduction & Multiplication: Describe how you church plant will plant another church and multiply:

10. Feed Back: When & how will you evaluate whether God might be pleased:

Share this project plan with a number of people – including an experienced church planter or church-planting mentor – to get further ideas.

Submit this plan to your Conference/Field President and church planting coordinator –

Name:

Date:

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