Church Planting Institute
Biblical Principles Of Church Planting



# Church Planting Institute

**PO Box 5262 SCMC**
**NAMBOUR**
**QUEENSLAND 4560**
**AUSTRALIA**

**email: churchplant@bigpond.com**



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# Biblical Principles of Church Planting

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# BIBLICAL PRINCIPLES OF CHURCH PLANTING

## INTRODUCTION.

This Manual is written and designed to be part of **"THE CHURCH PLANTER'S TRAINING COURSE,"** a series of studies designed primarily for use within the local church. For maximum effectiveness it should be used in conjunction the other manuals that comprise this Course.

It is written primarily for use by Pastors and Church Planters in the great Frontier Missions Nations of Asia and Africa and the emerging world, although its usefulness is not restricted solely to them. It is also written mainly for those potential Church Planters who have never had the opportunity to avail themselves of any formal training in a Bible College or Seminary. It is dedicated to such persons with the fervent conviction that they can become part of the great Army of Reapers that God is raising up to gather in the tremendous harvest which the Scriptures have predicted for these days. I firmly believe that the most fruitful fields of the great End Time Harvest will be those of the so-called Third World Nations — the heavily populated nations of Asia and Africa and Latin America. Those countries that for long centuries have been dominated by the great pagan religious systems. In some special way, the attention of God's Spirit has been directed towards them at this critical period of history. Whilst many of the churches in the Western World appear to be in the grip of a lethargic slumber, those of the Third World are dynamically alive, vibrant, and eager to make a powerful impact for Christ upon their countries.

The prophet Joel predicted that in these days God would **"pour out His Spirit upon all flesh."** He would send the harvest rains in such great volume that it would be as "The former and the latter rain together in the same month." Amos said that "The plowman would overtake the reaper, and the treader of grapes him that soweth seed." The picture is of a time when a massive program of sowing and reaping will occur at one and the same time. No sooner has the seed been planted than the reaper will be on hand to gather the harvest.

Jesus Himself predicted that the "End of the Age, would be a great time of harvest." In harvest time there is work for everyone. The army of reapers swells in numbers as volunteers join them to ensure that the harvest is not wasted in the fields. This great End Time Harvest will not be reaped solely by the pastors and evangelists. They will need to be augmented by a great army of "lay people," who have been trained in the



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basic skills of harvesting and rushed into the fields in order to reap the harvest lest it should wither on the stalks.

Church Planting Institute is dedicated to the task of helping to prepare those labourers. We know that within every local church fellowship there are potential leaders who can help to gather in the harvest. These are the men and women we wish to help. To train and encourage them. To inspire and motivate them. To get them moving into their true calling. To raise up a vast company of reapers who will work in the harvest fields and gather precious lives into the Kingdom of God.

The C.P.I. manuals are written in a very simple, easily absorbable style. They are not intended to be profound nor a theological treatise. They are designed to equip and motivate lay persons enabling them to participate in the great harvest. These books are biblical, spiritual, and practical and we trust that they will help to produce workers who are also biblical, spiritual, and practical!

They are sent forth with the fervent prayer that all who study this course will eventually play some part in gathering the harvest. Solomon exhorts us in this manner, "Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with all your strength, for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom in the world of the dead," and remember that "the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the mighty." (Ecc. 9: 10, 11.) What he is saying is, "whatever you are called to accomplish, put everything into it while you have life and breath, and remember that you do not have to be someone uniquely special. You can succeed in what God wants you to do even if you are not some great and mighty person."

**Gerald Rowlands.** D. Min.



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**Chapter One**

# WHAT DO WE MEAN BY "CHURCH PLANTING?"

As we commence this study on "Church planting," it is necessary first to do three things.

1. To dispel some erroneous ideas about what constitutes a "church."
2. To define what is implied by the phrase "local church."
3. To try to simplify the whole approach to this vital subject.

## WHAT DO WE MEAN BY "CHURCH?"

For most people the word "church" means one of three things.
**Firstly,** a building in which people meet to worship God.
**Secondly,** people performing religious activities together.
**Thirdly,** A denomination. e.g. The Methodist Church.

**A Church is NOT a building.**

**It is a fellowship of Redeemed people.**

In that first instance, where a church is perceived to be a building dedicated to the worship of God, there are frequently many other features built into the picture. Most of these ideas are not from the Bible, nor the model of the early church, but from Western church tradition. I refer to the idea of a building which is designed and erected in a style suitable to preaching to a captive audience of worshippers. Associated with these traditional ideas are pulpits, platforms, aisles, altars, organs, and in the "Historic Churches," - naves, chancels, vestries, candles, confessionals, even steeples and spires, and a whole host other religious trappings. Unfortunately this concept has been freely "exported" from the West, and adopted in almost every nation where the Christian Gospel has taken root. This typically Western style of concept has helped to strengthen the conviction of many who perceive that "Christianity is a Western religion." I personally feel that it is very sad to see the Church of Christ represented in this manner. Christianity was certainly never intended to be a "Western religion." It was birthed in the Middle East and in Asia Minor and it was from there that the great missionary journeys were launched which eventually brought the Gospel to Europe and the Western world. Amidst all this emphasis, even Christ is usually been represented as a Caucasian. Many sacred paintings depict Him as a blonde haired, Caucasian type, which is far from the truth. His appearance would have that of a Middle Eastern Jew and the message He presented had strong overtones of classic Judaism. However, the Gospel was not solely for the Jews either. It is the message of God's love, and Christ's redemption for all mankind. The Gospel is the Good News for all men. Its message is to be preached in all the world for a witness to every creature.



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**THE CHURCH IS NOT A BUILDING.**

The first error in this concept is the idea that a church is a building. The second that it is a particular style and type of building designed to accommodate-date the religious activities alluded to in the previous paragraph. Let us make it very clear that a church is **NOT** a building of any kind. The Church of Jesus Christ is not comprised of bricks and mortar, nor of timber board or bamboo. **The true Church is comprised of PEOPLE,** saved by the grace of God through faith in Jesus Christ and His atoning work.

As we face the task of church planting, let is be firmly established in our minds that we are not talking about erecting religious buildings. This is certainly not the primary concern. It is perfectly possible, feasible and scriptural for a "church," to function fully without a religious building! In fact it may, in many instances, function more effectively in some facility which is not obviously religious, nor Christian. In some cultures it is much easier for people to attend some place which is not overtly Christian. It has also become extremely expensive in many places to erect a building, the cost of land and of building is exorbitant. It is also a fact that the religious style of building is not conducive to many activities other than preaching and congregational worship. I believe that the contemporary church needs to expand its activities beyond the traditional preaching and worship syndrome. It should be a centre for community activities too, but I will speak more about this later when we deal with the establishing of a local church.

**"CHURCH," DOES NOT MEAN PERFORMING CERTAIN RELIGIOUS ACTIVITIES.**

In order to move with the great harvest that God is planning to give, we need to break the mental mould we have of what constitutes a "church." Certainly we need to open our minds to new innovations and concepts that will supersede the old models, and particularly those models that are blatantly and obviously Western. One of the features of the new move of God will be churches that are culturally authentic and appropriate for their national setting. For example, the Church in Indonesia should be Indonesian, not Western. The Church in the Philippines should be manifestly Filipino. It should not be draped with Western trappings. Nor do these churches need to adapt Western styles of worship. For too long it has been perceived by missionaries that the culture of the people in "missionary nations," is inherently evil and should be completely abandoned. They have blithely substituted their own cultural trappings, i.e. Western world culture, considering them to be "more civilised," and therefore more Christian! In fact much of it is pagan in origin.

**WESTERN CULTURE IS NOT SACRED!**

Not only is Western Culture not sacred, in many instances it is down right decadent! Missionaries from Western Nations who have imposed their cultural baggage on to the peoples of their adopted nation have usually done them a grave disservice. There is nothing biblical or sacred about much of the Western culture, and there is an ugly brashness and humanistic pride about those who obviously feel that there is. Many missionaries who tenaciously cling to their native culture, wonder why they have such limited success amongst their adopted people. It is because in refusing to incarnate



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themselves into the life style of their adopted nation they intimate some measure of superiority that is unacceptable to those they would seek to influence.

**The "Western Church" model is:-**

**Non Biblical.**

- **Culturally inappropriate.**
- **A dying species.**

It is based largely on Intellectualism, Materialism, and Scepticism.

**WHAT THEN IS A "CHURCH?"**

The Greek word most frequently translated "Church," in the New Testament, is "Ecclesia." The Latin equivalent of this is "Ex-Calleo" meaning to **"call out."** So a church is a company of people who have been called by God. Out of the world system and into relationship and fellowship with Jesus Christ and with their fellow believers. Perhaps the simplest definition of a church would be,

> **"A company of like minded believers who meet together in Christ's name, to worship God, to edify one another, and to bring others into the Kingdom of God."**

Possibly the simplest description of a local church is the one which Jesus gives us in Matt. 18:20. **"For where two are three are gathered together in My Name, there am I in the midst of them."**

**THINK "CONGREGATIONS OR FELLOWSHIPS," RATHER THAN" CHURCHES."**

If we can get ourselves accustomed to the concept of congregations, rather than churches, we can more readily free our minds from the traditional humanistic ideas of "church," and focus instead on the biblical image of what constitutes a church.

Begin to think about **"Congregation Planting"** instead of **Church Planting,** then your vision will centre upon:-

- People, rather than buildings.
- Redemption, rather than religion.
- Infiltrating communities, rather than hiding in ivory towers.
- Building the Kingdom of God, rather than enlarging denominations.

Unfortunately there are not many churches that are mature enough to function on such a simple, yet biblical premise. The situation has been complicated by doctrinal positions, denominational affiliations, religious traditions, ecclesiastical practices etc. The criteria for membership in many modern churches has become complicated by requirements of doctrinal persuasion, liturgical practice, and a host of human traditions. Requirements for church membership have been made more and more complex and complicated through the years until we have strayed far away from the original New Testament pattern. One sometimes wonders whether the early church apostles would be able to obtain membership in many contemporary churches?

As we approach this vital subject of Church Planting I would like to encourage you to think of a church in its simplest, most basic form. I want us to try to get back to the model of the early church. Let's endeavour to visualise the local churches of the New



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Testament and pattern our thinking and planning upon them, purposing to plant churches that are as close as possible to the original pattern! Elsewhere in this manual we will discuss the nature and criteria of the early biblical model.

## KEEP IT SIMPLE SAINTS.

Most people have heard of the "Kiss Principle," which is generally rendered "Keep It Simple Stupid," but I am changing it to "Keep It Simple **Saints."**
One of the obvious differences between the teaching style of Jesus and that of most modern preachers is that Jesus took the most profound subject and made it delightfully simple, whilst many modern preachers take the most simple of subjects and make it profoundly complicated.

The "kiss principle," is meant to serve as a reminder that we often have the tendency to make things much more complicated than they really need to be. Effectiveness is not achieved by complicating issues but by simplifying them. We are going to try to keep the issue of Church Planting as simple as possible. In this way, many more people will be able to understand it and function in it. As those persons go out into the field their simpler approach and style is going to be appreciated and accepted by many more people.

**It was said of Jesus that the "common"**

**( average, ordinary ) people**

**heard Him gladly." Mark. 12: 37.**

- **Jesus identified Himself with the average person.**
- **He spoke their language.**
- **He did not condemn them**
- **He provided practical solutions for every day problems of life.**
- **He proclaimed "Good News" to them.**

## AIM TO IMPACT AND ATTRACT THE "AVERAGE PEOPLE."

The message and methodology of Jesus was not designed to appeal to an intellectual minority, or a religious elite, but was simple, plain, and easily understood by the masses. His ministry went right to the very heart of where His audience was. It appealed powerfully to a strong segment of the community. He was, to use a modern term, "on the people's wave-length." They eagerly anticipated His coming. They hung on to every word He spoke. They followed Him for miles around the country side. They pressed in upon Him at the water's edge. They neglected to eat their normal meals, so eager were they to feed their souls on the Bread of Life with which He fed them.

## WHAT DO WE MEAN BY CHURCH "PLANTING?"

This a term frequently used to describe the initiation, commencement, or pioneering of a new congregation or church. Obviously the idea of "planting," is an agricultural term which possibly evolves from the biblical emphasis on "ploughing, sowing,



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watering, reaping, harvesting, and conserving," all terms with which the people of Israel were extremely familiar. They were for the most part, a rural, agriculturally employed people and these concepts were very much a part of their life.
In addition to this, the analogy of planting has some important analogies that potential Church Planters should bear in mind.

In the process of planting we need to consider the importance of :-

- Finding the right ground in which to plant.
- Sowing the right seed in the right season.
- Preparing the land prior to planting, removing rocks and impediments.
- Breaking up the fallow ground.
- Sowing good seed into the good ground.
- Sowing into ground which has been softened by the seasonal rain.
- Caring for the crop. Fertilising it as necessary. Watering it regularly.
- Weeding.
- Diligently tending it until the time to harvest.
- Gathering in the harvest at the appropriate time and season.

We will consider these principles more carefully later in the manual when we discuss strategies for Church Planting.

**THE CERTAINTY OF HARVEST.**

A further encouraging idea from the concept of planting is the **certainty of harvest,** a principle and a process which God Divinely initiated from the beginning of man's presence on the earth. Gen. 8:22. - "While the earth continues, seed time and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night, shall not cease."

David also tells us, in Psalm 126: 6. "He that goes forth weeping, bearing his precious seed shall **DOUBTLESS** come back with rejoicing bringing his sheaves with him."

This powerful law of the inevitability of harvest has been built into every aspect of life on this planet. Amongst many lessons we may learn from it is the fact that if we sow, we **SHALL** reap. If we are diligent to carefully observe the Divinely instituted Laws of Nature, we will definitely reap a harvest. So with Church Planting, God has certain principles we must observe. Let's try to discover and consider together these principles so that "He that soweth and he that reapeth, may rejoice together." John. 4: 36.

**Please remember this:-**

**Church is not a building, it's a company of redeemed people.**

**Think of "congregations," rather than "churches."**

**Don't equate church with a particular pattern of religious activities.**

**Aim to impact and attract the average person. (There are more of them than any other kind!)**



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**Questions :**

1. **Can you name three things that would appeal to the average person?**
2. **Can you name three things that should attract people to your church?**
3. **Name three principles that one should regard when preparing for a natural harvest.**
4. **How might you apply these principles to planting a new congregation?**



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**Chapter Two**

# THE BIBLICAL PATTERN

As we seek for biblical principles of Church Planting, the obvious place to which we must first turn our attention is the book of Acts, the historic account of the founding of the early church. My personal conviction is that this is not only a historic record of the event, I believe it to be a "pattern" — a biblical model of how a church should be planted and established and how it should function. Let's turn our attention so some of the salient points.

## 1. THE PROMISE OF POWER. ACTS. 1:8. (DUNAMIS)

Jesus said, "But you shall receive power after the Holy Ghost comes upon you and you shall be witnesses unto Me in Jerusalem and Judea and Samaria, and unto the uttermost ends of the earth."

Here we have the first key to the book of Acts. A key that opens the door of our understanding to all that transpires in the following record. An indispensable factor without which we cannot expect to emulate the deeds of the early church. We ignore this principle to our own impoverishment. Which ever way one may wish to interpret this statement of Jesus, there is an inescapable conclusion that He was clearly referring to the disciple's need for a super-natural empowerment through the anointing or enduement of the Holy Spirit. Such an enduement was forthcoming in chapter two, and the evidences of it were clearly seen in the lives and ministries of the Apostles.

**It has frequently been said that**

**this book might have**

**better been named,**

## "the Acts of the Holy Ghost!,"

or more specifically, "some of the acts of the Holy Ghost." It has also been suggested that there is a profound significance in the fact that there is no "Amen," at the end of the book, indicating that this was not the end of His mighty Acts, "further chapters were still to be written. These subsequent acts fill the pages of church history. Many great Acts of the Holy Spirit have also been evidenced in the 20th Century and Bible predictions give us strong reasons to anticipate that the most dramatic manifestations of the Spirit's power will occur towards the end of this Age, and prior to the return of Messiah to earth.

The prediction of Jesus began to be fulfilled 50 days after His declaration, when on the Day of Pentecost the Spirit was poured out upon His disciples. From that time they also began to fulfil the remainder of His prophetic statement, becoming His witnesses in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria and ultimately to the literal ends of the earth.

## 2. THE IMPORTANCE OF PRAYER. ACTS. 1:14.

We must never forget that this history of Church Planting began in a prayer meeting! Nor should we ever underestimate the power and necessity of prayer as an essential and indispensable factor in every kind of spiritual activity, and particularly in Church Planting.



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Plans and programs are essential too, but these must be birthed in the place of prayer. It was as the leaders of the church at Antioch ministered to the Lord in fasting and prayer, that they received revelation and instruction concerning the first great missionary program.

If you are a potential Church Planter; conscious of the call of God on your life to engage in this type of ministry, then begin to pray earnestly about it. Spend quality time before God in prayer. Talk to Him about your calling, but even more importantly, wait before Him, listen for His voice, seek His direction. As you fellowship and commune with God in this manner, the Spirit of God will begin to quicken certain things to your awareness and understanding.

**It is before God in prayer,**

**that the Burden and Vision of His heart**

**is communicated to you.**

It is in this setting that He begins to lay a certain task upon you.

I have had several such experiences over the years. Probably the most dramatic of them being in January 1974. At the time I was the Senior Pastor of a church in Brisbane. I made a habit of fasting and praying through most of each January as a preparation for the coming year. On this occasion I had been fasting for several days and God was speaking to me about a number of things in my life. As I endeavoured to work through these issues I began to experience His presence in a very strong measure. Suddenly I became intensely aware of Southern Africa and a powerful desire came to pray for that area. The more I prayed, the more aware I became that God wanted me to go there. At first I thought that it would be for a short visit, but the more I prayed about it the more I realised that God was asking me to uproot my family and go to live there. Soon I was spending hours before God in prayer each day and the more I talked with Him, the clearer became the sense of direction in my spirit. By July I had tendered my resignation as pastor on the understanding that I would be leaving at the end of the year. Meanwhile, I began to make many of the necessary arrangements for our journey.

The next seven years proved to be the most fruitful and productive years of our ministry. We had the joyous privilege of seeing many new congregations planted. We were also privileged to train and prepare many others to successfully engage in Church Planting. Today I know of many churches in several different nations of Africa where there are thriving churches that we were directly or indirectly involved in planting.

The point that I am making is to emphasise the importance of prayer and the guidance that is so often made available to us at such times. Let me heartily encourage you to intensify your prayer life. Only God knows what surprising and exciting things may happen in your life as a direct result. This Church Planters Training Course is not primarily about methods and techniques, it is about spiritual ministry, of which the combustible fuel is prayer.

## 3 THE POWER OF THE SPIRIT. ACTS. 2: 1-13.

Suddenly, on the Day of Pentecost, the promise of Jesus was fulfilled with the arrival of the "Other Comforter." Immediately dramatic changes and trans-formations which were obviously a direct result of the new empowerment of the Spirit, began to occur. The most notable and obvious of these occurred in Peter.

His initial call to discipleship, recorded in Matt. 4: 18-22. was filled with promise. Jesus called him from fishing on the Galilee and promised him, "Follow me and I will make you a fisher of Men."



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Shortly afterwards, at Caesarea Philippi, Matt. 16: 13-20. he was greatly favoured and blessed to receive the heavenly revelation of the true identity and Messianic role of Jesus. "You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God." But sadly, a little while later, Jesus had occasion to rebuke him for his self confidence and presumption. Matt. 16: 21-23. In the weeks immediately prior to the Day of Pentecost, his life had evidenced some disappointing indications.

His denial of Christ, Matt. 26:69-75. marked a sad decline in his spiritual development, as he denied any knowledge of Jesus on three occasions. Further to this he returned to his previous calling as a Galilean fisherman, John 21:1-14.

At the crucifixion he is conspicuously absent. It would seem that his spiritual life is in a decided decline, but the power of Pentecost changed all that.

**After Pentecost he is a transformed person.**

Prior to this experience he appears to be somewhat cowardly.
Afterwards, he is courageous and bold.

Previously he was timid and afraid.
Afterwards he is fearless.

Previously he is self confident and boastful of self.
Now, his boasting is of Christ.

Previously he denies any knowledge of Jesus.
Now he boldly proclaims Him to the masses.

How typical of the abundant grace of God, that the one who had denied Christ three times, is chosen to be the spokesman on this important day at the inception of the Church!

## 4. THE POWER OF PREACHING.

One of the evidences of the Spirit's power upon Peter is his ability to preach the Word with power and authority. His proclamation becomes a model for us.
He preached in the power of the Spirit.
He preached under the anointing of the Spirit.
He preached the Word of God.
He preached Jesus, crucified, buried and resurrected.
He preached Jesus as the Son of God.
He preached Him as God's Messiah. (the Anointed one, the Christ)
He preached Him as LORD.
He preached the forgiveness of sins.
He preached repentance, water baptism and the infilling of the Holy Spirit.
He brought his listeners to a point of decision.
He clearly urged them to "save (separate) themselves from their untoward generation."
He saw his converts "added to the church." Acts. 2:41.

## 5. THE EMPHASIS OF HIS MESSAGE.

The crescendo of Peter's message was reached in V.36, when he proclaimed, "God has made that same Jesus, whom you crucified, both LORD and CHRIST."
It was this statement, beyond all else that he said, that powerfully arrested and convicted his audience. It brought them all to a point of serious decision and caused them to cry out "What shall we do?"



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**Had Peter given a title to his message,**

**it might well have been,**

**"Jesus Christ is Lord!"**

This must be the underlying theme of all our preaching and teaching too, for it is the foundational theme of the Gospel of the Kingdom. I know that Jesus is our Saviour, Healer, Burden bearer, Counsellor, Advocate and much more. But above and beyond all of these things, HE IS LORD. We compromise the message of the Kingdom if we proclaim Him as anything less than that. The preaching of His Lordship embraces all other aspects of His ministry yet announces that He is ultimately and supremely **KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS.**

## 6. HEART CONVICTION.

Acts. 2:37. tells us that the listeners were "pricked to their hearts." This is a quaint way of saying that they were brought under deep heart conviction. They were gravely disturbed. They were troubled in their spirits. They were agitated. They were convinced of their guilt before God and they cried out with some degree of distress and anguish, "please tell us what we must do to rectify the situation." They clearly recognised and acknowledged the need to make some appropriate response to God and were willing to do whatever was required.

One thing that appears to be noticeably and sadly lacking in evangelistic services today is "old fashioned heart conviction."

**We rarely see people disturbed and distressed today,**

**crying out fervently, "What must we do?"**

This is obviously due to certain factors and we would do well to try to examine what some of these reasons are. Let's briefly consider what some of them may be :-

a) Inadequate emphasis on prayer.
b) Insufficient Bible content in our messages.
c) The modern tendency to preach "sermons" rather than "messages from God."
d) A diminished anointing because of our reticence to apply forthright, uncompromised proclamation.
e) A fear of fully yielding to the proclamation dynamic of the Holy Spirit.
f) A reticence to make the personal application as strong as it should be.

## 7. THE POWER OF TRUE REPENTANCE.

When faced with the cry, **"What must we do?"** Peter did not compromise the requirement. He did not issue "decision cards," or require them to "repeat this simple prayer after me," nor sign a church membership card. He fearlessly and plainly confronted them with the need to **REPENT.**

**The forthright response of Peter was**

# "Repent!"

The call to repentance has largely been discarded in modern evangelism. It has been substituted with clich□s like, "give your heart to Jesus," or "accept Jesus as your own



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personal Saviour." But these are not biblical models. They are the clich□s we have invented to make it easier for people to receive Jesus. In substituting these ideas for the biblical emphasis on repentance we have done our listeners a grave disservice. The first word that Jesus spoke when He commenced His public ministry was "Repent." (Mark. 1:14.)

True repentance is the key that opens the door to salvation.
Repentance is essential to receiving true forgiveness and pardon.
It is essential to the healing of the inner man.
It is essential to life transformation.
It is a pre-requisite to the indwelling of Christ within.

Water Baptism is a meaningless religious ritual unless it is preceded by true repentance.

## 8. THE LORD ADDED THEM TO THE CHURCH.

Please make special note of the fact that it was THE LORD, who added converts to the Church, and that immediately after "the Lord added three thousands converts to the Church," the process of discipleship began. The new believers were exhorted and encouraged to :-

### a) Continue steadfastly in the Apostles' Doctrine.

The word "doctrine," in its original usage, had a different meaning than that which is generally applied today. The modern usage conveys the idea of a theological summary of what one believes on a particular biblical subject. However the original use of the word signified ""manner, or style of life." Thus the "Apostles' Doctrine," indicated the "Apostles' manner of life," or life style. It was not so much a theological statement of what they believed so much as the style and quality of life they lived because of what they believed. This use of the word doctrine is clearly seen in its application in 1 Tim. 4: 16. 1 Tim. 5:1,2. Titus. 2: 1-8.

For some three years Jesus had personally taught them how the Father wanted them to live. He had taught and modelled the principles of the Kingdom in their presence. He had encouraged and exhorted them to emulate His example, and to live as He did. To embrace and live by the same principles that He lived and taught. Thus the Jesus life style, became the Apostles' manner of life also.

Doctrine is not a religious, theological, academic or philosophical issue. It is a loving, practical, serving way of life. A lifestyle worthy of the name "Christian."

### b) In Fellowship.

Koinonia, the word translated "fellowship," means partnership. Partnership with God and with one another. It indicates a strong, consistent, reliable and enduring relationship. For example, it is used to depict the marriage relationship, i.e. the "strong partnership of marriage." It is also used to depict a business partnership in which the parties are wholly committed one to the other.

**The New Disciples were**

**WHOLLY COMMITTED to Jesus Christ,**

**and WHOLLY COMMITTED to each other.**

The Apostle John says that our partnership is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ, and ALSO WITH ONE ANOTHER. (1 John. 3: 7.)
The same quality of relationship that had been established between God and themselves, had also been established between the believers.



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When they were joined to God through Christ, they were joined to each other too.
When God became their Father, they became brothers and sisters.
Our relationship with one another is just as real as our relationship to God.
We cannot be related to God, without being related to each other.
We cannot be committed to God, without being committed to each other.
"He that says, 'I love God', but does not love his brother, is a liar." (1 John 4: 20.)
The members of the early church were wholly committed to God and to each other and this committed company was the Kingdom of God on earth.

**c) Breaking of Bread.**

When they "broke bread from house to house" each day, it does not necessarily mean that they celebrated Holy Communion. It means that they shared hospitality and meals together. They visited in each others homes, enjoying communal meals, getting to know each other better and solidifying their relationships. We can usually get to know a person much better over a meal than by sitting in church with them. Many Christians attend the same church for years but never really get to know each other beyond a superficial knowledge. How can we ever become willing to "lay down our lives for each other," if we do not even share hospitality together?

Their communal meals were also a sign of their Covenant Relationship. The making of a Covenant Relationship was usually accompanied by the sharing of a communal meal together and whenever they ate together, it enhanced that relationship and openly declared it.

**d) United prayers.**

The fourth thing in which they continued steadfastly together was in united prayers. There is an important sequence to observe here. It was precisely because they steadfastly observed the first three principles that they able to effectively function in the fourth area. True unity in prayer can only be achieved when the parties involved are properly related to each other.
United prayer is much more than merely having a number of people in one room together. Suppose we have fifty people praying in one room. Though they are all Christians, they are not necessarily united by that quality of relationship and mutual commitment that releases the tremendous power of a united petition. However, if those same Christians are steadfast in the Apostles' manner of life, common commitment, covenant relationship and sharing meals together, they develop a unity that is evident when they pray together. (Acts. 4:24.) When such people pray together the place is shaken by the power of God. ( Acts. 4:31.)

## 9. PRAISING PEOPLE. (ACTS. 2:47.)

This final verse in Chapter Two is extremely important. It outlines some imperative factors in the first church to be planted, namely :-

**a) The early Church was a Praising Church.**

It was clearly and easily recognisable as such. Praising God characterised that church. It was clearly identified by this element. There was obviously a considerable emphasis upon this priestly function. We should always encourage new converts, by teaching and example, to become people of praise. We should teach the members of the newly formed congregations to develop a strong emphasis on praise and worship. I personally believe this to be an essential factor if the remaining features of this verse are to be present.
Strong praise and worship is important in a church because it :-

- Releases the people spiritually.



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- Attracts a special anointing of the Spirit.
- Unites the people in harmony.
- Releases the joy of the Lord which is our strength
- Binds principalities and powers. (Psa. 149 : 8.)

**b) The Church enjoyed favour with the local population.**

The local populace had great respect for the Church. Just as Jesus had gained great respect and popularity with the average citizen, so His church enjoyed the respect and confidence of the people.

**c) The Lord added to the church daily.**

It was precisely because of the nature and disposition of the Church that God joined to it the many people who were repenting and turning to Him. I believe that God challenges a church thus; "When you are prepared to care for the people as I want them cared for, I will send people to you."

## 10. POWER ENCOUNTERS.

Acts 3. introduces us to a factor that became an intrinsic feature of the early church. Modern missiologists have termed it a "Power Encounter." It highlights the supernatural aspect of the Gospel. The authority, power and ability to minister supernaturally into a felt-need situation, to administer the healing, delivering power of God through the redeeming Name of Jesus. - "And His Name, through faith in His Name, has made this man strong," (healed, whole, well.) (Acts. 3:16.)

The importance of the Power Encounter cannot and should not be ignored. It was an intrinsic and indispensable factor in the effectiveness of the early church that cannot be underestimated.

**A Power Encounter occurs**

**when the Power of God**

**confronts the power of Satan.**

The power of God accompanies the proclamation of God's Kingdom. The power of Satan confronts it in the form of maimed humanity. A battle ensues, and victory and ascendancy through Jesus' Name, forces Satan to capitulate yielding the territory to the Kingdom of God.

**Some accompanying results of Power Encounters.**

**a) Signs follow the preaching of the Gospel, as Jesus predicted.**

(Mark. 16: 17, 18.) "And these signs shall follow them that believe; In My Name they shall cast out devils, they shall speak with new tongues, they shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick and they shall recover."

**b) Wonders and Miracles will validate the Authority of the message. Acts 2:22.**

"Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by Him in the midst of you."

**c) Meets real needs of people.**

The great variety of Power Encounters recorded in the Bible illustrate the many types of human needs which are ministered to through the Gospel.
The sick, infirm and afflicted are healed.



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Demoniacs are delivered.
Captives are set free.

**d) The Name of Jesus is exalted.**

Acts 3:16
´By faith in the name of Jesus, this man whom you see and know was made strong. It is Jesus' name and the faith that comes through him that has given this complete healing to him, as you can all see. (NIV)

**e) Many effectual doors are opened.**

Throughout the biblical history of the early church there are many recorded instances where the miracle power of God has opened effectual doors of utterance to the Gospel. How we rejoice that, contrary to the opinion of some, that power has been available ever since and is still available today. Throughout the world today there is a tremendous harvest taking place and multiplied thousands of people are entering the Kingdom of God. Scenes of great revival and accelerated church growth are taking place in South America, South Korea, The People's Republic of China, the former USSR and to a somewhat lesser degree in many other parts of the globe. In almost every case where dramatic growth is evidenced, the presence of effective Power Encounters are to be found.

**Almighty God is committed to**

**"Pour out His Spirit on All Flesh."**

I am personally persuaded that there is soon to be a greater harvest in-gathering than at any time in church history. I believe it will be a world wide phenomena in which God will "pour out of His Spirit, upon ALL FLESH." I am further convinced that it will be a revival characterised by mighty Power Encounters. I believe that many thousands of new congregations will be birthed and the doors to these incidences will be opened largely through the biblical keys of Power Encounters.

## 11. FROM ADDITION TO MULTIPLICATION.

In the early days of the Church there was exciting growth as God added new believers to the Church.
Acts. 2: 44
. "And the Lord added daily to the Church those who were being saved."

Acts. 5:14
"and believers were the more added to the Church."

However, when we reach Acts 6, we find the Church moving into a new accelerated dimension of growth, expressed as Multiplication. Acts 6:7. "And the number of disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem."
This illustrates the pattern of true revival that gathers momentum and accelerates from addition, to multiplication. Such growth patterns are extremely exciting but they can also bring their own problems for which we must find the biblical answers.

## 12. INTRODUCTION OF ADMINISTRATION. ACTS. 6:1-7.

As the early church grew numerically there came a greater need for adequate administration. In the initial stages, before this was in place, the church was functioning well with a minimum of emphasis on administration and organisation. But as the number of believers increased dramatically so the need for proper organisation became more urgent. Even the fact that this growth was occurring in the context of a spiritual revival, did not mean that the



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growth was without potential problems. People are people whether they are in a revival or not, and as such they need to be properly organised.

The Apostles recognised that some concrete steps must be taken and began to make provision for more staff and personnel to join them. They saw the need to :-

a) Prioritise their calling. "It is not wisdom that we should neglect our spiritual ministry in order to engage in administration." V.2.
b) Choose sufficient suitable fellow workers. e.g. Seven men.
c) Establish appropriate criteria. e.g. Full of Holy Ghost, and wisdom.
d) Recognise and appoint them. V.6.
e) Delegate specific responsibilities.
f) Issue appropriate authority.

The beneficial results of these measures was immediately obvious in the continued accelerated growth of the Church. Acts. 6: 7.
The Word of God increased.
The number of disciples in Jerusalem increased greatly.
A great company of priests became obedient to the Faith.

## 13. STEPHEN, THE FIRST CHRISTIAN MARTYR. (ACTS 7)

The new company of disciples, (deacons) initiated in Chapter 6. began to show fruit in several other ways too. Two of those appointed, namely Stephen and Philip, quickly moved on from organising the distribution of food to the role of preachers and miracle workers. Let's consider the case of Stephen first.

In Acts. 6: 8. we read,

**"Stephen, full of faith and power,**
**did great wonders and miracles**
**among the people."**

A short time earlier he had been thought suitable material to be a Church Administrator. (Acts 6:5) He had met the required criteria set for this role, being "of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom." He obviously functioned efficiently in this role, together with the other six men. But soon we discover him in another role, doing great wonders and miracles among the people. It seems quite obvious that he had been serving some kind of spiritual apprenticeship and that God had now "promoted" him. This underlines a principle frequently observed in the work of God . That God usually entrusts His work to those whose hands are already engaged in service for Him. If you want to become a servant of God, start serving Him somewhere now and in His time, He will promote you.

Unfortunately his new sphere of ministry was short lived. (Acts 7:54-60) Stephen, the newly ordained preacher became the first Christian martyr. Standing by, consenting to his death, was Saul of Tarsus. Who can tell how profoundly this incident affected him and how much his dramatic conversion might be attributed to the powerful message of Stephen and the courageous manner in which he prayed that "this sin may not be laid to their charge."

## 14. THE REVIVAL AT SAMARIA. (ACTS 8: 5-25)

The second of those two young administrators was Philip. Shortly after his appointment as a deacon we find him "going to Samaria, to preach Christ unto them." (Acts. 8:5.) Let us briefly examine some of the aspects of his successful ministry there.



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a) His sincere desire to serve God was evidenced in his willingness to serve as a deacon. (Acts.6.)
b) His appropriate and exemplary character. Of good report, (reputation), full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom.
c) His servant spirit, willing to wait upon tables.
d) He went down to the city of Samaria. His desire and willingness was translated into action.
e) He preached Christ to them.
f) They gave heed with one accord.
g) Hearing his words.
h) Seeing the miracles which he did.
i) Many were delivered from demonic forces.
j) Many were healed of palsy and lameness.
k) There was great joy in the city.
l) They believed his message concerning the Kingdom of God.
m) Many were baptised in water.
n) Many were filled with the Holy Spirit. V.17.
o) The revival reached many other villages of the Samaritans.

## 15. PHILIP'S SOUL WINNING ACTIVITIES. (ACTS 8:26-40)

In the middle of the great revival in Samaria the Angel of the Lord instructed Philip to leave Samaria immediately and journey towards the south, to the road that goes from Jerusalem to Gaza. In the natural this might have appeared to be folly. To leave the scene of a great revival and go to the desert even to minister to an important person as the Ethiopian Eunuch. God's ways are frequently beyond our understanding but as we look back on church history we can recognise the wisdom of God's strategy, for the conversion of this man led to the opening of a whole new area of the world to the Gospel.

We must always be sensitive to the voice of God and obedient to His every instruction. This can be SO important in the matter of Church Planting. If you should have a clear word of instruction from God, no matter how unlikely the prospect may appear, be obedient. More can be accomplished through one specific step of obedience than from years of human effort.

## 16. THE CONVERSION OF SAUL. (ACTS 9)

The greatest antagonist of the Church until this time was Saul of Tarsus. He persecuted the new believers without mercy, sending many of them to prison and not a few to their deaths. On the way to Damascus, with the intention of bringing believers bound to Jerusalem, he was dramatically arrested by the personal appearance of Jesus. Struck from his horse, and falling to the ground,

**he immediately surrendered**

**to the Lordship of Jesus saying,**

**"Lord, what will you have me to do?"**

Paul's conversion opened a glorious new chapter in the history of the early church. We read, " Then had the churches rest throughout all Judea, and Galilee, and Samaria, and were edified; walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, were multiplied." "the growth of the early church was under way and would soon spread to every part of the world.



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Paul's conversion experience was unique in many ways but there was a factor which ought not to be unique to him, “his immediate and complete surrender to Jesus as his Lord and Master. This is meant to be the pattern for all conversions. (Romans 10:9) "and confess that JESUS CHRIST IS LORD."

**QUESTIONS:**

1. **How important was prayer to the birthing of the early church?**
2. **In what ways did the Pentecostal experience transform Peter?**
3. **Name three things which Peter's Pentecostal message emphasised.**
4. **How important was repentance in the emphasis of Peter's message?**
5. **State three reasons why we do not see more evidence of repentance today.**
6. **In what four things did the early church steadfastly continue?**
7. **Give three reasons why Praise and Worship are important to a church.**
8. **Please name three things which Signs and Wonders produced in the early church.**
9. **Please name three things which the Apostles looked for in choosing Deacons.**
10. **Name five things that happened when Philip went to Samaria.**



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Church Planting Institute
Biblical Principles Of Church Planting

**Chapter Three**

# EVANGELISTIC MODELS IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

In the previous chapter we have briefly traced the birth and beginnings of the Church up to the conversion of Paul. We have seen some of the principles and methods employed by the Apostles as they preached Christ and began to establish local churches in Jerusalem, Judea and Samaria. We shall now continue on through the book of Acts, tracing the origins of some of the early church congregations and the manner in which they came into being.

## 1. THE CHURCH AT PHILIPPI.

In Acts. 16: 11-40. We find the record of Paul's initial visit to Philippi and the first contacts he found there. Three important events transpired during this first visit and probably all of them were instrumental to some degree in the formation of the church that was subsequently commenced there.

- He meets a remarkable woman.
- He exorcises a demonised girl.
- Experiences revival in the prison.

His visit to Philippi appears to be somewhat by chance for he and his party had initially wanted to go to Ephesus, or failing that, to Bithyinia, but God had indicated that it was not yet His time for either of those places. (Acts. 16: 6,7.)

Immediately afterwards Paul had a vision in the night of a man from Macedonia crying, "Come over and help us," and they began to make their way there arriving in Philippi, the chief city of that part of Macedonia.

### Coincidence, or God - Incidence?

It is interesting how "circumstances," can frequently result in a fruitful activity for the Kingdom. Sometimes certain events can appear to be 'coincidental', when they are really 'God-incidental.' I have experienced this several times. Visiting a place without having any real purpose in being there and then sensing that God wanted me to accomplish some task there. We need to be spiritually alert at all times.

### An Influential City.

Philippi was an important Roman colony, named after Philip of Macedon. Some referred to it as a "transplanted Rome." It served as a Roman garrison town for the area, and was also a great centre of commerce. Its location was extremely strategic for that particular area.

These are some of the things of which we need to be conscious as we prayerfully consider appropriate places in which we may try to plant new churches.

- The size of the population.
- The prosperity and influence of the people.
- The strategic location of the city.
- Its importance to the surrounding area.
- Its suitability as a base from which to later evangelise the locality.



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As we observe the journeys and ministry of Paul it becomes obvious that he deliberately chose to evangelise strategically placed and influential cities whenever possible so that he could then use them as a base from which the Gospel might spread throughout the surrounding areas.

**A Remarkable Woman.**

On the first Sabbath, Paul and his team went to the river bank where a prayer meeting was regularly held. It was here that they made the acquaintance of Lydia, a successful business woman who appears to be the leader of the group of women who prayed and worshipped there. Lydia was an excellent contact for a number of reasons :-

She had an open and receptive heart.

- She had a spiritual disposition.
- She was a respected and influential person.
- She was a successful and wealthy woman.
- She obviously had strong leadership qualities.

She had a large home, capable of housing the four men in addition to her household and for accommodating gatherings of believers.

Shortly after Paul's initial contact with her she and her family were baptised and Paul and his companions stayed in her home. Obviously this first contact with Lydia was extremely important and critical to the subsequent founding of a church in Philippi.

**Make sure that you prayerfully discover**

**the contacts that God may have prepared for you in a town or city**

**to which He is leading you.**

They are usually the key that will open wide the doors of opportunity and ensure the successful planting of a church there.

**A Power Encounter. Acts. 16: 16-18.**

As the new church was being established Satan endeavoured to discredit and ruin it. He tried to accomplish this through a demon possessed girl, who began to cry out "These men are servants of the Most High God, who show us the way of salvation." The words she spoke were true. What Satan was trying to do was to discredit the church by implying that this girl was associated with it, but Paul discerned his intent and delivered the young woman from the evil spirit.

**Once a new congregation is being effectively established,**

**Satan will frequently mount some**

**kind of attack against it, so be prepared!**

However, he often oversteps the mark and defeats his own purpose as in this case. Ultimately this successful Power Encounter served to further assist in the establishment of the Philippian church.

**Revival in the Local Prison. ( Acts 16: 23-34)**

Once a new work of God commences it is amazing how God begins to open more doors of opportunity and utterance. The imprisonment of Paul and Silas, which could have appeared to be a huge set-back for the church, eventually added to its growth through the dramatic conversion of the chief jailer and his family. This is undoubtedly one of many such incidents



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that caused Paul to declare, "The things which have happened to me have fallen out unto the furtherance of the Gospel." (Phil. 1:12.)

When one is committed to evangelism and church planting, it is exciting to see how frequently the "circumstances" of life fall into patterns favourable and conducive to the "furtherance of the Gospel." Opportunities exist all around us for the promotion and growth of the Kingdom and we need to keep spiritually alert to recognise them and to seize them for Christ.

## 2. THE CHURCH AT THESSALONICA. (Acts. 17: 1-9.)

The Church in Thessalonica was a direct result of the visit and ministry of Paul and Silas following their release from prison in Philippi. The journey from Philippi to Thessalonica was about 100 miles and a synagogue provided an excellent point of contact for the launching of this new work. Despite extremely strong resentment and opposition, the contacts they made persevered until a strong church was established there. Paul actually wrote 1 Thessalonians, to commend the faithful saints there for their dedication to Christ, each other, and the work of the Lord. There are several interesting things here that will interest potential Church Planters.

a) The Church at Philippi, which they had recently planted, sent money, on at least two occasions, to help with the Apostle's support as they laboured in Thessalonica. ( Phil. 4:15,16.)

b) Paul also helped to provide his own support by engaging in manual labour. (1 Thess. 2:9. 2 Thess. 3: 7-10.)

c) Although their ministry commenced in the synagogue, most of their converts were not from the synagogue but were idolatrous Gentiles. (1 Thess. 1: 9.)

d) The Apostles faithfully proclaimed the Crucified and Resurrected Jesus as the Messiah. (Acts. 17:3.)

e) They also proclaimed Jesus as King and taught concerning the Kingdom of God. This is abundantly evident in the charges brought against them, which accused them of teaching things that defied Caesar's decree, namely "that there is another king, one Jesus."

   This charge clearly indicates that Paul taught "the things concerning the Kingdom of God," as he did in many other places. As the Thessalonian epistles later show he also proclaimed that the Messianic Kingdom will be established at the return of Christ. (1 Thess. 3:13. 5: 1-11. 2 Thess. 1: 5-10. 2:14. cf. Luke. 23:2. John. 18: 33-37.)

f) Amongst those who initially responded to their message were some Jews, many God - fearing Greeks, and not a few prominent women.

### THE THESSALONIAN MODEL

Acts 19 : 1-6. 1 Thess. 1, and 2.

The Epistles provide for us a fascinating glimpse into the life of the early church in its various locations as it spread across Asia Minor and into Europe. Paul and numerous of the other Apostles were now constantly engaged in missionary journeys and wherever they went local churches were planted. In this early period of their history the churches were still in their infancy and needed regular visits from the apostolic bands.

The churches were still quite basic, simple and unsophisticated, without complex structures or organisation. The believers were bound to each other by their common faith, love and hope, rather than by legalities of church membership and formal



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structures. This can be attributed to some degree to the fact that they were still quite young and undeveloped. However, I believe that there is also an indication here of something that God actually intended to remain in the church throughout the ages. He intended that it should be, and remain, an **Organism,** rather than an **Organisation.** He wanted the church to retain some essential aspects of its primitive simplistic nature.

Obviously growth demands more organisation and management. The more people you are responsible for, the more you need to organise things properly to avoid disorganised chaos. But there are ways and methods by which this can be accomplished without sacrificing the spontaneity, simplicity and enthusiasm which typified those early days.

The introduction of administrators in the Jerusalem church, (Acts 6: 1-7) undoubtedly set a pattern for many of the other young churches and in this model we see a marriage of simplicity and efficiency. We witness principles of appointment and delegation that apparently solved the problems that arose in the church and yet managed to retain an uncomplicated simplicity of methodology. It was also a system that obviously provided the right kind of training and experience to graduate many of the "deacons," into the Apostolic ministry. e.g. Stephen and Philip.

Although the New Testament churches were quite distinct and different from one another, there were still numerous common denominators that became typical of those early churches and from which we can still learn much in this modern day.

Let's take a brief look at the planting and early nurturing of this infant church in Thessalonica.

## 1. THE CITY OF THESSALONICA.

The arrival of Paul and his companions in Thessalonica is more than coincidental. There are some solid reasons why Paul and his companions decided to plant a new church in this city, and why God motivated Paul through a vision of a man from Macedonia, exhorting them to **"Come over and help us."** ( Acts. 16 : 9,10.)
It seems clear that Paul had developed a mission strategy for world evangelism and that he used this strategy as frequently as possible and tried not to deviate from it. He refers to his strategy in 2 Corinthians 10: 14-16. alluding to it as his "rule" or "measure," a set of principles to which he held when endeavouring to **"preach the Gospel in regions beyond."** (V.1.6.) Part of his strategy appears to be as follows :-

He planned to preach in new places where the Gospel has not previously been preached. "and not to boast in another mans line of things made ready to our hand." (2 Cor. 10: 6b.)

"And so I have made it my aim to preach the Gospel, not where Christ was named, lest I should build on another man's foundations." (Rom. 15 :20.)

He went to large, strategic centres, establishing a church there and using it as a base from which to evangelise that region. He did not plan to go to every place himself but to establish a strong centre in a strategic city and trust that God would raise up labourers and ministers from that city to go into the surrounding areas with the Gospel.

It was for this reason also that he aspired to visit Rome. (Rom. 15:22)

It was also because of this strategy that he established a church at Antioch so that from there he could reach into the vast area surrounding that city. ( Acts 11: 19-26)



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**a) It Was The Capital City.**

Thessalonica was the capital city and commercial centre of Macedonia. It was also the chief seaport of this Roman province and ranked equally with Corinth and Ephesus, the main ports of Achaia and Asia.

**b) It Was A Large City.**

The population of Thessalonica at that time is thought to be approximately 200,000 people which was a very large population in those days. This factor alone constituted a tremendous challenge. The great mega-cities of our day also present an enormous challenge to the contemporary church. One of the reasons why this is so is the very fact of the multitudes who live there. Where there is a huge population there is a tremendous challenge to evangelise that people. Their sheer weight of numbers constitutes a challenge. Many of the largest cities of our day are virtually unevangelised. This is particularly true in the people's Republic of China and other great cities of Asia.

**c) It Was Strategically Located.**

The city was located on the main route from Rome to the Orient and thus had direct and regular contact with many other important cities that could be easily reached either by land or sea. This made the possibility of travelling in and out of the city to adjacent areas very feasible and convenient.

**d) It Had a Cosmopolitan Population.**

Besides the native Greeks, many Romans lived here. There were also many people from Asian and Oriental cities, and many Jews and proselytes to Judaism. The local synagogue was an influential one catering for the strong Jewish population and also for the numerous Greek proselytes who lived there. This also constituted a challenge and an attraction for Paul. One of the reasons why Jerusalem had been such an ideal launching pad for the church was its cosmopolitan population. This was particularly true during the Feast of Pentecost when there were devout Jews present from many parts of the world. Their gathering together in Jerusalem was opportune for the launching of the church because the new converts had come from these many different places. Once they had been discipled and grounded in the Faith, persecution scattered them in every direction and wherever they went they proclaimed the Gospel. So the church at Jerusalem was not a simple local church comprised of Israeli Jews, it was a diverse, cosmopolitan congregation. Many of these converts were ultimately to take the Gospel back to their homelands and to their own cities.

**e) It Was a Renowned Commercial and Trade Centre.**

Its strategic location and accessibility by land or sea made Thessalonica a favoured and important commercial and trade centre. The many businessmen who lived there, together with many others who passed through from time to time, made it extremely attractive to other traders and also to Paul and his missions strategy.

## 2. THE MISSIONARY TEAM.

Paul first preached in Thessalonica during his second missionary journey. He was accompanied by Silas, Timothy, Luke and possibly several others. Having such a team is an immense advantage. (Obviously if you had such men as these in your team, you would expect something mighty to happen!)

However, even though your team may not be comprised of such illustrious ministers as these, you will still benefit enormously if you are able to assemble a team. Some of the obvious benefits of team ministry are :-



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- A greater concentration of spiritual maturity and ministry.
- A greater variety of ministries, evangelists, pastors, teachers etc.
- More prayer power is available to you.
- There is mutual encouragement.

Let us consider for a moment the nature and characteristics of these workers as perceived by the Thessalonians.

- They had already suffered for the Gospel of Christ. (1 Thess. 2:2)
- Their motives were pure. (1 Thess. 2:3)
- They did not use empty flattering words. (1 Thess. 2:5)
- They were not covetous. (1 Thess. 2: 5b)
- They were not burdensome to the people. (1 Thess. 2; 6)
- They were gentle with the new believers, as a children's nurse with her charges.
- They imparted their souls, as well as the Gospel. (1 Thess. 2: 8)
- They were also firm, as good fathers should be. (1 Thess. 2: 11)

All this, that their converts might "Walk worthy of God, who had called them to His Kingdom and glory."
(1 Thess. 2:12.)

## 3. THE MANNER IN WHICH THE GOSPEL CAME TO THEM. ( 1 Thess. 1:5.)

### a) It Came By Word.

The Good News must inevitably be shared in word. There must be a communication, proclamation, and explanation of the Good News and this involves verbal or written expression of the message.

### b) But Not In Word Only.

Having just stated that the Gospel must be conveyed by word, we must now also add that the word alone is not sufficient. There are necessary accompaniments to that word in order for it to be fully effective.

### c) It Came Also In Power Of The Holy Spirit.

The message was conveyed in the energy, power and authority of the Holy Spirit.

### e) It Came With "Much Assurance."

Initially the "much assurance'" refers to the messengers who brought the good news, they were personally fully assured of the authenticity and validity of the message they brought. Some of the reasons why they were so confident were :-

- Their personal experience of the power and effectiveness of their Gospel.
- The results they had seen everywhere the Gospel had been proclaimed.
- Their message was thoroughly biblical.
- The Holy Spirit gave them assurance wherever they proclaimed their Gospel.

The recipients can only experience assurance if the messengers are themselves assured.
"If the trumpet gives forth an uncertain sound, who will give heed to it?" (1 Cor. 14: 8)



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## 4. THE RECEPTION OF THE GOSPEL. (1 Thess 1:6)

### a) They Received It In Much Affliction.

The advent of the Gospel into Thessalonica aroused considerable antagonism, persecution and affliction. They new believers were made the targets of venomous attacks from the unbelievers. It is amazing how such persecution can serve to strengthen the roots of an infant church. The very powers that would seem to threaten the existence of the church, become the mortar that cements the believers together.

### b) With Joy In The Holy Spirit.

Persecution without, but joy within, has frequently been a hallmark of true faith. Joy from the Holy Spirit is not dependent on external circumstances. The Holy Spirit does not only rejoice when things appear to be going well. He rejoices at all times, knowing that the ultimate triumph of the Gospel is inevitable. As we allow the Spirit free expression within us, He manifests that joy in our lives.

### c) They Turned From Idols.

Their lives and life styles were completely transformed. Whereas previously had been captivated and enslaved by idols, they had now turned from (repented of) idol worship. The message of salvation had liberated them from the captive spirits of their idols and freed them to worship the one, true and living God.

### d) They Now "Served" The Living God.

There is a parallel link between the two conditions that both compares and contrasts them. i.e. "They had turned God from idols to serve the true and living God." As they had once been dedicated and devoted to their idols, now they were dedicated and devoted to the living God. With a similar yet even greater zeal than they had held for their idols, they now enthusiastically gave themselves to the service of God.

### e) They Anticipated The Return Of God's Son From Heaven.

They lived in the light and consciousness of Christ's return. Not in the sense that they were "all packed up and ready to go," but rather that they conducted their lives with an awareness that Christ would one day return and they would all stand before His judgement seat to give account of their works for Him. This attitude has a powerful cleansing and therapeutic effect on one's spiritual life. The Apostle John says, "Whoever has this hope, purifies himself even as He (Christ) is pure." (1 John. 3:3.)

## 5. THE CONVERTS RESPONSE TO THIS.

The Thessalonians were fortunate to have such exemplary men as their spiritual mentors, for they became followers of them and of the Lord, and thus became examples to all the believers in Macedonia and Achaia, and wherever the story of their faith was heard. (1 Thess. 1;8.)

Three characteristics of these new believers were clearly evidenced.

### a) Their "Works Of Faith."

Literally, "the works produced as a direct result of their new found faith." While it is true that the faith which saves us is without works - (Eph. 2: 8,9.) it is also equally true that, being saved by faith, we are then ordained to produce good works as God has previously purposed. (Eph. 2 :10.) James tells us that "Faith, without such works is dead." (James. 2: 20.)



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**b) Their Labours Of Love.**

Their love for Christ produced a love for others too. Not a love expressed in words alone but one so genuine that it inspired labours in behalf of the objects of that love. Paul calls this, "serving the true and living God." (v.9.) Serving God is not wholly accomplished in spiritual service directly to Him, but in practical labours on behalf of our fellow men who are also the objects of God's love. Thus we serve the Lord, as we serve one another.

**c) Their Persistent, Endurance.**

One of the intrinsic aspects of faith is faithfulness. True faith endures and persists, even in the face of opposition and persecution.

**d) The Sounding Forth Of Their Faith. (1 Thess. 1:8.)**

One of the biblical indications that a people have truly received and responded to the Gospel is the fact that the Gospel is then sounded forth by them to others. The word translated "rang out', or "sounded forth," could also be rendered, "reverberated" -as a loud noise reverberates and echoes forth.

Paul now saw Thessalonica as a relay station for the Gospel. The message had been passed on from Jerusalem, Judea, Asia Minor and now to Europe. The Thessalonians had not only received the Gospel for themselves, they had become a relay station from which the Gospel would continue to be broadcast to other regions beyond. The church that receives the Gospel is under Divine obligation to it pass it on. One of the clearest features of the New Testament churches is exactly this and any contemporary church that does not actively and forcefully engage in missionary activities forfeits the right to regard itself a New Testament church.

## 3. PAUL'S MINISTRY AT ATHENS. (Acts. 17: 16-34.)

Athens, the world centre of Hellenism, was a focal point of culture, philosophy, religious ideas, and idolatry. Paul was deeply distressed to observe that the intellectual capital of the world was fostering idolatry. His strategy and approach into this complex and formidable situation is extremely interesting to observe and something from which we can learn some vital lessons. Notice the "contextualisation" of his message. (The manner in which he ensured that his message was appropriate and fitting for the situation in which he was called to preach.)

**His approach was initially on two fronts:-**

**a) In the synagogue:** where he sought to prove from the Old Testament Scriptures, that Jesus was indeed the Messiah. (Paul **reasoned,** conversed and discussed with them.)

**b) In the market place,** (The Agora, -the Civic Centre) where philosophers gathered to present and debate their views, Paul **disputed -** (to toss ideas back and forth) with them.

**He did not preach to them.** (he reasoned, debated, and disputed)

**He did not use the Scriptures formally as in the synagogue.** (They did not recognise the Scriptures as a basis of authority.)

**He quoted some of their own poets and writers.** (V.28.) Using their own writers to convince them of the truth. Thus contextualising his approach to them.

**He began "where they were."**

**He sought to commend them.** Observing that they were very religious.

**He met them on their own ground.** They loved to debate, so he debated with them.

**He used ideas with which they were familiar.**

**Under the guise of philosophical debate he preached a sermon.**



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- Discussing the "unknown God," whom they worshipped. V.23.
- Affirming that He is actually the God who created the world and everything in it. Vs. 24-29.
- That God now commands all men, everywhere to repent. V.30.

  That a day of judgement is coming. V.31.

Among those who heard and believed Paul was one of the leading figures among the philosophers, one Dionysius, known as an "Areopagite."
Some might regard Paul's ministry at Athens to be a failure because there is no record of a church being established there. However this was certainly not the failure of Paul's approach or message, but because of the stubbornness of their hearts.

## 4. THE CHURCH AT CORINTH. (Acts. 18: 1-18.)

Paul left Athens and went to Corinth. Although the cities were only 50 miles apart geographically, they were poles apart in other ways.

- Each city is different.
- Each has its own character and characteristics.
- Each requires a different approach.
- We must be aware of this as we seek to strategise for Church Planting.

Athens was a centre of culture, learning and philosophy.
Corinth was a centre of commerce, materialism, and gross Immorality.
It was also a centre for the worship of Aphrodite, the goddess of love, in whose name immorality was freely indulged in. There were said to be 1,000 temple prostitutes there.

Once again Paul worked with his own hands to support himself. He lived and worked with Aquila and Priscilla who were also "tent makers." It is this trade of Paul's that has given rise to the modern missiological term, "tent making," to describe the concept of working in one's trade or profession in order to :

Gain access to certain countries which are restricted to missionaries.

- To financially support oneself in that place.
- To add to the productivity and viability of that nation.

Paul commenced his ministry in the synagogue and amongst the Jewish community and some Greeks, who evidently associated with the synagogue. His message was the one he had learned on the Damascus road and in Arabia, that Jesus is **LORD AND MESSIAH.** (Acts. 2;36. 3: 18,20. 17:3. 18: 28.)

We are not sure just how long Paul spent in Corinth, possibly some eighteen months. During this time a sizeable church was established and Paul obviously taught them extensively. His later epistles are largely correctional in nature, seeking to rectify some of the errors that had crept into their activities. They also indicate though how large a body of truth he had originally shared with them during his stay there.

## 5. THE CHURCH AT EPHESUS. (Acts. 19:1-20.)

Once again, upon his arrival in Ephesus, Paul discovers prospective believers, this time, "disciples of John the Baptist," by whom they had been baptised. They had not yet heard about the Holy Spirit. Paul built on the teaching they had received from John, explaining that Jesus was the One of whom John had been a fore-runner. He then baptised them again, this time in the Name of Jesus, laid his hands on them and prayed. Whereupon, "the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spoke with tongues and prophesied." ( V.6.)



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**The Theme of Paul's ministry. (Acts. 19:8.)**

"Paul went into the synagogue, and spoke boldly, disputing and persuading them of the things concerning the Kingdom of God." The consistent theme of Paul's ministry is things concerning the Kingdom of God. This inevitably includes:-

- That Jesus is the crucified, resurrected and glorified Son of God.
- That He is the promised Messiah.
- That He is King of Kings and Lord of Lords.
- That He has brought God's rule to earth.

  That He will return to rule the earth from the Throne of David.

Paul remained in that region for some two years during which time "all those who dwelt in Asia, heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks." (V.10.)

## 6. PAUL'S TESTIMONY BEFORE AGRIPPA. (Acts. 26: 1-32.)

Paul had already made his defence before Festus and now he presents it to Agrippa. He realises that in certain circumstances there is nothing more powerful or effective than one's own personal testimony to God's saving power through Christ. His testimony contains several parts :-

**a) He sincerely complimented Agrippa. Vs. 1-3.**

Whenever this is possible, do it. Compliment your listeners on some issue which is honestly praise worthy. This establishes a good, positive rapport. It is much more productive than antagonising one's audience.

**b) He spoke of his early life as a Jew. Vs. 4-11.**

**c) He described his antipathy towards the Christians. Vs. 9-11.**

**d) He described his dramatic confrontation with Christ on the road to Damascus. Vs. 12-18.**

**e) He powerfully applied his experience to Agrippa himself. Vs. 27-32.**

He did this so effectively that Agrippa then remarked, "Almost you persuade me to be a Christian."
(Acts.26:28.)

**f) He endeavoured to "draw in the net," V.29.**

"I would to God that not only you, but all who hear me this day, were altogether such as I am, except for my handcuffs."

## 7. PAUL'S VISIT TO ROME. (Acts. 28: 16- 31.)

We conclude these brief insights into the growth of the early church with some comments about Paul's stay in Rome, where he was under house arrest for some two years. During this time he was allowed his own hired house and was free to receive all who came unto him, "preaching the Kingdom of God, and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ, with all confidence, no man forbidding him."

The phrase "The Kingdom of God," includes the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ but also includes a strong prophetic reference to Christ's reign over the nations in the eternal future. It definitely has a futuristic aspect and is eschatological in emphasis.



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## LEARNING ACTIVITIES:

1. **What three events helped to establish a believing community at Philippi?**
2. **Give three characteristics that Paul discovered in Lydia. Why was she an excellent initial contact?**
3. **How do we know that Paul preached the Kingdom of God in Thessalonica?**
4. **What must we emphasise to proclaim the Kingdom of God?**
5. **How did Paul's approach in the Synagogue at Athens differ from his method in the civic centre?**
6. **What was the theme of Paul's ministry at Ephesus? Name 3 things this might include.**
7. **Give three features of Paul's testimony to Agrippa.**



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**Chapter Four**

# RIGHT MOTIVES FOR CHURCH PLANTING

It is essential that everything we do for God springs from a right motive. This is particularly true in respect of Church Planting. If our desire to plant a church springs from a wrong motive, we will build that church on a false foundation and serious problems are absolutely inevitable.

Some may question the very idea that one might ever do this. They may ask, "Surely the very desire to work for God and certainly to engage in the arduous and sometimes thankless task of pioneering a church can only be a good one." It is true that Paul thanked God that Christ was being preached, even if sometimes it was motivated by "envy and strife." (Phil.1: 12-18.) Nevertheless it is most desirable that Christ be preached out of a good, sincere, pure motive. For whatever spirit the message is preached in, conveys itself to the recipients.

**If we wish to lay a good foundation,**

**right motives are absolutely essential.**

## FIRSTLY LET'S ASK OURSELVES WHAT MIGHT BE SOME OF THE WRONG MOTIVATIONS THAT WE COULD HAVE .

### 1. PRIDE.

It was this weakness that brought about the downfall of Lucifer. (Isa. 14: 12-23. Ezek. 28: 12-19.) He was originally an important servant of God, but pride lurked in his heart and eventually destroyed him. Pride has been the instrument of destruction that has ruined many other servants of God. Whatever the eventual circumstances of their failure, it is usually pride and ego that pave the path of destruction. Human pride can work in many detrimental ways, and spiritual pride is even more devastating. Such pride can be an underlying motivating force that causes a person to commence a church. Their pride drives them relentlessly, but any church found upon human pride and ego is destined to disappointment and failure.

### 2. SELF AMBITION AND THE DESIRE TO SUCCEED.

Many people are driven by the desire to succeed in life and to accomplish something that will bring them to the attention of a public. If such a person be a Christian, and that self characteristic is not dealt with, they may well see the opportunity to commence and pastor a church as a means to gratify their ambition for accomplishment. Although commencing a new church is by no means an easy task, it is an easier way than many to achieve a measure of success that wins some public recognition.

### 3. MAKING A NAME AND A REPUTATION.

In any church group or denomination there is a certain recognition of Church Planters as the "Movers and Shakers," of their group. They are somehow perceived to be more adventurous, more daring and more colourful than their peers who are content to shepherd a flock. Jeremiah asks,

**"Do you seek great things for yourself?**

**Seek them not!"**



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A secret desire for such recognition can sometimes be mixed with a more sincere desire to genuinely accomplish something for God. However, we need to prayerfully ensure that our motives are not mixed but pure and that our highest intention is that God may be glorified through our ministry.

## HAVING THE RIGHT MOTIVES.

## NOW LET'S CONSIDER THE RIGHT KIND OF MOTIVATION.

### 1. TO MAKE CHRIST KNOWN AMONG THE HEATHEN.

This became the consuming passion of Paul's life, to know Christ, and to make Him known, and it should be our greatest desire and ambition too. The underlying reason for all our preaching and teaching should be to bring people to a knowledge of Jesus Christ. For the unconverted that they might know Him and His saving grace. For the believers and saints, that they know Him more intimately and deeply.

### 2. TO EXALT HIM AND MAKE HIS NAME GREAT.

"There is no other Name given on earth amongst men by which they might be saved, but the Name of Jesus." (Acts. 4: 12.)

"And His Name, through faith in His Name, has made this man whole." (Acts. 3: 16.)

"That at the Name of Jesus every knee should bow and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord." (Phi. 2: 11.)

### 3. TO ACCOMPLISH THE DESIRE OF HIS HEART.

Isaiah says of the Suffering Servant, "He shall see the results of the travail of His soul and shall be rewarded." (eminently satisfied)
God the Father invites the Son, "ask of Me and I will give you the heathen for an inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for your possession." (Psa.2:8.)
When we engage in evangelistic ministry and soul winning activities, bringing the heathen to a saving knowledge of God and His grace, we help to fulfil the desires of the Saviour's heart.

### 4. TO BRING PEOPLE TO THE SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS.

The greatest thing we could ever do for any person is to bring them into a knowledge of Jesus Christ and His wonderful salvation. There is no greater way in which we could enrich or bless their lives than this. Which is precisely why our calling as preachers of the good news, is the highest and greatest calling on earth. Jesus said, "What shall it profit a person if they should gain the whole world and lose their soul?" If your neighbours should gain the whole world, but did not know Christ and went forever to a lost eternity, their whole life would profit them nothing.

### 5. TO SEE PEOPLE ENTER THE KINGDOM OF GOD.

Anyone who has ever been privileged to preach the Gospel and to see people receive Christ and enter the Kingdom of God as a direct result have experienced the greatest thrill in life. What a joy to see people brought - "Out of the authority of darkness, into the Kingdom of God's dear Son." How rewarding to see their lives dramatically changed, enhanced and enriched, through receiving the grace of God. What a blessing to have people say, "It was your preaching that brought me to a decision to receive Christ as my Saviour and Lord." It is wonderful here on earth when people approach you to tell you such things, but how much greater it will be in eternity should they say, "Were it not for the fact that you came and preached Christ in our community, I may not have been here!"



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### 6. TO MINISTER HEALING TO THE WHOLE MAN.

It is also a tremendous privilege to bring healing to the sick in Jesus' Name. Wherever the Gospel was proclaimed by the early church, people received healing through the power of God. And Jesus is till the same today. If God has blessed you with a message and a ministry which includes the ability to bring healing to the sick and afflicted, what a blessing and privilege that is! In His Name the sick may be healed, lepers cleansed, cripples walk, and the demonised delivered. The Apostles of old preached a Full Gospel message of salvation, healing and deliverance and the message has not changed.

### 7. TO SEE GOD'S KINGDOM EXTENDED HERE ON EARTH.

Jesus taught His disciples to pray, "Your Kingdom come, Your Will be done on earth as it is in heaven." (Matt. 6: 10.) Every time we plant a new church anywhere in the world, the Kingdom of God comes and His Will is done on earth as it is in heaven. With the planting of every new church we are taking territory from Satan and advancing the growth of God's glorious Kingdom amongst men. In so doing we are helping to prepare the way for the return of the Lord and the unveiling of His Kingdom rule.

### 8. TO FULFIL OUR CALLING AND MAKE FULL PROOF OF OUR MINISTRY.

2 Tim. 4:5. Paul exhorts Timothy, "Do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of your ministry." Not every pastor is called to be an evangelist per se, but every preacher can "do the work of an evangelist," in effectively preaching the Gospel and bringing people to Christ. Whether we are pastors, teachers, apostles or prophets, we can do the work of an evangelist and thus make our ministry fully effective.

### 9. TO WIN A CROWN OF REJOICING.

For every Soul Winner or evangelist there is a special eternal award available. It is called the "Crown of Rejoicing." (1 Thess 2:19) That Crown of Rejoicing, is the privilege of seeing people in God's eternal presence whom we had the joy of witnessing to effectively. Paul says, "For what is our crown of rejoicing? Is it not the sight of you in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ, at His coming? **YOU ARE OUR GLORY AND OUR JOY."**

### 10. TO HEAR JESUS SAY, "WELL DONE, GOOD AND FAITHFUL SERVANT."

Please notice the criteria for this reward. It is not success, great achievements**,** or being the pastor of a huge congregation. The reward is given for being a "good and **faithful servant."**

## PLANTING WITH THE RIGHT MOTIVE.

**"Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it." (Psa. 127: 1.)**

As we examine the matter of motive, we need to seriously ask ourselves, "What is my true purpose in desiring to plant a church?" "What do I really hope to gain from it?" Here are some good positive motives and purposes:-

### 1. CHURCHES ARE THE "BUILDING BLOCKS" OF THE KINGDOM.

In Matthew 16: 18. Jesus declared, "I will build my Church." He is the real church builder and we are only successful as we function as co-labourers together with Him. He is not building His Church with bricks and mortar but with the "living stones" - redeemed people. He builds them into local churches, integrating lives together and causing them to grow up together into Him.



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## 2. CHURCHES ARE THE LOCAL BRANCHES OF THE CHURCH UNIVERSAL.

Each local functioning body of believers is a branch of the great universal church over which Christ is the sovereign Head. Each local church should fit into its geographical and cultural setting. This is one of the reasons why God allows such a great variety of churches to flourish. There is something for everybody. A local church needs to fit into its location and environment geographically, culturally, linguistically, doctrinally and traditionally. Each church should be authentic and appropriate to its location.

## 3. CHURCHES ARE THE BIBLICAL COMMUNITIES OF THE REDEEMED COMPANY.

Local churches are authentically New Testament in nature. They are certainly not an invention of man though he may have shaped their present appearance to a considerable degree. In fact their style goes back beyond the New Testament, for careful research will reveal that the New Testament churches were based to a large extent on the synagogue model of the ancient Jews. In that context, churches are to be far more than "Sunday go to meeting" facilities.

The synagogue was always the centre of life within a community. Jewish thinking does not subscribe to a dichotomy in which the natural and the spiritual are rigidly divided. It sees life more as a whole, and therefore every activity we engage in is as unto the Lord. And the synagogue becomes the centre of all community life. New Testament churches were also very much like this and I am persuaded that modern churches should also adopt and pursue this model. It would certainly fit much better into many non-Western cultures, than does the Western model which one frequently finds.

## 4. PLANTING NEW CHURCHES SPREADS THE NET WIDER.

Every new congregation that is planted brings the Gospel closer to someone's door step. The more churches there are, the better chance of reaching more people. The more variety there is, the more chance that one church or another will appeal to, and attract more people into its sphere of influence. More local churches  more Gospel outreach.

## 5. CHURCH PLANTING IS THE KEY TO WORLD EVANGELISM.

There is presently in many church circles, a vision of harvest and ingathering. This decade has been called, "The decade of harvest," and concepts of world evangelism are being propagated everywhere.

**I think that we need to clearly understand**

**that such a task is impossible without the**

**strongest possible emphasis on Church Planting.**

Neither evangelistic Crusades, radio evangelism, TV evangelism, nor literature evangelism are going to accomplish the task for the simple reason that it is the local church that conserves and consolidates new believers into the Body of Christ. Some of the biggest mass Crusades in modern history have resulted in pitifully small numbers of enduring believers because there was too little emphasis and importance placed upon the value and role of the local church community.



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**The planting of new local churches accomplishes several important functions:-**

**It covers more territory.**

- **It reaches more people.**
- **It employs more labourers.**

## 6. LOCAL CHURCHES ARE "SHEEPFOLDS" FOR GOD'S PEOPLE.

The biblical pattern for local churches has been fashioned by God for the care, protection and covering of His sheep. God frequently calls His people sheep and this analogy tells us a great deal about them. However suffice to say for now that sheep are somewhat vulnerable, especially when alone. They need the guardianship of a flock and they need the care of a Shepherd and the protection of a sheep fold. Wolves, whose nature it is to destroy sheep, always endeavour first to separate them from the flock. So, the more local churches there are, the more opportunities for sheep to find a sheepfold that suits their needs.

As we approach the great End Time Harvest, we must understand that reaching the masses of humanity is only the first part of the equation. Building them into the Body of Christ is also absolutely essential lest the fruit that has been harvested is then allowed to perish and waste. The harvest strategy must therefore be based on the concept of local church planting. Not only is this the biblical model, it is also the only way to conserve the fruit of the harvest.

## LEARNING ACTIVITIES.

1. **Please name three human characteristics that are wrong motives for Church Planting.**

2. **Please name five correct motives for Church Planting.**

3. **Please give three reasons why Church Planting is vitally important.**



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**Chapter Five**

# ANOTHER LOOK AT THE EARLY CHURCH MODEL

As we now begin to seriously consider the kind of church we are going to plant there is only one source to which we can refer - The Bible. We must see that we build according to the biblical model. When God was instructing Moses in the building of the Tabernacle, He constantly urged him to "ensure that you made all things according to the pattern which was shown you in the mount." (Ex. 25:40. 26:30. 27:8. Heb. 5:8.) We too are "builders together with the Lord," and must endeavour to do things according to the biblical pattern.

## BACK TO THE BEGINNING.

As we examine the origins of the early church in the Book of Acts, we are aware of two things:-

### 1. A BIBLICAL MODEL.

The early church was founded by a sovereign act of God, according to known biblical principles. What we have therefore is not only a recorded history of the inception of the New Covenant Church, but a model for the Church throughout the ages.

There are certain biblical indicators present in the early church model that should be perpetuated in the church model throughout the ages irrespective of geographical or contemporary context.

#### a) A Scriptural foundation.

The launching of the early church carries all the hall marks of biblical authenticity. It was obviously orchestrated by the God of the Bible. Its origins are all prophetic fulfilment of the predictions of the prophets. Hidden beneath the surface of the Old Covenant writings, lay the promise of a New Covenant Community, and the early church begins to fulfil those predictions.

So the Holy Bible is THE resource book of the Church. It is the inspiration and guide for every Christian aspiration and activity. Therefore our objective in Church Planting needs to be to commence new Bible based communities of redeemed and Spirit filled believers in Jesus.

#### b) Apostolic Oversight.

The early Apostles, each of them chosen and called by the Lord, rightly assumed the oversight of the early church. They were not governed by some ecclesiastical system or man conceived laws, but by Divinely called and appointed ministers who conformed to the New Testament pattern for ministry.

**Each and every one of them were:-**

- Born again.
- Spirit filled.
- Divinely called.
- God enabled ministers of the New Covenant. (2 Cor 3:5)



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**c) Charismatically Empowered.**

The churches in the New Testament were all Charismatically active. That is, the supernatural power of the Spirit was evidenced in them. They did not rely on humanistic programs or expertise. Their confidence was not in human accomplishment or ability, but in the anointing and power of the Spirit. Consequently they witnessed many supernatural confirmations upon their ministry, and their activities flourished through the dynamic of the Spirit. The gifts of the Spirit were all powerfully evident in the early church even to the point of some excess in the case of the Corinthian believers. This caused Paul to write a lengthy letter of correction but in no way did he advocate the abandonment of these charismatic evidences.

**d) Biblical criteria of Membership.**

"The Lord adding to the church," is the quaint way in which Luke defines the growth of the membership of the early church. For that church is seen as a body, and not a club. In the modern context many churches have became like clubs and their philosophy of membership subscribes to the style of a club. Membership is often gained by formal application, screening, confirmation, transfer, or the like. The applicants are screened and approved using certain criteria applicable to that particular church or denomination.

In the context of the early church new members were won to Christ, baptised in water, initiated into the Apostles doctrine and life style, and into the life of the redeemed community. There was, at one and the same time, a spiritual dynamic and a human one. That human aspect was not formal or legalistic but informal and practical.

**e) House Cell Groups.**

"Breaking bread from house to house," (Acts. 2: 46.) implies several things but the clearest of them is simply that much of the early church activity occurred in the houses of the believers. Obviously the groups involved at any one time would not be very large because the size of the average home would preclude this. So we may be certain that the pattern established is that of smaller groups of believers meeting together regularly in their various houses for purposes of worship and mutual edification. They partook of communal meals. They engaged in prayer. They were praising God together. These gatherings must have been overseen by "lay leaders," to use a definition with which we are familiar. The meetings were undoubtedly an indispensable factor in both the edification of the believers and the spread of Christianity. They are essential to church growth and to church planting.

**f) Larger United Gatherings.**

"And in the Temple." (Acts. 2: 46.) Not only did they meet in small groups within their homes, they also met together regularly in much larger groups when evidently the whole local church came together. In our modern context this has been described as "celebration," i.e. when the whole congregation comes together, as distinct from meeting in numerous smaller groups. Both modes are important and perhaps even essential to the effective functioning, growth, and spread of the church.

**g) Ministries of Social Concern.**

"And all that believed were together and had all things in common." (Acts. 2: 44.) the expression, "were together," implies much more than being in the same proximity. It Indicates a togetherness which epitomises the Koinonia, (partnership, sharing, common bond) of the church in those days. It included a mutual loving concern and care one for another that extended into the very practices of every-day life. It was actually this concept of caring and sharing to which the contemporary commentators referred when they said, "these who have turned the world upside down have come here."



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(Acts. 17: 6.)
This area of social concern was not a temporary factor in the life of the church. Years later we find strong evidence of it in Acts 6: 1-7. when the Church was ministering to widows on a daily basis in a caring program that included the provision of meals.

**h) Praise and Worship.**

"Praising God and having favour with all the people." (Acts. 2:47.) This statement intimates two important things.
The first is that they had a strong emphasis on praising God. The clear indication is that their praise was released in expressions of gladness. (V.46.) They gave joyful and enthusiastic expression to their praise.
The second thing is that they gained favour with a large number of people. I am sure that the two things are linked and certainly there is NO intimation that their exuberant style of praise in any way isolated them from public approval or favour.

The thing that I am going to suggest here is that music and vocal expression is a legitimate language of the heart and an extremely powerful medium of communication. It speaks from the heart and to the heart. It arouses attention, arrests people, communicates a powerful message to them and leaves them with a desire to own the same joy that is being conveyed by the expressions of praise and gladness. I feel sure that music, and praise and worship, will play a powerful role in the great harvest of the last days. Expressions of praise that are biblically based but contemporally appropriate will help to spear head the great advance of the Gospel into the pagan world.

As you formulate your plans and strategies to penetrate the nations please give music and its effective appeal some serious consideration. Do not be afraid to use music that is radical, different, culturally appealing and appropriate. Music, under a mighty anointing of the Spirit will make powerful inroads into the world community .

**i) The Church was discriminated against and persecuted.**

The early church did not grow because it was respectable and socially acceptable. Nor because it enjoyed government favour and protection. On the contrary, it was the target of grave discrimination, persecution and imprisonment. But Jesus had promised that even the "Gates of Hell would not prevail," against the Church which He would build. I am certainly not advocating that we should seek to provoke discrimination, antagonism, or persecution. These are not elements we should seek. Nevertheless, they have frequently been inevitable consequences of preaching an uncompromised Gospel. The facts indicate that far from discouraging or deterring church growth, such factors actually foster it. In fact the Church today is experiencing its most dramatic and prolific growth in countries where its presence is most powerfully resisted.

**j) The Early Church was Alive, Dynamic and Rapidly Expanding.**

It is certainly true that,

**"Where there is life, there is growth."**

Growth is a sign of healthy life. Every living thing enjoying normal health will grow. So if a particular church is not growing then someone should look to the health of that church.

Amazingly there are many Christians and ministers who are fearfully afraid of vital signs of life. They try to suppress and discourage any signs of animation or life. They breed stagnation and sterility into everything they contact. They are fearful of emotional expression, exuberance or enjoyment. They are more desirous of indications



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of death than of life. Church services are deadly dull, liturgies predictable and boring. Preaching is unimaginative and inane. Any signs of life have long since been extinguished. And then those leaders wonder why nobody wants to attend their church.

Let's welcome life. Not just emotional expression, but vital signs of dynamic life. Let the wind of the Spirit blow through the churches, blowing away the cob webs and breathing new life into the nostrils of the church.

**Let the churches you plant**

**be places of Love, Life, and Power.**

## 2. A CULTURALLY APPROPRIATE MODEL.

We should also be aware that this newly born Church was culturally authentic, and appropriate to its religious, geographic and contemporary context.

a) Since the Church was birthed in Jerusalem, in the midst of a Jewish Feast, (Shavouth) amongst a population comprised of observant Jews from most parts of the world, it obviously had a strong Jewish content and image. All the original members of the Church were Jewish, though a tiny minority were actually proselytes from Gentile backgrounds. In the early stages of its growth and expansion the apostles tended to target the local synagogues, making them a base for their preaching and teaching programs. So for many years the Church continued to have an authentic Jewish bias.

b) Since the Church was birthed in the Middle East, it had a clear and distinctive Middle Eastern content and image. Even though its early membership was very cosmopolitan it still retained much of this image. As the Church began to grow, rapidly expanding into Asia Minor, its customs and image was modified somewhat to its new environments.

c) Since the Church was birthed in the first century A.D. its methodologies and activities were appropriate to its contemporary setting. I believe that it was in every way a church that was completely appropriate to its contemporary setting.

I am convinced that we are now touching an extremely important issue for Church Planters. To have maximum impact upon a community, our approach must be appropriate to that community in its religious, cultural and contemporary appeal.

For example, if our purpose is to plant a new church in a Muslim community we must make every effort to ensure that our image does not antagonise the ethics of that community. There are many facets of modern Christianity, particularly the "Western World" brand, that are obviously offensive to the Muslim mind. Many of these things are not truly Christian, nor are they authentically biblical. Some are of Christian tradition, adopted somewhere along the long and varied path of church history. Others are blatantly Western mind additions, adopted from the powerful influence of the Western World upon the last few centuries of Christian history.

Now I am certainly not suggesting that we should compromise anything that is genuinely biblical and authentically Christian. Nor can our message be compromised in any way. But our presentation of that message can be adjusted to avoid unnecessary offence or misunderstanding. Our image, in terms of dress, behaviour and life style must always be appropriate to the situation. There are many common perceptions amongst Muslim people



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in respect of Christians, and particularly active, evangelical Christians. We probably do not agree with these perceptions nor see them as valid, but neither should be ignore them. We should always be aware of and mindful of them, ever seeking to avoid causing unnecessary offense. Jesus incarnated Himself into the environment of His day and times in a religious sense. He observed the Feasts, He kept the Law. Although many religious Jews opposed and withstood Him their criticisms were not legitimate or valid. He did not offend or break their law. In fact he distinctly said, " I am not come to destroy the Law, but to fulfil it."

Many Christian churches In Asia and Africa, have offended the religious conscience of their community by espousing and practising concepts that are clearly Western World in their origins. They have often inadvertently strengthened the idea that "Christianity is a Western, or even a White man's religion." This has tended to greatly reduce the attractiveness and relevance of the Christian message.

We can also see frequent evidence that Western cultural norms have intruded into the original planting of churches in many nations. Many such churches have espoused a Western cultural pattern, complete with Western architecture, styles of worship, and styles of administration.

I eagerly anticipate the day when this influence will cease. When Asian churches will be just that -Asian churches. When African churches will no longer appear to be colonial outposts but will became culturally authentic to their people. The cultures that have long been despised by Westerners and deemed inferior and demonic, often have a richness of quality that the Western mind has never taken the time to understand or respect. Too often he has taken the superficial attitude that everything African is pagan with a thin veneer of civilisation. He has sought to replace all traces of the historic culture of the people with so called Christian standards that have often been as pagan as have those they have sought to replace.

Similar principles hold true in respect of the cultural environment of those we would seek to win. Not only should we not ignore their cultural norms and requirements, we should actively seek to accommodate them to the best of our ability, again without in any way betraying or compromising those issues that are intrinsically biblical. Nothing can be gained from ignoring or belittling the issues of local culture.

### 3. THE EARLY CHURCH WAS A CONTEMPORARY ONE.

We also need to be acutely aware of the necessity to be appropriate in a contemporary sense. There is an unfortunate tendency amongst many Christians and Christian Churches and organisations to believe that "old is good, and modern is evil." Somehow our mental images of God are usually tied to the historic past. God is portrayed as an elderly gentleman living in the dim and distant past. Nothing could be further from the truth.

God is ALWAYS CONTEMPORARY. He is the God of yesterday, today, and tomorrow. He is at one and the same time, the God of the past, the present, and the future. He is in the eternal NOW. **God is the GOD OF THE NOW. He is the God of the eternal future!**

Our tendency to tie ourselves to the past and hold to old fashioned concepts and methods restricts and limits our effectiveness enormously. Our message is unchanged and unchanging, but our methods should relate to our times.

## LEARNING ACTIVITIES:



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1. **Please give five characteristics of the early church model.**

2. **The early church was a "culturally appropriate model."**

   a) **Please state three things that show this to be so.**

   b) **Please state three things that would make a church in your nation more culturally appropriate.**



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**Chapter Six**

# "A CHURCH PLANTING CYCLE"

In this chapter we are going to examine a strategy for Church Planting based on the phases of the reproductive process that God built into mankind. In Genesis 1: 26-28. where we have the "first mention" of mankind, God declares His highest intention for Adam and Eve, "Be fruitful and multiply and replenish the earth." God's purpose for us, His redeemed children, is to be fruitful and replenish His Kingdom.

### THE PROCESS OF REPRODUCTION. Gen. 1: 26-28.

Man (kind) was designed and ordained to be fruitful and reproduce.
God designed them to accomplish this through co-operative effort.
God established a pattern, a cycle, or process that is Divinely built into nature :-

1. **Conception.**
2. **Pregnancy.**
3. **Birth.**
4. **Growth.**
5. **Reproduction.**

## A1. THE CONCEPTION PHASE. -(Getting The Vision)

### HERE ARE SOME DEFINITIONS AND THEIR IMPLICATIONS :-

**TO CONCEIVE.** "To become pregnant with." (usually relating to physical reproduction.) Can also mean to get an idea, or to receive inspiration.

### CONCEPTION.

I. To conceive, or become pregnant.
II. To become inspired with an idea, or plan.
III. To gain a thorough understanding. (e.g. "Can you **conceive** what this might mean?")

### CONCEIVABLE.

Able to be grasped or imagined.

In terms of Church Planting, it means that God plants an idea into our spirit. He inspires us with the desire and determination to plant a new church. He imparts to us the inspiration and incentive. The idea and desire to plant a new church is "born within us" by God's Spirit.

### SOME BIBLICAL IMPLICATIONS:

**Man Was Designed And Ordained To Be Fruitful. Gen. 1: 26 -28.**

1) **Designed To Reproduce.**

God designed the anatomy and physiology of mankind, both male and female, to complement each other in the process of reproduction. The very design of our physical being indicates the importance of this particular function.



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**2) Disposition To Reproduce.**

God designed and installed the "sex drive" within the mental, emotional, and physical system of man to ensure his continuing desire to reproduce himself.

**3) Desire To Reproduce -" After His Own Kind." Gen. 1: 11,12.**

God designed every seed, including the seed of man, to reproduce after its own kind and in its own likeness and image. We see in Gen. 5:3. that "Adam begot Seth, .**after his image**."

**4) Decision To Reproduce.**

God designed the reproduction process to be subject to the will or decision of man and woman. This principle introduces the idea of family planning. The human will must be involved in the process. A decision must be made and then invoked.

**5) Determination to Reproduce.**

Sometimes determination must also play a part, especially when for some reason conception does not occur normally or within a reasonable time span.

In the Bible, barrenness was usually seen to be an abnormality and was even thought to be a curse and a reproach. But it is a reproach which God wants to help us overcome, as per Isaiah. 54: 1-4.

"Sing and rejoice O barren, You who have not borne! Break forth into singing and cry aloud, you who have not laboured with child. For more shall be the children of the desolate Than the children of the married woman says the Lord.
For you will forget the shame of your youth and will not remember the reproach of your widowhood anymore. For the Lord is your husband."

## HERE ARE SOME REASONS WHY A PARTICULAR CHURCH MAY NOT BE REPRODUCING AFTER ITS KIND.

1. TOO COMFORTABLE - WON'T MAKE THE SACRIFICE.
2. IMMATURITY. ( a measure of maturity is required to bear children.)
3. IMPOTENCE, OR BARRENNESS. (lack of reproductive strength)
4. SICKNESS OR ILL HEALTH make child bearing impossible.
5. WRONG CONCEPT OF WHAT IS REQUIRED TO PLANT ONE.

## SOME FURTHER IMPLICATIONS.

1. Producing a child takes time to accomplish.
2. Requires cooperative effort.
3. The potential parents should "count the cost."
4. They must both accept responsibility for the child.
5. Such a project calls for careful advanced planning.

## RELATING THE ANALOGY TO THE CHURCH.

1. It was planned from eternity.



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2. God counted the cost -the life of His only Son. (John. 3:16.)
3. He paid the price -God gave His Son, “Christ gave His life.
4. Jesus is building His Church. Matt. 16:18.
5. He requires our cooperation.

## CONCEIVING THE VISION. ( THE ORIGINAL INSPIRATION.)

**1) The Vision Comes From God.**

He is the author, architect and builder of the Church. He plants the desire in our spirit even as he inspired David and Solomon to build the Temple.

**2) It Usually Comes In Response To Prayer.**

The inspiration to plant a new congregation usually comes to those who are prayerfully concerned about the growth and development of God's Kingdom.

**3) Is Conceived In Our Spirit -From God's Spirit.**

The original inspiration is a spiritual one that is conceived in our spirit. As we begin to focus the vision, prayerfully thinking about it, the vision begins to fill our mind and emotions too so that our whole being becomes involved in the excited anticipation of its fulfilment.

**4) Sometimes As A "Burden." (Deep Concern For)**

The vision frequently comes as a deep concern, or burden, for the plight of the lost. We become deeply aware of a certain place and the Holy Spirit begins to burden us for the spiritual needs of the population there. This burden usually drives us to earnest and consistent prayer for the particular place.

**5) Sometimes As An Exciting Concept. (Idea)**

At other times the call comes as an exciting challenge rather than a deep burden. The Holy Spirit excites our spirit with the potential for spiritual results. The more we think about it, the more excited we become.

**6) Often As A "Picture" In Our Spirit.**

I find that God often sows a "prophetic picture" into our spirit of what can happen in a certain place if we co-operate with God in faith. The more we think and pray about the possibilities, the more clearly the picture becomes focused in our mind and heart. Sometimes we can even receive prophetic awareness of specific things that will take place as we walk before God in faith and obedience. The more clearly we can focus this picture, the better prepared we can be for what God wants to accomplish there.

**7) Prayerful Meditation Will Usually Develop The Picture.**

Rather than allowing our natural imagination to run riot we need to ensure that we allow our anticipation to focus and clarify in an environment of deeply prayerful meditation. Someone said, "unbelief is the dark room where we develop our negatives." But we might also say that prayerful meditation is the atmosphere in which all our positive dreams develop.

**8) Eph. 3:20. -"Above All You Can Ask Or Imagine."**

As you prayerfully anticipate the fulfilment of the vision, remember that "God is able to do far more exceedingly abundantly above all that we can ask or even imagine, according to the power which works within us."



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**9) Stay Close To God. - Don't Let Imagination Run Riot.**

There is often a fine line between faith and presumptive imaginations. The thing which preserves us from getting into the realm of speculative imaginings is staying humble, submissive, and close to God and His Word. He will enable you to go to the sharp edges of faith's possibilities, but preserve you from running over into the dangerous territory of vivid imaginations.

**THINK:**

**What "vision" do you have for church planting?**

**What does that church look like?**

**How can you more clearly visualise it?**

## 2. THE PREGNANCY STAGE.

During which the Vision "incubates" within your spirit. You carry the vision around inside you wherever you are. It is developing, forming, growing like a child within you. You think it through, pray over it, visualise it, speak it into being.

This also the period when all your pre-planning must be done. When solid preparations should be made. You need to prayerfully formulate a "check list" of every relevant item and then go through it carefully, endeavouring to anticipate every possible requirement. (Once you have actually planted a church, all this will become so much easier the next time.)

### 1. EXAMINING THE PROPOSITION.

**Interrogate Yourself With Pointed Questions Such As The Following :-**

**a) Why Start A New Church?**

Are there not sufficient churches already in that area? If so, why do you want to plant another one?

**b) Who Is The Target Group?**

What part of the population are you specifically aiming to reach? What particular emphasis will you present that will uniquely meet their needs?

**c) What Kind Of Church Do You Plan To Start?**

Depending somewhat on the particular people group you plan to reach, what style of church do you plan and how will it be uniquely suitable to that specific population group?

**d) With Whom Will You Plant It?**

It is generally advisable to have a "Church Planting team," rather than one person, or one family. A team usually offers much more potential and has a far greater prospect of success. There is a wider variety of giftings available. There is more strength and encouragement. There is often greater wisdom in a dedicated team than in an individual.



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**e) How And When Will You Start It?**

What style of approach will you use? e.g. a Crusade, house meetings, or personal evangelism?

**f) What Assistance Will You Need?**

There are two main areas in which you may need assistance.

I) Personnel. What kind of ministries would it be helpful for you to have working alongside you? Do you know any people, gifted in these areas who may be available to help you and work with you?

II) Financial support. How do you foresee your financial needs being met?
Is there a supporting church or group who will stand with you?
Do you plan to find employment through which to support yourself?

**g) How Can Others Become Involved?**

There may be ways in which people, not necessarily part of your team, yet with very real ways in which they can assist and encourage you.

## 2: FOCUSING YOUR VISION AND GOALS.

### a) Who Are You Trying To Reach?

If you try to reach everybody, you may not reach anybody. Be specific.
Your target group may be determined by :-

**Geographic Location**.
**Nationality**. e.g. The Korean population of Berlin.
**Ethnic Identity**. e.g.- A specific tribal group in a given region.
**Religious Affiliation**.e.g. - Muslims living in Sydney, Australia.
**Group Identity**. e.g. Filipino maids in Singapore.
**Economic Status**. e.g. A "people group" identified by economic conditions.
Paul recognised and respected cultural and group distinctives 1 Cor. 9 :19 -23.
´To the Jews, I became as a Jew.
To those outside the Law, I became as one outside the Law.
To the weak, I became as weak.
I am made all things to all men, that by all means I might save some."

Acts. 15: 19,20. Converts should be required to forsake as little cultural identity as possible.

**THINK:**

I. **What kind of cultural identifiers may be left intact?**
II. **What kind of cultural practices should be forsaken?**
III. **How may this change best be effected?**

### b) What Needs Are You Seeking To Meet?

Each target group has its particular felt needs. How will you discover them?

I. By adequately researching the group and their community.
II. By living amongst them and observing them.
III. By identifying yourself with them. (Incarnational.)
IV. By conducting a community survey amongst them.



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"**The Gospel**" literally means, "**The Good News**." What would be "**Good News**" f**or this particular people?**

### c) How Do You Plan To Meet Those Needs?

I. By bringing the **GOOD NEWS** of the Gospel.
Make your presentation as positive as possible. Major on the positives.
Major on those aspects of the Gospel that are particularly relevant to the felt needs of that people.
e.g. Some people groups have an extremely poor self image and almost no sense of self worth. Therefore major on the fact that God created ALL MEN in His own image and likeness and that Christ has come to restore that image in us. Emphasise the confidence and well being of the New Creation.

II. Learn as much as you can of skills that will help meet felt-needs.
In areas where general health is poor, medical and dental teams might be brought in for short term missions that will pave the way and establish credibility for the associated Gospel team.
I know of an extremely effective ministry in Southern Africa that specialises in drilling wells to bring fresh water supplies to villages. While the drilling is taking place, Gospel services are also conducted and thousands are confessing Christ as Saviour.

III. Include team members qualified to meet felt-needs.

### d) Designing Your Planting Strategy.

**I. Gather As Much Information As Possible.**

**II. Prayerfully "Brain-Storm" The Challenging Issues.**
Brainstorm with your covering group, elders, or mission leaders.

**III. Arrange The Steps In Logical Sequence.**
Make an exhaustive list of everything that needs to be done. Then go through it and prioritise every item to get everything into a logical sequence and therefore ensure that every task is tackled in the correct sequence time wise.

**IV. Plan Your "Prophetic Calendar."**
Your "prophetic calendar" is compiled by prayerfully endeavouring to "anticipate and visualise" WHEN certain steps should happen.

**V. Do A Reality Check.**
Is this plan truly feasible? Bring out every thing that could possibly hinder or prevent the success of the project. Prayerfully discover the solution. Then make a list of every positive indication as to why this event will succeed. Major on this list in your thinking, talking, and planning.
Are there any weak areas?
If so, how can we eliminate them?

### e) Determining Your Ministry Model.

I. **Determine Your Most Appropriate Ministry Method.**
Consider your own ministry gifting. e.g. Crusade evangelism, House meetings, Personal evangelism etc.
Consider the prevailing political, or religious situation.
Consider the personnel, equipment, finances, that are available to you.



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II. **Make It Appropriate To Your Intended Target Group.**
e.g. Culturally appropriate. Religiously fitting. Contemporary suitability.

III. **Determine The Progressive Phases Of Your Plan, And How To Link Them Together.**

The more detailed planning you can do before the actual launching of the project, the less likely you are to encounter unforeseen problems once you are involved in the actual program.

For the sake of simplicity and to give ourselves a plan that we can use effectively regardless of what specific method of Church Planting we may use, let us presume that there are five development phases in the planting of a new congregation.

We need to look carefully at each of these, examining each one in detail, prayerfully considering what we can do to effectively implement each phase.
If possible, we need to tackle each of these phases in the sequence that is suggested here. If we consider the analogy of erecting a building we know that there is a sequence that must be followed. This would include :-

- The initial intention to build.
- Determine appropriate type of building.
- Design the building, plans, specifications, approvals.
- Obtain suitable building site.
- Commence building operations.
  - Excavating the foundations.
  - Laying the foundations.
  - Erection of building commences.
  - Roof in place.
  - Internal fixtures and fittings in place.

In the same manner, our evangelistic strategy must be planned and implemented in an appropriate sequence e.g.



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**Take Into Account The Following Six Probable Phases :**

**1: PRE-EVANGELISM**
**Making friends, discovering needs.**
**Building a list of contacts.**

**2: EVANGELISM**
**Recruiting for the Kingdom.**
**Using various forms of evangelism.**

**3: ASSIMILATION**
**Introducing them into the Church.**
**Assimilating them into the Body.**

**4: GROWTH**
**Placing in Cell Care Groups.**
**Discipling and training.**

**5: LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT**
**Mentoring potential leaders.**
**Affording leadership development opportunities.**

**6. REPRODUCTION**
**The new church begins to plant other churches.**

## 3 THE BIRTH PHASE. -Bringing The Church Into Being.

**"My little children, for whom I suffer birth pangs, until Christ be formed in you." Paul. (Gal. 4:19.)**

There are numerous ways in which Church Planting involves a process of travail, or an undergoing spiritual birth pains. The Holy Spirit actually births new converts and new congregations and we play the role of spiritual mid-wives**. However, in doing so we also experience certain travail and birth pains.**

**Travail, means :- Painful effort, Pains of childbirth. Descriptive of :-**

- **Child birth pains. Gen. 38:27.**

  "And it came to pass, in the time of her travail, twins were in her womb."



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- **Messiah's anguish. Isa. 53:11.**

  "He shall see the travail of His soul, and shall be satisfied."

- **Church Planter's concern. Gal. 4:19.**

  "My little children, for who I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you."

- **Tent makers labours. 1 Thess. 2:9. 2 Thess. 3:8.**

  "For you remember brethren our labour and travail as we preached the Gospel unto you."

- **Creation's re-birth. Rom. 8:22.**

  "The whole creation groans and travails in pain together until now."

Before we discuss some of the methods we may employ in planting a church, we need to remind ourselves that there are very real and vitally necessary spiritual activities involved in "birthing a church." In a very real sense we travail in prayer and spiritual warfare and if this is not successfully accomplished then the Church Planting exercise will not be a success.

## 1. MEETING AND BE-FRIENDING THE PEOPLE.

Determine to meet the people and to "be friendly."
"He who would have friends, must show himself to be friendly." Prov. 18: 24.

In the Bible, "friend" can mean "confidential advisor." see Gen. 26:26.
It was used as a salutation, whether to friend or foe. Matt. 22:12. 26:50.
When Jesus commissioned His disciples He told them
"Whatever house you enter, first say Peace, (Shalom) to this house." Lk. 10: 5.
In other words, initially presume everyone to be your friend.

## 2. CONDUCT A COMMUNITY SURVEY.

Be prepared to go from door to door.
Aim to establish a friendly rapport with each family.
Conduct a "discovering needs survey."
Be prepared to pray for peoples· needs on the spot.

## 3. DEVELOP YOUR CIRCLES OF INFLUENCE.

Most leaders have "circles of influence." Interests and skills in common with others.
Discover what your circles are. Develop your skills. Offer your help.

Some of your skills may be :-

Helping neighbours.

- Coaching a sports club.
- Teaching guitar lessons.
- Teaching English language.
- Teaching typing.
- Teaching basic computer skills.
- Helping solo parents.
- Helping the aged.
- Helping drug dependant people.
- Helping alcohol dependant persons.



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## 4. BECOME PART OF THE COMMUNITY.

Go where the people are. Join in their activities.
Jesus did not come to condemn people but to save them.

## 5. USE THE CELL GROUP STRATEGY.

The cell group system is indispensable to the strong development of a local church. Many of those things that the New Testament commands us to do for each other cannot be accomplished except in small groups.
Jesus built a small group of 12 disciples.

**Let your first group meeting become a model for future cell groups.**
**Develop cell group leaders.**
Teach and train by observation, participation, involvement.

## 6. USING A SEMINAR STRATEGY.

Seminars, practical lectures and workshops on subjects which many people would like to know more about, can attract many outsiders. Begin with seminars which will attract the average person, dealing with every day situations for which many people would like some solutions.

**a) Felt-Need Seminars (for attracting non-Christians.)**

Offer seminars on subjects that many people need help in. e.g. Positive Parenting. Stress management. Financial management.

**b) Bridging Seminars. (For bridging for pre-Christians)**

Felt need problems which lead to spiritual solutions.
e.g. "How to break addictive behaviour patterns." "How to achieve family harmony."

**c) Response Seminars (for bringing contacts to decision.)**

How to experience God.

## 7. COMMENCE FELLOWSHIP GATHERINGS.

**a) Celebration. Praise and worship. Ministry to God.**

This is your public gathering to which you invite pre-Christians as well as your regular congregation. Keep this meeting bright, positive, powerful, and dynamic. If you have musicians, aim to form a good music group, playing joyful and triumphant music that will attract pre-Christians.

**b) Edification. Teaching and prayers.**

This is generally a believers' meeting where solid biblical teaching can be given and united prayers can be conducted.

**c) Evangelism. Provoke non-believers to jealousy.**

Evangelism can occur in two main arenas:-

Outside activities. Taking the message to the people where they are.

- Evangelistic meetings to which pre-Christians may be brought.



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Embrace some "Cell group principles." e.g. :-
Informality. To encourage participation by pre-Christians.

- Low "religious" content.
- Cultural authenticity.
- Ethnic appropriateness.
- Contemporary suitability.
- Keep the meetings bright, happy, challenging and open to the supernatural.

### 8. FORM THE CELL GROUPS.

Develop a Cell Group ethos from the beginning. Informal, non-religious, caring.
(More about this in the "Growth Stage.")

## 4: THE GROWTH PHASE.

"Healthy growth has to be more than merely numerical. Imagine a person who only develops in physical size, but not mentally, emotionally or spiritually."

The development and growth of Jesus was multi-faceted and balanced.
´He grew in wisdom and stature, in favour with God and with man." Luke. 2: 52.

### 1. THE IMPORTANCE OF QUALITY LEADERSHIP.

This factor can never be underestimated. The people will never rise above the level of their leaders.

**The ultimate indication of good leadership is producing other leaders.**
Demands leadership training and mentoring.

**a) Communicate confidence.**
"Potential Leaders will generally rise to the level of your expectation of them."

**b) Help them realise that failure is not fatal.**
Some of God's finest leaders had overcome failure. e.g. Moses, David, Peter.

**c) Celebrate small wins.**
"Affirmation is the foundation of change."

**d) Provide effective coaching.**
Eph.4:11. Pastors and teachers should be perfecting (Katatismos adjusting - to put into functioning order as the setting of a broken leg, or the mending of a torn net.) the saints to do the work of the ministry.

**e) Provide a leadership fraternity.**
Where leaders can interact, leadership can be modelled.- must be caught, and taught. Skill training. Mutual encouragement. Fraternal relationship and fellowship. Team spirit.

### 2. IMPLEMENT THE "FOLLOW UP" STRATEGIES.

a) Advance preparations are essential.



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Establish the method you will employ. Obtain suitable materials.

b) Mobilise people to help.

c) Keep the vision before the people.

d) Lead by example.

## 3. DEVELOP AN EXPANDING NET-WORK OF CELL GROUPS.

The Cell Group Church is the CHURCH OF THE FUTURE.
We can only fulfil all we are commanded to do for each other in the context of small groups. Cell Groups are discipleship forming units.

**a) Where people love, learn, serve, and reach others.**

**b) Training and cultivation of "apprentices" takes place.**

**c) Form fishing pools. "Pools of people" in which we can "fish."**

**d) Ensure that group multiplication happens.**

Build in the expansion factor right from the very beginning. Make sure that every group realises that they must plan for, and move towards, planting other groups.

## 4. FOCUSING ON TARGET GROUPS.

There are special groups of people in every community who have a specific need as their common denominator. One of the secrets of church growth is to "find such needs and begin to meet them."

**a) Cultivate compassion ministries.**

Working with under privileged groups.
Many years ago, in an Australian church of which I was pastor, God gave us a break through into the prostitutes of our city. Numbers of them were gloriously saved and delivered.
There are drug and alcohol dependent people you can reach.
The deaf population can be reached.

**b) Form support/Recovery groups.**

Some types of need require a support group to help them recover. This is clearly the case with alcoholics.
Persons who have suffered various forms of nervous break down or emotional burnout, need people who have experienced and recovered from this to help them.

## 5. INCREASE EVANGELISTIC EFFECTIVENESS.

**a) Reaching the families and associates.**

New believers must be encouraged to maintain links with their family members and former associates in order to win them to Christ. This is frequently called "OIKOS EVANGELISM." The Greek word "oikos" is translated "family, kindred, or household." It refers to the close associates of the new believer. Andrew is an example of this style of evangelism. "One of the two who heard John speak and followed him was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. He first found his own brother Simon, and said to him, We have found the Messiah." (John. 1: 40, 41.)



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**b) Provide training in methods of evangelism.**

From the very commencement of the new congregation emphasis must be placed on the importance of evangelism, and training must be offered in various forms of personal evangelism. Unless the members are properly trained and motivated no growth will transpire. (See the section **"You can be a real winner"** supplied with this Course.)

**c) Organise evangelistic activities and outreaches.**

Having provided adequate training in evangelism, the leadership must now organise evangelistic activities in which the members can engage.

### 6. ASSIMILATE AND MOBILISE NEWCOMERS.

**a) Help them find a suitable group affiliation.**

New believers must be encouraged to join with suitable groups and activities that will afford them scope in productive ministry.

**b) Discover and develop their latent ministry giftings.**

Special teaching must be given on the various ministry giftings that God has given and members must be helped to identify their proper and appropriate role in ministry. (Romans. 12. 1 Cor. 12: 7-11. Eph. 4 : 11, 12.)

### 7. SHARPEN, AND/OR REPLACE EXISTING MINISTRIES.

**a) Pruning for greater effectiveness. john. 15:2.**

"Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit He takes away, and every branch which bears fruit He prunes, that it may bear more fruit."

The ministries within the local church must be kept as effective and productive as possible. This may entail :-

**Replacing some existing ministries.**
**Training and appointing new ones.**
**Ensuring that training classes are functioning at all times.**
**Encouraging a constant flow of potential leaders.**
**Finding roles and opportunities for leadership expression.**

# 5 THE REPRODUCTION PHASE.

One of the clearest indications of having attained a measure of maturity, having grown beyond childhood, adolescence and puberty, is the onset of reproductive capabilities.

A person has not yet reached maturity if still incapable of reproducing.
A church has not yet reached spiritual maturity if it is not 'reproducing after its kind'.
When is the reproduction potential introduced? At the moment of conception! But a growth process towards maturity must occur before that potential can be expected to function. So every church has the potential to reproduce, but only those that have moved on to the required maturity will actually do so.

**The Church is designed by God to Grow and reproduce Churches.**



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1. **CULTIVATE COMMITMENT TO REPRODUCTION.**

   From the earliest possible time members should be taught and made to understand that the church has a commitment to plant other congregations. They should grow with this awareness in mind.

2. **IDENTIFY POTENTIAL HARVESTS.**

   The local church should always be looking for potential harvest areas in which evangelism can occur and a new congregation planted. This should occur in the "Jerusalem" - adjacent surrounding area. In its " Judea and Samaria" - somewhat further afield. And to the "uttermost parts of the earth," a cross-cultural, missions program beyond our national borders.

3. **ENCOURAGE EVANGELISM BY EVERY POSSIBLE MEANS.**

4. **KEEP THE VISION BEFORE THE PEOPLE.**

   Church members should be consistently reminded of the missions vision of their church. They should not be allowed to become introspective and introvert but always aware of those fields that are white already unto harvest.

5. **SECURE CONGREGATIONAL COMMITMENT TO REPRODUCTION.**

( I am grateful to Dr. Robert Logan of Strategic Ministries Inc. California U.S.A. for originally sharing some of these concepts in this chapter with me and allowing me to adapt and use them.)



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**Chapter Seven**

# PROPHETIC VISIONING

## ´LIVING IN GOD·S FUTURE"

We have been examining some of the basic principles employed in planning a project, now I want to introduce a further aspect required in the planning of spiritual projects. I refer to "prophetic visioning," which is :-

**The prayerful projection of our spirit man**

**into the future to ´sense"**

**what God has in store for us.**

In the process of natural planning we rely on the information received by our natural senses. In the process of prophetic visioning we prayerfully plug into the concept that God conveys to our spiritual senses. In the natural we see the visible. In the prophetic mode we "see the invisible."
( Heb 11:27 )

In the story of Elisha at Dothan we see an example of someone's vision being enlarged from the natural to the prophetic.

II Ki 6:17
´And Elisha prayed, "O LORD, open his eyes so he may see." Then the LORD opened the servant's eyes, and he looked and saw the hills full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha." (NIV)

Initially the young man could only perceive what his natural senses told him. His physical sight was focused upon the problem before him. All that he could see was the huge enemy army that surrounded he and Elisha. So the prophet prayed for him. "Lord open the
( spiritual ) eyes of the young man." After which he saw what God saw, instead of only that which his natural senses told him. Effective leaders need spiritual ( prophetic ) vision to see the future as God sees it.

**Prayerfully project your ´Spirit man"**

**into the future by faith.**

**Believe to ´see" what**

**God wants to accomplish through you.**

## THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN PROPHETIC VISIONING AND WISHFUL THINKING.

**WISHFUL THINKING, or day dreaming, involves :-**

a) Indulging in flights of fancy.
b) Ultra idealistic thinking.
c) Ego-centric fantasy.



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d) Hyper vivid imagination.

**PROPHETIC VISIONING is :-**

e) Prayerfully approached.
f) Cautiously considered.
g) Corporately confirmed.
h) Responsibly undertaken.

**THINK:**

What do you believe God wants to accomplish through you in the next five years? How do you "see" your church, five years from now, God willing?

**INITIATING A PARADIGM SHIFT**

A paradigm is a grid or pattern through which we perceive things. It is a bias towards which we lean in our interpretation of issues. It is a pattern of the shape we think things ought to be. A particular lens through which we view life. It derives from the Greek word paradeigma, which means pattern or example. It is frequently adopted from our:-

- Ethnic identity.
- Cultural background.
- Religious heritage.
- Social station.
- Political perception.

Within our religious package we frequently embrace a doctrinal pattern, a denominational preference, a regional influence, (Western world, African, Asian, Latin American) and a national perspective. (e.g. British, American, Chinese, Indian, African, etc)

Many people are limited and restricted by their paradigm perception. They are slow to believe that any concept other than their own will be effective. Most people are reticent to accept any suggestion of change from the way they have always believed that things should be done.

Before we can ever **act** differently, we must **think** differently. We need a paradigm shift, a change in the way we view things.

**CHARTING A PROPHETIC VISION.**

Here is an intriguing scripture that alludes to prophetic guidance.

Isa 30:20-21
´Although the Lord gives you the bread of adversity and the water of affliction, **your teachers will be hidden no more; with your own eyes you will see them.**
Whether you turn to the right or to the left, your ears will hear a voice behind you, saying, "This is the way; walk in it." (NIV)

Firstly God promises Israel teachers, "in front of your own eyes." Teachers who can give guidance and direction, telling us which way we should go.



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Then, when we have begun to follow those directions, a voice behind us issuing warnings at any time we are likely to deviate from God's way. Should we veer to the left or the right, a voice will correct us bringing us back on to the right path. God never forces anyone in His direction. His quiet yet persistent voice calls to us as a voice from behind endeavouring to save us from straying from the straight path.

One of the tribes of Israel, the sons of Issachar, had a special prophetic anointing.

1 Chr 12:32
´men of Issachar, who understood the times and knew what Israel should do-- 200 chiefs, with all their relatives under their command; (NIV)

They not only understood the times in which they lived, they also "knew" (prophetically) what Israel ought to do in the light of those times. They were like God's intelligence corps. The sons of Issachar marched directly behind the tribe of Judah, obviously giving them direction from behind.

We have a fine example of this guidance process in the case of Israel's journey from Egypt to the Promised Land. Whenever Israel marched in God's purposes, the tribe of Judah took the lead, closely followed by the sons of Issachar.

Num 10:14-15. Judah marched first, followed by Issachar.
´The divisions of the camp of Judah went first, under their standard. Nahshon son of Amminadab was in command.
Nethanel son of Zuar was over the division of the tribe of Issachar," (NIV)
**Kingdom strategy needs to be :-**

1. **SPIRITUALLY CONCEIVED.**

   We are comprised of spirit, intellect, emotions.
   God speaks initially into our spirit.
   Not our intellect or emotions.
   We need to proceed in the spirit, not turning to the right nor the left.
   Avoiding the extremes of either the intellect or the emotions.

2. **BIBLICALLY AUTHENTICATED.**

   Spiritual guidance can be somewhat subjective, (based on a persons emotions or pre-conceived ideas). Therefore we need to immediately expose that guidance to an objective source, (undistorted by personal feelings or bias). The Bible is the first such source to which we must always turn. Whenever you sense that you have received something from God, go to Him immediately, your Bible before you and ask Him to either confirm or deny your leading. God is able to speak to you, from His Word, in all manner of ways. It is fascinating at times to discover the unique methods He uses to convey His wisdom to you personally through the pages of His Word.

3. **CORPORATELY CONFIRMED.**

   The second safeguard for confirming that your guidance is truly from God is the prayerfully considered opinion of your spiritual peers. Every leader needs a circle of peers to whom he can turn at any time for added wisdom and guidance. God is always willing to confirm His will.

   Prov 11:14
   ´Where no counsel is, the people fall: but in the multitude of counsellors there is safety. (KJV)



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Prov 24:6-7
´For by wise guidance you will wage war, and in abundance of counsellors there is victory.
´Wisdom is too high for a fool, He does not open his mouth in the gate. (NAS)

Another rendering of V.7. is ´matters of wisdom are beyond the grasp of a stubborn fool. At the city gate, (where the wise elders gather) he does not open his mouth" (ask for guidance).

This principle is particularly pertinent in respect of prophetic issues which are frequently subjective in nature and can be ambiguous to the spiritually immature. The Bible advocates that a prophetic statement should always be submitted to those other prophets who are present for their collective consideration and judgement.

1 Cor 14:29-30. Let other prophets judge.
´Two or three prophets should speak, and the others should weigh carefully what is said.
And if a revelation comes to someone who is sitting down, the first speaker should stop. (NIV)

Another version, (GOD·S WORD by World Publishing, Michigan) renders it in this manner.

´Two or three people should speak what God has revealed. Everyone else should decide whether what each person said is right or wrong. If God reveals something to another person who is seated, the first speaker should be silent."

The Bible indicates that ´The mind of Christ" is not entrusted to a lone individual but rather to a group of people. Paul says, ´But WE have the mind of Christ." (plural)

1 Cor 2:16
"For who has known the mind of the Lord that he may instruct him?" But **we** have the mind of Christ. (NIV)

Therefore when any individual feels they have the mind of Christ on a certain matter they should submit their revelation to a number of spiritual persons for their scrutiny and judgement. The more serious a matter, the more necessary that it be submitted to one's spiritual mentors for their advice.

**Deut 17:6. Serious matters required more than one witness.**
´On the testimony of two or three witnesses a man shall be put to death, but no one shall be put to death on the testimony of only one witness. (NIV)

2 Cor 13:1
´This will be my third visit to you. "Every matter must be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses." (NIV)

Prov 20:18
´Make plans by seeking advice; if you wage war, obtain guidance. (NIV)

## 4. REALISTICALLY ASSESSED.

Every prophetic vision should be realistically assessed (realistic: an awareness and acceptance of things as they really are as distinct from the ideal, or imagined.)
(assess: to judge the worth or importance, the validity and merit of a matter )



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## 5. RESPONSIBLY DEVELOPED.

The Bible reveals a principle by which God usually accomplishes things, it is ´change by transition or process."

Isa 28:10 Change transpires a little at a time.
´For it is precept upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, there a little. (ASV)

2 Cor 3:18. God initiates change gradually.
´But we all, with unveiled face beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are transformed into the same image from glory to glory, even as from the Lord the Spirit. (ASV)

God is rarely in a hurry to accomplish anything. Most of what He does is accomplished little by little. Great oak trees do not grow to maturity over night. They take many years to reach their state of ultimate maturity, growing little by little.

## 6. PROPHETICALLY INCLINED.

A prophetic vision or word from God is usually forward looking, focused on the future rather than the past.

Isa 43: 18,19.
´Forget what happened in the past, and do not dwell on events from long ago. I am going to do something new. It is already happening. Don·t you recognise it?"

Jer 29:11
´For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. (NIV)

1 Chr 28:11-12
´Then David gave his son Solomon the plans for the portico of the temple, its buildings, its storerooms, its upper parts, its inner rooms and the place of atonement.
He gave him the plans of all that the Spirit had put in his mind for the courts of the temple of the LORD and all the surrounding rooms, for the treasuries of the temple of God and for the treasuries for the dedicated things. (NIV)

## 7. FAITH INSPIRED AND ENDOWED.

Visions and plans that come from God are not only inspired by faith, they are endowed with faith. God does not only inspire the beginnings of something, He supplies the faith to continue and complete the project. God never begins anything that He does not intend to finish. If He is in your plans they will ultimately be perfectly fulfilled.

Phil 1:6
´being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus. (NIV)
Psa 138:8
´The LORD will perfect that which concerneth me: thy mercy, O LORD, endureth for ever: forsake not the works of thine own hands. (KJV)

**POWER SHIFT. ´Prophetic actioning."**

Once we have achieved a "paradigm shift," i.e. a change of perception, we should begin to DO things differently too. We call this "Prophetic actioning."



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**“Do today what you would need to do if your church were twice as large.”**

**Begin to act and live now as you would need to if your vision were already fulfilled. Live by faith, in God·s future.**

**“Believe to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living.” Psa 27:13.**

## SUGGESTIONS

### 1. OBTAIN A LARGER BUILDING.

If the building in which you are meeting is scarcely large enough to contain the crowd, you will need to obtain a larger one before your church will grow much more. Some church growth experts say that if your building is more than 80% filled there are probably people staying away because it is too crowded for them. Whether this is true or not in your situation it might be true that if you are going to see your congregation double in number you may have to obtain a larger place. If you do so, begin to envision that place filled with people praising and worshipping God. See it with the eyes of faith. See it whenever you pray. Begin to thank God, by faith, for filling the auditorium.

### 2. OPEN MORE SMALL VENUES.

Instead of finding a considerably larger meeting place, perhaps God will give you a vision for numerous smaller venues. He may want you to plant numbers of house churches throughout your area. Believe God for a ´vision,” a picture within your spirit, of the strategy He wants you to follow.

### 3. TRAIN MORE WORKERS.

If your church experiences considerable growth, you will need many more workers than you presently have. Therefore you should take a step of faith and begin to select and train the number of workers you will need. Train them for every aspect of ministry that will be needed when your congregation increases in number and you have far more people who need to be cared for and ministered to. Most churches have far too few workers. A small percentage of the people do the major part of the work. You will be able to redress this imbalance when more of your members are trained and prepared for various functions and ministries.

### 4. IMPROVE THE MUSIC MINISTRY.

Larger churches usually have a different music ministry than do small ones. They frequently have a healthy number of musicians, with a good variety of instruments. This helps to charge the atmosphere, making it more exciting and attractive to a big crowd. Use your music ministry to cultivate the kind of environment and atmosphere that is typical of a larger church. The worship will then begin to attract many more people to your church.

### 5. INSTALL BETTER ADMINISTRATION. ACTS 6:1-7

´In those days when the number of disciples was increasing, the Grecian Jews among them complained against the Hebraic Jews because their widows were being overlooked in the daily distribution of food.
So the Twelve gathered all the disciples together and said, "It would not be right for us to neglect the ministry of the word of God in order to wait on tables.
Brothers, choose seven men from among you who are known to be full of the Spirit and wisdom. We will turn this responsibility over to them
and will give our attention to prayer and the ministry of the word."
This proposal pleased the whole group. They chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit; also Philip, Procorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolas from Antioch, a convert to Judaism.
They presented these men to the apostles, who prayed and laid their hands on them.



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So the word of God spread. The number of disciples in Jerusalem increased rapidly, and a large number of priests became obedient to the faith." (NIV)

The Bible clearly shows that competent administration is vital to effective church growth. Problems arising in the early church were solved by the appointment of deacons to handle the organisation and administration more efficiently. This gave the apostles more time for prayer and ministry of the Word, resulting in a further acceleration of numerical growth and the addition of a large number of priests.

Take steps of faith to improve your administrative and organisational abilities. Adopt systems and principles of administration that would cope with a larger congregation than you currently have. Put into place, by faith, the personnel and systems that you would need if your church were twice as large. Act in obedience and faith towards God and He will honour your faith.

## 6. LIFT YOUR SERVICE.

**Intensify the celebration component in your services.**

Believe God for the kind of exciting atmosphere that usually accompanies a much larger and more dynamic congregation.

**Be ´seeker sensitive."**

Many small churches unwittingly become introvert and introspective. They develop a small church mentality that is not always attractive or appealing to non-believers. Become sensitive to the perceptions of pre-Christians. Make your services more appealing and meaningful to strangers. Become a ´user-friendly" church.

**Preach dynamic messages to ´more" people.**

In a similar manner, preaching to small congregations often develops a style of preaching and communication that is not suitable for a larger crowd. You should determine to preach a more powerful and impactive message. Even if your congregation is relatively small, preach as though you were preaching to a much larger congregation. Imagine a good sized crowd before you. Preach with passion, from the heart. This kind of preaching will lend itself to enlarging your congregation.

**Be culturally appropriate.**

Most of the churches that are growing have adapted themselves to the culture of the people amongst which they are working.

**Be contemporary.**

King David endeared Himself to God because he ´served his generation according to the will of God."

Acts 13:22
´And when he had removed him, he raised up unto them David to be their king; to whom also he gave testimony, and said,
**I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after mine own heart, which shall fulfil all my will.**

Acts 13:36
´For David, after he had **served his own generation by the will of God,** fell on sleep, and was laid unto his fathers, and saw corruption: (KJV)

God wants a people who will understand and communicate effectively with their contemporary peers. There is no special virtue to being archaic and out of date.



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**Be relevant.**

Relevant means, ´having a direct bearing on real and current issues." The church needs to address its message to the issues and problems about which people are most concerned. God and His Word have answers to every human problem. We need to be aware of the basic issues that are causing concern and hurt in people·s lives. Those things that are uppermost in their thoughts and concerns. We need to ´scratch them where they are truly itching." In the words of an old hymn;

Christ is the answer to my every need.
Christ is the answer, He is my friend indeed.
Problems of life my spirit may assail,
With Christ my Saviour, I shall never fail.
For Christ is the answer to my need.

## 7. CONSERVE THE HARVEST.

It is pointless and even immoral, to bring people to Christ but not follow them up adequately in order to consolidate their decision. An outreach, evangelistic program **must** be accompanied by an adequate program of after care. Church members must be trained and prepared to function in such capacities.

Here are some of the activities that can be used to conserve the harvest :-

**Commence new believers classes.**

New believers need to be established in their faith. They need to be taught the scriptural basis of what they have done in committing their lives to God through Christ. A special class should accommodate this need. A class in which all the students are new believers or people who are not yet thoroughly familiar with the biblical basis of their faith. The basic principles of the faith should be communicated to them, not simply for their intellectual retention but so that their lives may be influenced and impacted by them, teaching them to live the Jesus style of life.

**Commence mutual interests groups.**

New believers also need ample opportunity to fraternise with new Christian friends, particularly those with similar interests and common needs. Men·s fellowship, Women·s fellowships, Youth groups, Senior citizens meetings, Choir rehearsals, are all common interest groups to which new members may attach themselves.

**Determine discipleship procedures.**

Provision should be made for the effective discipling of new believers. Our true commission is not to make converts, but to make disciples. Therefore, every new believer must be given opportunity to be discipled and to present their lives to God for His utmost service.



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**Chapter Eight**

# WORKING YOUR PLAN

**"For which of you. intending to build a tower, does not first sit down and count the cost to see if he has sufficient to finish it?" In case, having laid the foundations and being unable to finish it, all who see it begin to mock him saying, This man began to build and was not able to finish it." (Luke. 14: 28 - 30.)**

Someone has well said, **"If you fail to plan, you plan to fail."**
Another true concept is, **"Plan your work, and work your plan."**

Jesus Himself, in the above Scripture, reminds us that it is folly to embark upon a project without first having sat down to "count the cost" and make sure that you have the potential and ability to complete the task. It is folly to begin something, particularly something that involves the Name of God, without ensuring to the best of your ability that you are well able to complete that project. Jesus said :-

1. Sit down, (Think)
2. Count the cost. (Calculate)
3. Build. (Take appropriate Action)

So the first thing we need to do in the ministry of Church Planting is some very serious thinking as to the feasibility of undertaking the task that is upon our heart. We are going to call this,

**Objective planning.** (What do we mean by "Objective planning?")
We mean, realistic planning with a specific objective or purpose in view.
It involves clear, serious, realistic, forward planning.
Objective also infers, an impersonal, unbiased and unprejudiced view, free from sentimental, emotional and irrational influences.

All of this is in direct contrast to **Subjective Planning.**

Which is often personal, biased, and prejudiced.
This kind of thinking is often really "wishful thinking."
Looking at things the way you would wish or hope they might be.
This is the thinking of a visionary who is too proud or self confident to subject his ideas or ambitions to others whose view may not be subjectively influenced.
It is a mode of thinking influenced by emotions, feelings and imaginations.
Subjective thoughts and planning are usually unreliable and misleading.
They are frequently too emotional, sentimental and unrealistic.

**Subjective thinking can sound very "Spiritual."**
It is often couched in phrases and clichés like :-
"God will take care of everything."
"The Lord will provide."
"It's all in God's hands, why should I be concerned?"

However, Jesus Himself warns us against this kind of thinking.
He says we should not dismiss any fore-thought or planning.
If a man is about to undertake a large project, the first thing he should do is to sit down and thoroughly think it through. Not subjectively in an irresponsible manner



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that may say, "Praise God, it's His work after all. He will take care of everything and pay all the bills etc."

**He cautions us to plan with a clearly defined objective in view.**

To ask ourselves some very practical questions like :-

- What is my real purpose?
- What am I really called to do?
- How shall I go about it?

Please let it be clearly understood that when I encourage careful, objective planning I am in no way suggesting that you should not plan in faith. By all means bring your faith into the vision and plans. Always make room for the GOD FACTOR. But remember too that there is a big difference between faith and presumption. We can be men of faith, but this does not mean that we should be foolish or irresponsible. Proper planning certainly does not need to deny or diminish faith.

**I am going to pose five practical questions you must be prepared to ask yourself.**

1. **WHERE?**

   Where do you plan to plant a new church?
   What do you really know about the place?
   How can you find out everything that it would be helpful to know?

   Visit the place. Get some brochures and information on it. Get some books about the place.
   Get to know someone who lives there or has lived there.
   Create a file on the place and put into it every piece of information you can find.

2. **WHAT?**

   What exactly do you purpose to do there?
   If the place in which you plan to do Church Planting is in another nation, you need to get some answers like the following :-

   a) **What is the Political Climate?**

      What kind of government? What is its policy towards religion, Christianity, missionaries?
      If anti-religious, Are church groups allowed to exist? What restrictions are there upon religious groups?
      Would believers be endangered? What penalties might they incur?
      Is the government stable or unstable?
      What is its relationship with your own nation like?
      What type of visa may you be able to obtain?
      Can you enter the country as a church worker? Or should you apply as a "tent maker"?
      Is it possible to travel freely within the country?

   b) **What are the Economic Conditions like?**

      What economic conditions prevail?
      What is the per capita income of the people?
      What is the general standard of living like?
      Are food, clothes and living essentials available?
      What is the economic condition of believers in that country?
      Are they discriminated against economically?

   c) **Educational Conditions.**

      What is the literacy rate? Is there a literacy program operating?
      What languages are spoken or read?



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What Christian literature is available/permissible.
What printing facilities are there? What is the cost of printing?

### 3. WHEN?

When would be the best time to launch a Church Planting program?
What time of the year? Season? Weather? Holidays?
When can I realistically hope to get there?
Does God have a special time for us to commence there?

### 4. HOW?

How can we most effectively launch this Church Planting project?

**Organise a Mass Crusade ?**

In which venue? Who will be the preacher? Where could we find the number of helpers needed?
How could we adequately care for the converts who may be won?

**Commence a House meeting?**

Where? In whose house? Will we need a permit to do so?

**Organise a door to door visitation program?**

What would our approach be? How could we gain the best response to this?

### 5. WHAT RESOURCES WOULD WE NEED?

**a) Personnel.**

A team is highly desirable for such a venture.

**b) Equipment.**

P.A. system. Musical instruments.

**c) Financial Support.**

- How much will the initial program cost?
- What will be the cost of the ongoing program?
- Where will this financial support come from?

**IN ANSWERING THESE QUESTIONS WE ARE :-**

**Discovering Needs.**

- **Determining Objectives.**
- **Detailing Methods.**
- **Developing Resources.**

From the answers to these, and similar questions, we must make appropriate plans, which must include :-

1. **OUR VISION. The long term objective.**
2. **OUR GOALS. The steps by which we will reach our goal.**



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**If you don't know where you are going,**

**any road will get you there!**

# WHAT IS YOUR VISION?

What is your long term objective?
If you are planning to plant a church, why not stop right now, get a sheet of paper, and commit to writing your LONG TERM VISION for that church.
In writing out your vision, be as specific as you can.
Avoid vague, abstract terms.
Specify where, when, how, what kind, what size.
Describe the picture that God is giving to you of the church you are to plant.

**Your Vision should be :-**

1. **God given.**

   Any project for church planting must be God inspired. If we embark on such a project for any personal or selfish reason there will be a tragic flaw in the very foundations of it that will mar its growth and development.

2. **Specific.**

   One of the differences between a Vision and a Goal is the specifics factor.
   **A Vision** does not have specifics built into it.
   Someone may say, "my vision is to build a great church."
   **A Goal** has some specifics built into it.
   The person may say, "My goal is to build a church of 500 members in MYTOWN in the next five years."

3. **Measurable.**

   Our plan must have factors that allow us to accurately measure progress.
   These will include :-

   - **Numbers**. How many people are you believing to win?
   - **Time.** Over what time period do you plan to achieve this?
   - **Budget.** How much do you estimate that this will cost?

4. **Communicable.**

   Your plan must be specific and clear enough to be communicated :-

   a) To your associates and fellow workers.
   b) To your congregation.

5. **Realistic.**

   Even faith goals must be realistic.
   The faith factor will greatly increase your planned achievement but it will not take it beyond the realm of realism.

6. **Achievable.**

   If you have a huge vision, it is still advisable to break it down into smaller, achievable pieces.
   Divide your vision into long term and short term goals.
   Let your ultimate vision be your long term goal.
   Then divide it into short term goals.



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## WHAT ARE YOUR GOALS?

In considering the practical steps that must be taken to implement and fulfil your vision you must include :

**How? (Programming)**

- **When? (Scheduling)**
- **Whom? (Personnel management)**
- **Cost? (Budgeting)**

## LEARNING ACTIVITIES:

1. **Why is it necessary to plan ahead?**
2. **Please describe the difference between OBJECTIVE, & SUBJECTIVE planning.**
3. **Please list five practical questions you should ask yourself in the planning process.**
4. **Briefly describe the importance of each.**
5. **Write out a strategy for Church Planting, based on those 5 questions.**
6. **Please describe in about 500 words, the long term vision for your life and ministry.**
7. **Please outline five goals by which you plan to get there.**



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**Chapter Nine**

# ANALYSING A GREAT SERMON

At the International Conference for Itinerant Evangelists convened in Amsterdam in 1983, Dr. Billy Graham preached a sermon entitled "The Evangelist and his Preaching..” He described many of the lessons he had learned from a life time of preaching the Gospel across the world, and spoke about the particular features he regarded as essential to a Gospel message which would effectively reach the hearts of modern mankind.

In my humble opinion Dr. Graham is the most effective communicator of the Gospel in the 20th Century, and therefore has much to contribute to our understanding of how to effectively preach Christ in our day. I was not privileged to be present at the conference or to actually hear his message. I have only read an edited version of it but was deeply impressed by his grasp of **the power of the Gospel and the plight of modern mankind.**

He said, "We are called to communicate the good news to people who are empty, heartsick, guilty, and afraid of death." This simple statement is really a profound definition of our task as Gospel Communicators.

He touches principles that are essential to an adequate and effective presentation of the Gospel that should be carefully considered by every preacher who longs to make Christ known through the agency of preaching. I also feel that it is imperative that all "Church Planters,” should prayerfully study his remarks and bear them in mind when preparing messages and sermons for use in Crusades or meetings when seeking to pioneer new churches. We should also be mindful of these issues even in the planning of our strategy for planting a church in a new area. It will keep us mindful of the real objective of our project. Not simply to commence a new congregation of believers, but to endeavour to meet the deep needs of people who are without Christ and without God in their lives. So I am taking the liberty of sharing some of his material and then making some brief comments on it. I do not think for one moment that I can in any way improve on what this renowned preacher has said. My desire is simply to reiterate his convictions for the benefit of my readers, the Church Planters of the frontier nations.

**Let's listen to the powerful words of Dr. Graham :-**

**Preaching "Christ Crucified."**

How do we communicate the Gospel with power and effect in this materialistic, scientific, rebellious, immoral, humanistic age?

The key to the basic question that unlocks the door to effective Gospel communication is found in 1 Cor. 2:2.

You remember that the Apostle Paul had gone to Corinth, an idolatrous, pagan, intellectual and immoral city. In fact it was one of the most immoral cities in the Roman world. When Paul walked into that city he was the only Christian in the whole city. What did he do to found one of the greatest churches of the first century? His



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method: **"For I am determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified."** (1 Cor.2:2)

That is how he summed up his total message to the Corinthians. If we could talk to Paul personally, he would say, "My intelligence alone is not able to handle it. I do not have the logic or the argument to persuade the Corinthians to accept the truth of the Gospel." Then he said, with positive faith, "I resolve to know nothing among you save Jesus and Him crucified." Paul knew that there was a built-in communicative power to the Cross and the Resurrection. Paul knew well that the Holy Spirit takes the simple message of the Cross - with its message of redemption, love and grace - and infuses it into lives with authority and power.

I remember one particular night in 1952. It was early in our ministry. I was preaching in a stadium, and we were having 35,000 to 40,000 people a night. On this particular night very few people responded to the appeal to receive Christ. I left the platform a little bit discouraged. I shouldn't have, because I had learned over the years not to count numbers - the results are in the hands of the Holy Spirit if I have faithfully proclaimed His message.

But there was a German business-man there, a man of God. He walked with me off the platform. Putting his arm around me, he said, "Billy, do you know what was wrong tonight? You didn't preach the cross." The next night I preached on the blood of Christ, and a great host of people responded to receive Christ as Saviour. I used Paul's method: "I determined to know nothing among you, save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified"

**THE SPIRITS WORK IS VITAL.**

For "man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned" (I Cor. 2:14, NIV). Therefore when we proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ - Christ crucified and risen - there is built-in power. Proclaimers of the Gospel must always realise, as Paul stressed, that the natural man cannot accept the truth of Christ unless the veil is lifted by the Holy Spirit.

The glorious fact is this: The Holy Spirit takes the message, no matter how weak, no matter how primitive its delivery, and communicates it to the heart and mind with power. He breaks down the barriers. That's the supernatural power of the Spirit of God. No evangelist can have God's touch on his ministry until he realises these realities and preaches in the power of the Holy Spirit. In the final analysis, it is the Holy Spirit who is the communicator.

No matter where I am, when I stand before an audience, I assume that certain things are true in their lives. Certain psychological factors exist in every audience. As I begin to proclaim the Gospel, I can trust the Holy Spirit to strike certain responsive chords in every heart that hears.

1. **First, I know that life's needs are not totally met by social improvement or material affluence.** This is true around the world. Jesus said a man's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions.



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**2. Second. I know there is an essential emptiness in every life without Christ.**
All humanity keeps crying for something, and they do not know what it is. How many people today are crying for something, and nothing seems to fulfil? Money doesn't fulfil. Sensual experiences do not fulfil. Give a person a million dollars, and it still won't satisfy. Give him every form of sensuality. It will not satisfy. What is he looking for? God. Only God satisfies.

Across the years I have spoken at a number of the world's most famous universities. I've heard the pitiful cry of young people who are intellectually, psychologically, spiritually, lost. They are searching for something and don't know what it is.
Pascal put it right when he said, "There is a God-shaped vacuum in every life that only God can fill." When we proclaim the Gospel, we are talking directly to that emptiness. That person you are witnessing to, whether in personal witnessing or before a group, has a built-in receptivity to the message of the Cross. Why? Because Christ alone fills the void in his heart. He may not be conscious of the void, but it is there.

**3. The third thing I assume is that, among my hearers, there are lonely people.**
There is a cosmic loneliness. I once asked a friend of mine, a psychiatrist and theologian at a large university, "What is the greatest problem of the patients who come to you for help?" He thought a moment then said, "Loneliness. When you get right down to it, loneliness for God." We all sense something of that. For example, you can be in a crowd of people at a social gathering and, even with laughing people all around, feel a certain loneliness sweep over you. Its cosmic loneliness. A loneliness for God, because you are separated from your Creator. When you preach the Gospel, you can assume it is there in the audience.

**4. Fourth, I know I am always speaking to people who have a sense of guilt.**
Guilt is perhaps the most universal of all human experiences. It is devastating. When we were in England in the middle '60's, the head of a psychiatric hospital told me, "I could release half of my patients if I could find a way to get rid of their sense of guilt."

What a tremendously relevant message we have. This is what the cross is all about. When we preach Christ, we are speaking directly to the nagging, depressing problem of guilt. That problem is always there. You don't have to make people feel guilty. Most of them already know it. Tell them what their real guilt is - their sin against God. Only Christ can bring the sense of forgiveness and relief.

**5. Fifth, there is a universal fear of death.** An American university survey found that young people think more about sex than any other subject. Secondly, surprisingly, they think about death. The second greatest killer of students in the United States is suicide. The spectre is always there, and the subtle fear cannot be silenced.
But here is the glorious news : Our Lord came to nullify death. In His own death and resurrection, He made three things inoperative: sin, death and hell. What a message we have to give to those who are concerned about death.



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## POWERFUL PRINCIPLES OF COMMUNICATION.

Now here are some principles of communicating the Gospel that I have learned from my experience. All these can be realised if we preach Christ, backed by a holy life and filled with the Holy Spirit.

### 1. First of all, we are to communicate the Gospel with authority.

Preach it with conviction and assurance, knowing that "faith cometh from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ" (Rom. 10:17).

When I quote the Scriptures, I know I'm quoting the Word of God. It is God's authoritative message to us. It is an infallible book. We must never depart from that.
I have one basic criticism of modern theological education, especially in Europe and America. We are not putting enough emphasis on authoritative teaching. Where are the great preachers today? Where are the Luthers, the Calvins, the Knoxes and the Spurgeons? Churches are constantly writing me and asking me for recommendations. They say, "We want somebody who can preach. We have a good administrator. But we want a preacher." They want a preacher who can preach like our Lord Jesus did. But it takes hard work to prepare effective messages. People ask me sometimes how long it took me to prepare a certain message. I answer, "A lifetime."
Saturate yourself in the Word of God and prayer. Then, as Spurgeon said, "Take your text and make a bee-line for the cross."

Professor Sid Bonnell told his class at Princeton Seminary one day, "You are never preaching until the audience hears another Voice." You see, we have two sets of ears. We must hear the voice of the Spirit of God.

- Are people conscious of the OTHER voice when you preach?
- Are you filled with the Holy spirit when you preach?
- Are you anointed in your preaching?
- Do you preach with His authority?

Authority is absolutely essential to the communication of the Gospel. One reason the people listened to Jesus was that He spoke as one having authority. When you quote God's Word, the Holy Spirit will use it. He will never allow it to return void.

### 2. Preach the Gospel WITH SIMPLICITY.

That is the only way I know how to do it. You must learn to take the profoundest things of God and proclaim them in simplicity. Jesus preached in parables, making it simple for the people. We must communicate so that people understand. Preach it with simplicity.

### 3. Preach WITH REPETITION.

Professor James Denney of Scotland once said that Jesus probably repeated Himself more than 500 times. The Gospel may at times seem "old" to us, but it is "news" to multitudes. Repeat it.

### 4. Preach the Gospel WITH URGENCY.

Preach it for a decision. People are dying. You may be speaking to some who will hear the Gospel for the last time. Preach with the urgency of Christ. Preach it to bring your hearers to Christ. Preach for decision. Preach for a verdict as Christ did. The call to repentance and faith is part of the proclamation too.



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**5. We are to communicate the Gospel by a HOLY LIFE.**

Our world is looking for men and women of integrity. We desperately need communicators who back up their ministry with their lives. Our preaching emerges out of what we are. We must be holy people.

Those who have affected me the most profoundly in my life have not been the great orators and the great speakers. Rather, my life has been changed by those holy men and women that God has brought across my path.

Robert Murray McCheyne said, "A holy man is an awful weapon in the hands of God." Paul said, "I keep my body under subjection." We must take that seriously.

There are three avenues through which the devil attacks young preachers, it seems to me. (older ones as well). Money, Morals, Pride. We will battle them, I suppose, all our lives.

**6. We communicate the Gospel BY OUR LOVE OF OUR FELLOWMAN.**

Jesus said "All men will know you are my disciples if you love one another." (John 13:35). Do we really love lost souls as well as one another?

A layman in Boston went boldly into a hotel and walked up to a lady and said "do you know Christ?" She later told her husband about it. "Tell him to mind his own business," he snorted. She replied, "But my dear, if you could have seen the expression on his face and heard the earnestness with which he spoke, you would have thought it was his business." When you speak to people personally about Christ, do they think it 's your business because of the earnestness and love with which you approach them? Do you really love people? Does it show? Do they sense your compassion?

One of our associate evangelists was preaching at a university on one occasion. He tried to win the students to Christ, and they gave him a great deal of hostile reaction. After the lecture, one girl who was especially hostile came up to him and said, "I don't believe anything you said. I don't want to hear of Jesus ever again." He said, "I'm sorry you don't agree, but do you mind if I pray for you?" Stunned, she said "Nobody has ever prayed for me before." He bowed his head and began to pray. She stood, looking straight ahead. Then she noticed that while he was praying, tears were coming down his cheeks. When he opened his eyes, she too was crying. "No one in my whole life has loved me enough to shed a tear for me." They sat down on a bench, and that girl accepted Christ as her Saviour.

How many of you love so much that you shed tears?

**7. We communicate the Gospel by COMPASSIONATE SOCIAL CONCERN.**

**Social involvement is commanded in Scripture. Look at our Lord. He touched the leper. Can you imagine how that leper felt when he was touched? The leper had to go around ringing a bell and saying "Unclean, unclean, unclean." And Jesus touched him. Jesus taught by example as well as precept that we have a responsibility to the oppressed, the sick and the poor.**

While I think of the starving millions, I can hardly eat my food. Millions are going to starve in Ethiopia this year. They can't get any water in parts of Africa. We are to go into the world in the name of Jesus Christ - touching, alleviating need. Never forget the church goes into the world with an extra dimension of social concern. We go in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. We reach out to meet needs and give, but we must always say, "Given in the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ." That is our motivation.



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When Martin Luther King accepted his Nobel Peace Prize in Stockholm, he was asked, "Where did you get your motivation as a social reformer?" He said, "From my father's evangelical preaching."

**8. Finally, we communicate the Gospel by OUR UNITY IN THE SPIRIT.**

How vital it is to realise that if we can stay unified, yet also realise that there is a diversity in unity, we can turn the world upside down for Christ. For the first time in the history of the Christian Church, the possibility of fulfilling the Great Commission is in our grasp. But we must all work together in "the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace" (Eph. 4:3). This is our task.

**(End of Dr. Graham's abridged Sermon.)**
From "The Evangelist and His Preaching," by Billy Graham.
From THE WORK OF AN EVANGELIST.
. World Wide Publications.
Permission granted.

## LET'S TAKE ANOTHER LOOK. (G.R)

I sincerely trust that the preceding message is as meaningful and challenging to you as it has been to myself. It seems to summarise with profound simplicity, the whole task of preaching to win the lost. There are so many powerful truths encapsulated in this brief sermon. So many things we need to keep uppermost in our minds as we involve ourselves in the greatest task of winning people to Christ through the God ordained ministry of preaching.

I am happy that one of Dr. Graham's points commends the power of repetition because I intend to repeat and underline some of the important truths he shares. Let's go through his powerful message again.

**1. Preaching Christ and Him Crucified.**

The preaching Christ and the power of his atoning work accomplished on the Cross is absolutely essential to the Gospel . Over many years there has been a diminished emphasis or preaching on this all important subject. Many modernist teachers have spoken disparagingly about the Cross, referring to it as primitive, antiquated, unsophisticated and obsolete. They have substituted a social Gospel of good works that appeals to them as being more respectable and socially acceptable. They have abandoned the emphasis of the Cross, the Blood of Christ shed for sinners, the atoning work of redemption through faith in the finished work of Calvary. These are too unfashionable. Too primitive for intellectual minds. To such modernists, pride and respectability are more important.

Even evangelical preachers do not preach the Cross of Christ as frequently or as authoritatively as once they did. It has become more fashionable to rationalise the Gospel. To interpret it in psychological terms. Many have sought to present the Gospel as a biblical style of positive thinking. They have endeavoured to present Christ as some kind of guru, or philosopher, and make His teachings acceptable to an intellectually sophisticated generation.

**We must realise afresh that**

**the message of the Cross is timeless.**

The truth of salvation through faith in the atoning work of Christ is an eternal, indispensable truth. Paul tells us that Christ is the "Lamb, slain before the foundation of the world." (Rev.13: 8) Yet when we are given a prophetic glimpse into the eternal future, the



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living creatures around the throne of God are still praising the "Lamb, sacrificed for sinners." (Rev.5: 6-12) The thin red line of redemption through shed blood, runs right through the Bible, from Genesis to Revelation. It is eternal. It is intrinsic. It is indispensable. Without it there is no salvation!

Paul refers to "the foolishness of preaching," and affirms that it is through this very activity that men come to the knowledge of God. For the message is only foolishness to them that perish, but unto us who are saved it is the power of God. (1 Cor.1:18) Whatever our "intellectual" perspective may be, we must recognise and acknowledge that it is through the apparent "foolishness of preaching," that God has determined to save repentant sinners. If we allow our intellectual, humanistic pride to cause us to reject the foolishness of preaching the Cross and Christ Crucified, we may find ourselves pursuing the only alternative, i.e. "The preaching of foolishness." - modernism!

It is not necessary to actually preach the Cross every time we preach. It is not required that we tell the same story of the crucifixion in every message we present. But we must consistently present the imperative truth that it is only through Christ's death and resurrection that men may be saved. We must also preach from an inner and absolute dependence on what Christ has accomplished through His atoning death and resurrection. Such preaching is not "old fashioned," for the message of redemption is eternally relevant. It is absolutely up to date. In fact it is also futuristic.

**2. The Holy Spirit's work is vital.**

If we do not emphasise the fact of salvation through Christ's Blood, we do not give the Holy Spirit opportunity to bring conviction of sin to the hearts of our audience. If this does not occur, neither will true conversion. The miracle of salvation cannot occur without the Holy Spirit, and He cannot cause conviction and repentance unless the message of salvation has been faithfully sown in the heart. So we must give Him material with which to work, i.e. the preaching of Christ Crucified.

The reason why the preaching of the Cross and salvation is "foolishness" to many is because it is a spiritual truth with a mystical dimension that cannot be "understood" by the natural mind of man. (1 Cor. 14:2) It is precisely because of this intrinsic mystical element that we must allow the Holy Spirit room to move. We should always preach with a clear awareness of our total dependency on the Spirit. Don't feel that everything depends on your sermon. Do not imagine that if you do not preach a "good sermon," nothing will happen.

**It is NOT your sermon**

**that converts people.**

**It is the power of the Holy Spirit.**

So endeavour to be a channel for Him. Surrender your mind to Him every time you preach. Endeavour to "sense" what He wants you to say and allow His thoughts to flow through your words. Have faith that He will do His work.

I still remember the first time I heard Billy Graham preach in one of his great Crusades. The meetings had been running for several weeks and reports told of hundreds receiving Christ each night. I was a very young believer and extremely keen to see such a phenomena. Dr. Graham preached a very simple sermon. His manner was controlled and rather unemotional. The crowd listened attentively but I was not aware of any obvious crowd response. At the conclusion of his message, he gave a gracious, yet controlled appeal and then quietly stood back from the pulpit in what I later discovered was a characteristic stance. For what seemed liked an eternity nobody moved. In my heart I was willing him to step to the pulpit again and deliver a more impassioned appeal. I was beginning to think, "There



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will certainly not be hundreds flocking forward tonight." And then, quietly, a trickle of people began to come forward. They came, and kept on coming. From every part of the building they flowed towards the front until several hundred people stood across the front of the platform, joining in the sinner's prayer, and committing their lives to Christ.

**What happened?**

I quietly asked God, "What happened? What was that?" The response came clearly, "It was the Holy Spirit." Each subsequent time that I heard him preach, I recognised his quiet dependency on the Spirit. There are obviously many reasons why the "Billy Graham Ministry" has been so powerfully effective over the years. The Crusades are well organised. His publicity is good. He has excellent co-workers with him. His preaching is extremely acceptable. But above every other reason I believe the main one is that Billy Graham humbly depends on the Holy Spirit and leaves ample room and opportunity for Him to move and work, and the Holy Spirit makes the ministry effective and fruitful.

## NOW, LET'S BRIEFLY CONSIDER HIS OBSERVATIONS OF THE HUMAN NEEDS THAT ARE CONFRONTED.

### 1. Life's needs are not totally met by social improvement or material affluence.

In this materialistic age, we are apt to forget that man is basically and primarily a spiritual being and that his real needs and the solutions to them are in the spiritual realm. Sometimes we tend to think that successful and wealthy people have "got it made." That all their troubles are over and they have no worries or anxieties. In fact the opposite is frequently true. Their "successful career" has brought them a whole new set of stressful problems that eat into their peace of mind and contentment of spirit. Many people are aptly portrayed by the "rich young ruler" who appeared to have everything a person could desire yet longed for a richer and higher quality of life that only God could impart.

### 2. There is an essential emptiness in every life without Christ.

"The God shaped vacuum in every life that only God can fill." The people we meet each day whose lives appear to be "full," are the ones with the greatest spiritual need. They have endeavoured to fill a deeply perceived void in their lives with all that the sensual world has to offer. But it is like a jig saw puzzle with one piece missing. There is only ONE piece that will fit in there properly. We may try to make other pieces fit but they don't, no matter how hard we try. And so it is with the God shaped vacuum, Only one thing truly fits, -God Himself. People may try to fill their lives with business, pleasure, social activities, drugs, alcohol and sex. Nothing really fits. Nothing truly satisfies. Deep within the void remains unfilled and the deepest needs of the human being can only be met by the indwelling presence of God by His Spirit.

### 3. The pain of loneliness.

One of the most popular secular songs of recent years was the Beatle hit, "All the lonely people, where do they all come from?" This song topped the Hit-Parade for months. I believe it was because it spoke to a powerful felt-need in the lives of millions. On a planet full of people there are millions of lonely souls. Lonely from a multitude of different reasons, but all with the basic denominator of a lonely heart. The main reason for human loneliness is our estrangement from God. Man was created in God's image and fashioned to be a companion for God. Without that relationship there is a missing dimension. Man is basically, "lonely for God." Of course most lonely people do not recognise or acknowledge this, and part of our task as preachers is to help them to accept this fact and open up to the relationship which God offers through Christ. Once a person truly receives Christ into their life, it is possible for them never to be lonely again.



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**4. The Burden of Guilt.**

One of the hurtful legacies we receive from our original parents, Adam and Eve, is the burden of guilt. It is passed from generation to generation. It is often a nebulous factor, difficult to recognise for what it really is because of the great gap that exists between man and his creator.

An eminent Psychiatrist in Sydney, Australia, once shared with me about a treatment with which they were experimenting. It was based on the observation that a huge percentage of patients with mental problems, harboured a deep need to forgive, and to be forgiven. The doctor described how he first sought to have the patients forgive people whom they perceived to be the cause of their mental anguish. This frequently necessitated bringing together certain parties who may have contributed to the patients· problems and encouraging forgiveness, new empathy, and reconciliation. After this came the need to have the patient forgive themselves. This was usually an even more difficult exercise, but, as the Doctor and his staff persisted, they achieved a considerable amount of success. Although these two factors achieved an encouraging improvement in the condition of the patients, my friend was still baffled by another area in which the patient obviously needed release. It was, to him, a mysterious area in which he had no knowledge or experience. I spoke with him about Adam and Eve, their rebellion and its consequences. About the fact that man has an innate need to receive the forgiveness of God. I mentioned that few today were consciously aware of, or interested in the Law of God, but that sub-consciously every human soul was innately aware of it and the fact that we stand guilty before God and His Law.

The Psychiatrist himself became aware of his own guilt in this area and prayed a prayer for forgiveness and salvation. He also discovered that many of his patients improved enormously and many were set free, after receiving the forgiveness of God through faith in Christ.

Obviously this guilt does not always produce recognisable mental problems. Most of the people who are burdened with this onerous guilt problem are functioning normally in many areas of their life. But deep down, there is an incessant sense that all is not well. They are "out of tune" with the harmony of life. Often a little probing will bring this fact to the surface and then it can be dealt with. This is one of the tasks of the Holy Spirit. We need to give Him some material with which to work. Endeavouring in our preaching to touch upon these areas of common need and allow the Spirit to gently bring the guilty soul to repentance.

**5. The Universal fear of death.**

The two common denominators of human life are birth and death. As sure as man is born, he will inevitably die. This is a spectre which fills the sub-conscious mind continually. For many, death is the great unknown. The very fact that natural man knows so little about death and what lies beyond the grave, causes foreboding and fear. The message of Christianity is the message of One who experienced death, conquered its mystique, rose from the dead and ascended to God. He is the trail maker. He has made a way for us to follow Him, through the valley of the shadow of death, into the glories of the Everlasting Kingdom.

The reason why so many millions of people in our world are slaves of the great religious systems is the fear of death. Millions cling to the belief of re-incarnation as a means of escaping the grip of death. Millions more live their whole life in servitude to the gods in the hope of gaining divine favour beyond the grave. These are facts of which we need to be conscious as we preach the unsearchable riches of Christ.



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## FINALLY, LET'S CONSIDER THOSE ASPECTS OF PREACHING WHICH DR. GRAHAM DEEMS IMPORTANT.

### 1. Communicate the Gospel with Authority.

One way to preach with authority is to preach the Bible, then you may speak with God's authority. This is something that Billy Graham obviously learned early in his ministry. He is famous for declaring, "The Bible says.." Because he quotes the Bible so frequently, the authority of the Bible is with him. This provides material with which the Holy Spirit can work, bringing conviction, revelation, understanding and salvation. As preachers we obviously need to spend quality time in the Word. Reading it, devouring it, studying it, quoting it. Discovering what it has to declare on all the important issues of life. Let the Word dominate our thinking so that quoting it becomes second nature. If we preach our own ideas or opinions we have only our own experience with which to convince people. But if we preach what the Bible declares, God Himself will confirm its truth in many wonderful ways.

**The second way in which to communicate with authority is to preach with the anointing of the Holy Spirit upon you.** Jesus gave us this model on the first occasion He spoke publicly, in the synagogue at Nazareth. He confidently declared, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, for He has anointed me to preach the Good News." Friends, we must value and treasure the anointing of the Spirit. We must realise that without it we speak as mortal men. But when the special touch of God is upon us, we can speak as the oracles of God. (1 Peter. 4:11) The anointing is not necessarily manifest in emotional fervour. It is not simply speaking loudly or forcefully. It is a mystical presence of the Spirit in what we say which lends credibility, authority and persuasion to our words.

We can hardly expect to communicate with authority unless we are well prepared and thoroughly versed on the subject about which we are speaking. The anointing of the Spirit is essential but it does not excuse us from the need to prayerfully and carefully prepare our heart and mind.

**We need to study the scriptures,**

**waiting on God for**

**illumination and revelation.**

Asking God prayerfully how He would have us present this message. Seeking to understand the subject from His perspective. To feel about it as He feels and to communicate it with His love and compassion. We can also speak with authority as we realise that we are God's spokes-person to the crowd to whom we are preaching. There may be people in the crowd who may never hear the Gospel again. This is their opportunity. There is no higher calling or greater responsibility than that of a preacher. We stand between God and man. We need, by God's grace and ability, to be God's messenger to the very best of our ability.
**As we endeavour to be channels through which God can deliver His Word, our message will come through with authority and strength.**

### 2. Preach with Simplicity.

The great difference between Jesus and many modern preachers is that Jesus took the most profound subjects and simplified them, whilst modern preachers take the simplest of



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subjects and complicate them. There is often a problem of ego involved in that the preacher wants to project an image of profound knowledge and enhance his reputation as a masterful preacher.

**Jesus was not concerned about His reputation as a Preacher.**

**He was only concerned with having His audience understand the**

**great truths He conveyed.**

Perhaps we need to understand afresh the enormous difference between being "childish," and "childlike" Many preachers are afraid to be childlike in case they are perceived as being immature, lacking in knowledge and sophistication. Jesus Himself was childlike and said that unless we also became such we could not "enter the kingdom." We need to simplify our presentation of the Gospel, not by being childish and silly, but by approaching the great truth of the Gospel with a simplicity with which Jesus Himself dignified it.

**3. Don't be afraid to use repetition.**

There are many ways to say basically the same thing. The need to repeat important issues does not mean that we must become boring, always delivering the same message and the same stories. Jesus continually presented the same basic truths but He clothed them in different apparel. His use of parables and illustrations was brilliant. He told stories that were so simple that even the children understood them and yet his whole audience remained enthralled. They listened for hours, forgetting about food and rest, completely absorbed in His teachings.

**Most people need to hear**

**things several times**

**before the truth gets through.**

Part of the skill of an effective teacher is the ability to repeat things, using different approaches but emphasising the basic indispensable truths.

**4. Preach with Urgency.**

There must always be a sense of urgency about our preaching. Not an atmosphere of panic or confusion, but a real sense that our message is imperative and urgent, an awareness that important decisions must be made in the light of our message. This is true for three good reasons:-

**a) The people to whom we preach may never hear the message again.**

Circumstances of their life may dictate that this is the last opportunity they may have to hear the message of salvation through faith in Christ. So make your presentation simple, specific, urgent, and requiring an immediate decision. Always give an opportunity for people to respond at the conclusion of your message. This may be their last chance.

**b) Life is so fragile.**

Death is so inevitable. We should never presume that there will be another opportunity. I well remember an occasion that happened many years ago, when I was a very young preacher. It was a Sunday evening Gospel service and though there were approximately 1,000 people present, my attention was almost totally absorbed by two young men seated at the rear of the auditorium. When the appeal was given several



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people responded, but there was no response from them. I felt so concerned about them that I went quickly to the rear of the church and confronted them before they could leave. I told them of the strong concern I had felt for them and urged them to receive Christ. One of them was inclined to do so, but his companion discouraged him. "We are too young to think of religion" he said, "We have our lives before us. Perhaps when we are much older we can consider what you say." With these remarks they left the building to make their way home. Alighting quickly from one bus, intent on crossing the city square in order to catch another one, suddenly a huge truck hit them both. One died immediately, the other en-route to hospital. Two young men who had felt that death was many years away, suddenly plunged into eternity.

**c) There is also an urgency to our message right now because the return of Christ is at hand.**

Prophetic signs all around the world are indicating that we are heading for a cataclysmic event.

**I believe that it is appropriate and necessary for us to preach**

**the Return of the Lord**

**and to do it with a measure of urgency.**

People need to know that the Kingdom of God is at hand. They need to be made aware that this present age will climax soon with the return of the Messiah and His enthronement over the nations. The beloved Apostle John says, "The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdom of our Lord and His Messiah, and He shall reign forever and forever." (Rev. 11:15.)

**5. Communicating through Holiness of Life.**

In these days, more than ever before, there is a tremendous need for preachers to communicate the Gospel through their sanctified life style as well as their pulpit sermons. This has always been required, but I feel that today the ministry is under an unusual onslaught from Satan. He knows that the end is near. He also knows that there will be a tremendous spiritual harvest in these crucial days before the return of the Lord. He is determined to hinder the reaping of that harvest to the best of his ability.

**One of his prime weapons is to destroy**

**the credibility of the messengers.**

Sadly he has succeeded in doing this to a degree. Some of the most prominent, high profile preachers have been exposed before the eyes of the world. This has done enormous damage, especially in Asia, but also in many other parts of the world. Satan is still working in this fashion and his attempts are being further intensified. It behoves every one of us to recognise his strategy and be on our guard. "Let him that thinks he stand, take heed lest he fall!"

**6. Communicating through genuine love for our fellow man.**

It is so easy to become professional in our ministry. To go through the motions without the right motive. We must realise that the motives are more important than the motions. Sometimes it is needful to re-examine our priorities. To go back to square one. To prayerfully consider what is the real motivation of our ministry. Many preachers commence their ministerial life with excellent purpose and pure motives but somehow they became entangled later in the professionalism of their calling. We need to go back to the Cross. Back to the place where we started. To examine afresh our lives in the light of Calvary's Love.



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**We need to see people**

**in the light of the Cross, and**

**through the eyes of the Saviour.**

**We need to stay there until we feel His love for them in our own hearts.**

I often tell young preachers, "The ministry is about two things. It is about God, and it is about people." Our task revolves around serving God and serving people. We are His priesthood, standing between God and the people. We cannot do either of these things well without love.

**Loveless service, to God,**

**or our fellow man,**

**is totally unacceptable.**

**7. Communicating through Compassionate Social Concern.**

There are millions of people in our modern world who are in desperate need of compassionate concern. They represent a tremendous challenge to the Church of Jesus Christ. I believe too that they present a glorious opportunity to reap a great harvest amongst them. Jesus was definitely concerned with the social needs of the people. When He fed the multitudes, and healed the sick, He demonstrated that compassion. We must follow His example and reach out in practical ways to meet the needs and heal the hurts of our fellow man. The world is in turmoil and confusion, and only Christ has the answer. He is looking to us to meet the challenge and show that He is truly the "Light of the World."

**8. Communicating the Gospel by Our Unity in the Spirit.**

In these critical days of harvest opportunity we Christians must work together as never before. The task before us is too big for any denomination or organisation. It demands a "net-working" together such as has never previously been witnessed. We must combine our efforts, our resources and personnel, to make a mighty, united effort to bring Christ to the world.

## LEARNING ACTIVITIES.

1. **What five heart attitudes does Dr. Graham anticipate in every audience?**
2. **What are the eight principles of effective Gospel communication that Dr. Graham advocates?**
3. **Which of these principles need to be strengthened in your preaching?**
4. **Why do we need a sense of urgency in our preaching?**



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**Chapter Ten**

# SOME CHURCH PLANTING METHODS

There are numerous effective ways by which to plant a new congregation. We are going to briefly consider a few of them. However, you may be led to use some other way. Perhaps a maxim might be, **"If it works for you, do it."**

Some of the factors which may help to determine which method may be the most appropriate and effective are :-

## THE LOCATION IN WHICH YOU PLAN TO COMMENCE THE CHURCH.

You need to consider the political situation. Some methods of Church Planting are inappropriate because of government regulations and restrictions. For example, in many situations it is not permissible to hold any kind of public rallies, but it is possible to witness to people, one on one, and deliberately keeping a low profile.

This is also true in some cases because of the religious influence. In some multi-racial and multi-religious societies, the government will not permit large public rallies that may antagonise other religious groups.

## YOUR STYLE OF MINISTRY.

Another factor that may determine the approach you choose will be your particular gifting and style of ministry. Not every Church Planter has the kind of ministry that is suitable for conducting large evangelistic meetings. Some of the most effective Church Planters I know have a much lower profile ministry than do the evangelists who are able to conduct mass Crusades.

## THE RESOURCES YOU HAVE AVAILABLE.

You will also need to carefully consider the resources that are available to you. Some methods of Church Planting necessitate a strong team, whilst other methods can be operated effectively by an individual, or by a very small team. You need to consider the amount of financial help that is available too. Big Crusades usually require large budgets. You need to carefully investigate the likely expenses and determine from your available resources, whether you have the faith or finances to cope with that kind of outlay, and whether the results will justify that expense.

## WHERE WILL YOU PLANT THAT CHURCH?

The decision as to where you determine to plant a new church will usually have some divine, spiritual input. It is essentially something more than cold logic or natural reasoning that inspires a person to attempt the task of pioneering a new church.

**You usually begin to develop a**

**"more than natural" interest**

**in a particular place.**



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I have personally found, and I know this to be true in the experience of many of my colleagues, that you usually begin to develop a "more than natural" interest in a particular place. Perhaps you "happen" to visit a certain city and whilst you are there you find yourself becoming burdened and concerned for the spiritual needs of that people. You often find a prayer burden developing for that place and notice that whenever you pray the needs of that place come into your prayers and intercession.

**You can often discern the will of God by the length of time that such an interest lasts.** If after some months you seem to lose the burden for that place, then probably you have fulfilled what God wanted you to do. If, after a considerable time, the interest continues and becomes even greater, you may begin to realise that God is leading you to do something substantial about that place.

**You then need to begin to "wait on God" about that place.** Begin to ask Him pertinent questions about it. Try to develop a "listening ear," and an ability to discern what God's Spirit is trying to show to you about that place. God will begin to share all kinds of impressions with you and as you ponder on them His plan for you and that place will begin to take shape in your spirit. You will usually see the kind of approach that He wants you to take. He will frequently give you some indication of what will transpire when you get there and how things will go as you endeavour to plant a new congregation there.

## 1. THE EVANGELISTIC CRUSADE METHOD.

This method employs a very direct approach which when successful can be extremely fruitful, attracting large numbers of people, in a relatively short time. However, there are several important factors that will determine the ultimate effectiveness or otherwise.

### Where?

The venue in which you conduct the meetings is the first factor.
Is it a good venue, one to which people are willing to come?
Is it accessible to a good portion of the people you wish to reach?
Is there any public transport available?
Can people make their own way there in the event that little or no transport is available. If the Crusade is eminently successful is the venue available on a continuing basis?
If not, is there suitable alternative accommodation somewhere?

### Who?

Who will actually preach at the Crusade?
If you plan to do it, are you sure that you have this kind of public ministry?
If you have another preacher, an evangelist, to conduct the actual Crusade, you must be seen to be a visible and integral member of the "team." When the actual Crusade period is coming to a close you should begin to take over the leadership so that when the special meetings are concluding you are seen to be the leader. This gives you a profile before the people and helps them to recognise you as their spiritual leader.
Do you have an adequate music ministry team? musicians, singers etc.
Do you have some special features, testimonies, films, soloists etc.
Does your team have the kind of impact required for this type of event?

### What will the emphasis be?

A public Crusade needs an emphasis to draw the people.
Will it be the well known preacher?



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Will the theme be salvation, new life, healing, Bible prophecy?
What will the people be coming for?

In the modern context of Church Planting, the apostolic emphasis on signs and wonders and the ministry of healing has been seen to be a very powerful and effective means of drawing people to hear the Gospel. Effectual prayer for the sick will always attract people, particularly where the meetings are conducted in a low socio-economic area, because :-

Unfortunately, there are always many sick persons in such a place.
Many of them have no access to, or cannot afford the medical care they need. Such people often have basic faith for healing. When they hear the message of healing, they are quick to seize hold of it and to believe for their healing. Once the word gets around that God is healing the sick, people usually begin to flock to the meetings.

**Advertising and Publicity.**

One essential factor in a successful Crusade activity is to let the local population know that the Crusade is on. It is pointless hiring a large public facility if no one knows about the meetings. This can some times be an expensive item on the budget, depending upon the kind of advertising you plan to do. If modern means of advertising are available and your budget will allow you to use them, then these are obviously an effective means of announcing the meetings.

**Obtain Interviews on T.V. Radio, or in the Press.**

If you have some newsworthy feature in the Crusade you can often obtain an media interview. Or if you are buying space for adverts you can frequently persuade the media source to grant you an interview or an article too. It is important that you gain a positive response to this. So it needs to be powerful and filled with human interest.

**Make sure you can deliver what you promise.**

Dramatic advertising can cause a severe anti-climax if you boldly promise things that you are unable to substantiate. This can occur when the publicity has made bold statements such as, "The blind see. The deaf hear. Miracles take place." etc. If these things ARE happening - great. But if you advertise them and they do not occur, the people are disillusioned and disappointed and become sceptical. It is far better to use such advertising sparingly until God begins to perform these kind of things. Once they begin to occur they provide their own advertising. People begin to share their testimonies and recount what has happened to them. This word of mouth testimony is often the most effective means of advertising.

**Media advertising is not always available.**

I realise that for many of you modern media advertising is not available. You may have to rely on lower profile means. If you are campaigning in a smaller town, a large banner across the main street can usually be easily arranged. Ask yourself, "how do people advertise their goods and wares in this place?" Then use those methods too. Advertising in the local supermarket. Placing advertising posters in shop windows. Distributing attractive leaflets in the market place. If you can get permission to use a mobile sound system, drive throughout the city and neighbouring areas announcing the meetings over the sound system. Above all, use your imagination. Discover some novel ways to advertise your intentions. The main thing is to let people know that you are here and what you are doing and do it in a manner that will attract their interest and gain their favourable response. Somehow, some way, you have to attract the people's attention and interest.



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**The "Follow up" procedures are essential.**

Before you even commence your Crusade, you need to adequately prepare for the following up of all those who make commitments to Christ. Failing to do this is like going fishing without some means to keep the fish once you have caught them.

**You need good Counsellors.**

You must establish some relationship with new converts as soon as possible. i.e. before they leave the meeting in which they have made a commitment. Have them come forward to the platform and be met by yourself and your counsellors.
Establish a personal point of contact with them.
Pray with them. Give them some helpful literature.
Obtain their name and address.
Arrange to have someone visit them as soon as possible.
Make some practical arrangements to keep in close contact with them.
Encourage them to attend as many services as possible.

**Making the transition from "Crusade to Church."**

We now reach a very critical point in which we help the new converts to make a transition between attending exciting Crusade services, into being part of a local body of believers.

It is usually advisable to keep the Crusade going as long as it continues to have momentum. If the numbers of people attending remain consistently good and there is obviously a vital interest in the meetings, then by all means continue to hold them. The excitement and stimulation of the Crusade provides an excellent environment in which to introduce some basic teaching for the new believers. Begin to make a gradual transition. Don't close down the Crusade atmosphere, let it continue and begin to gradually phase in teaching and practices that will help you form the crowd into a body.

It is wonderful when the evangelistic momentum of the Crusade can be continued into the local church mode. There is a pronounced excitement and enthusiasm associated with a soul winning event that needs to be continued as long as possible. New converts make the finest Soul Winners. Try never to lose the excitement and momentum of evangelistic fervour. Even after the local church comes into being, endeavour to make it a soul winning church.

## 2. THE HOUSE MEETING METHOD.

This is a less dramatic and spectacular method of church planting than the Crusade approach, but it has much to recommend it and is much more frequently used.

It is a method which is open to many more ministries than is the Crusade style. I have known many effective Church Planters who have successfully employed this style of planting. They have not necessarily been high profile ministers. In fact the majority of them are average preachers to whom God has given a burden to extend His Kingdom through planting new congregations.

I fondly remember a good friend in Australia who planted many new churches throughout his ministerial life. He was not a powerful public speaker, nor did he possess a charismatic personality. He had been a farmer for many years before entering the ministry and I guess he knew some good agricultural principles that helped him understand the process of church planting.

He usually adopted a "tent Makers role.” God would lay a particular town on his heart and before long he and his family would move there. He would obtain some kind of employment to support them, then rent or purchase a house and begin to hold house meetings. He always started off quietly and plodded away until he had some converts and



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was able to form a local Body of believers. He never had spectacular results, but over a number of years he successfully planted many churches. His name never became well known. He was not a preacher of renown. He was never featured as a speaker at big conventions. But I am convinced that when he stands before His Lord in the light of eternity, he is going to receive a great reward for his faithfulness and obedience.

**Church Planting, Indonesian style.**

Church planting is very much a feature of Christian activity in Indonesia and the national church has grown impressively over recent years. For several good reasons the main method of Church Planting is that of commencing house meetings. There are many dramatic growth statistics to confirm the effectiveness of this method. All over the nation, thousands of new churches have been brought into being in this manner. However I will cite one example of a Church Planting ministry in the island of Java, and look at some of the principles they observe.

**Here are some basic principles of this method.**

**a) Form a team.**

Prayerfully assemble a team of people who are dedicated to planting new congregations. The team may be comprised of several families, and some single persons.
Begin to fellowship and pray together with special emphasis on building good relationship and mutual trust.

**b) Target a town, or village.**

Let the Holy Spirit lay some particular place on your hearts and then begin to concentrate your prayers on that population group. Learn to take spiritual authority and begin to exercise this in regard to your target area.

**c) Begin to contact people there.**

Move into the town and begin to make contact with local people. Introduce yourself in a friendly manner to some of the influential people in town.

e.g. The Mayor, and Councillors, School Principals and Teachers, Business people, Store owners, Tradesmen.

**d) Begin to Witness.**

Keep a humble attitude and a low, inoffensive posture. This is particularly necessary where you may have a potentially hostile religious environment. Make use of good, attractive literature.

**e) Make a Convert.**

Your first converts are extremely important. You are laying the foundation for the future church and you need good, solid material. So prayerfully trust God to give you good people who will form a strong nucleus and lay an enduring foundation for the new church.

**f) Commence meetings in the person·s house.**

Once you begin to hold meetings in the home of a local person, you begin to penetrate that neighbourhood. You indicate to the local people that this new church is not just the work of "outsiders," but is supported by local people whom they know. It is essential to indicate the local identity of this new group.

**g) Emphasise the Ministry of healing.**

The ministry of healing is the most effective key with which to open up a community. There are sick and hurting people in every community. Once some of them have been



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genuinely helped and healed, the word will begin to spread and others will quickly come. Sickness is a known need which impacts almost every family and healing is something in which everyone is interested.

You may not be known as a minister who has a healing ministry but this does not prevent you from praying for the sick. Jesus said that one of the marks of believers would be "they shall lay hands on the sick and they shall recover." Be sensitive and responsive to God's leadings. Pray for the sick whenever you sense that God is encouraging you to do so. You will be amazed to see how wonderfully God may use these expressions of faith.

## 3. PLANTING A DAUGHTER CHURCH.

Every local church should be desirous of reaching into the surrounding area and planting more churches. This is the most effectual means of reaching a wider community. The most effective way to accomplish this is by starting house meetings. The mandate of every local church is to "prepare the saints to do the work of the ministry." (Eph. 4: 12.) Every pastor should :-

### a) Concentrate on training local leadership.

Every church should have a leadership training program functioning. Ideally this must include training in local Church Planting. Other leadership functions should also be taught, and the participants should be used as much as possible to undertake ministry tasks in the local church. This increases the ministry potential in the church and prepares future leaders.
Ideally, the Senior Pastor should "pastor," or "shepherd', his leaders, and they in turn should shepherd the sheep. This provides, "in-service training" for the potential leaders and prepares them for the time when they will become pastors.

### b) Start house meetings in every geographical area around the church.

Every church needs a network of house churches. No church can adequately cater for the needs of its members in the larger celebration type meetings. People also need the closer intimacy of small group inter-action too. It is at this level of leadership that your assistant pastors can begin to function. Here they can gain valuable experience in the tasks associated with providing spiritual care and oversight for Christians.

### c) Use the House Church to break into that area.

In addition to the mutual edification that can occur in these smaller groups the informal non-religious setting can also provide an effective environment into which non Christian neighbours and friends can be introduced. Never allow the house group to become insular or isolated from its community environment. Encourage them to keep finding ways in which to relate to the community. Encourage evangelistic enterprises.

### d) Aim to ultimately form a new church there.

If a particular group shows very healthy signs of growth encourage them to focus on the possibility of becoming a new church in that locality. Concentrate some attention on the leadership and begin to groom them for the task of exercising a pastoral role in that situation.

**The Technique of Transplanting.**

Every gardener is familiar with the technique of transplanting, in which seeds are initially planted in a seed box and then later transferred into the garden. Whilst the plants are small they can grow up together under the close watch and supervision of the gardener. But as they become larger and stronger, they are then suitable to be transplanted.



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The local church should be seen as a seed box in which members can be closely supervised, watered and fed until they reach a certain stage of development when it becomes feasible to transplant them.

Such families can be transferred from the seed box into another geographical area where there is potential to begin a new church. Ideally this should not be done with just one or even two families. It is much better if several families who can form a fairly strong nucleus, can be transferred together. This must be done officially with the full blessing of the pastor and congregation, who should also appoint the leaders of the new congregation. This branch, or daughter church should remain under the covering of the parent church until it becomes mature enough to stand alone.

If more churches undertook to exercise this kind of expansion ministry there would be less "splits and divisions" in which some congregations are torn apart. New churches would then be born to happy parents and there would be less rivalry and friction. These things are extremely detrimental to the image and reputation of churches.

## 4. THE "PACT" METHOD.

This method, the **"Plant A Church Together"** style, is being successfully employed in numerous parts of Asia. I believe that one of the reasons why it is being blessed is that it involves, net-working, sharing responsibility and resources, uniting together and working together. These are all biblical principles that God loves to see and bless.

The "PACT" program relies upon certain parties coming into agreement and working arrangements whereby they can work together to plant a new congregation. This can be achieved in any of several ways.

**a) The Branch, or Daughter Church Program.**

In which a local church assists a Church Planter to commence a new congregation under their covering and oversight. This is most effective when the parent church also transfers a number of families who live in the area targeted. They then form the nucleus of the new congregation.

**b) Two or more neighbouring churches combining.**

When one church is perhaps not large enough to sponsor a new one, two or more churches within a given region may determine to combine in order to do so. Each may contribute several families who happen to live in the geographic region in which the new church will be planted. This is usually more easily achieved when the sponsoring churches belong to the same group or denomination.

**c) The District or Regional Presbytery project.**

This involves numerous churches within a defined local proximity combining their resources and personnel in order to plant more congregations. A projected example of this could be a sizeable town or city where there are already several churches of the same group. For example if there were fifteen churches, they might plan to increase to twenty within the next five years.

**Some of the intrinsic factors in such a program would be :-**

**a) The Pioneer Workers.**



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**b) Morale.**

The pioneer workers must have strong morale. They need to be courageous, and have a very positive outlook.

**c) Motivation.**

They must be strongly motivated with a passion that will persevere patiently in the face of discouragement, persecution, and antagonism. They must be "self starters," with discipline and determination. Church Planters always need to be highly motivated persons.

**d) Message.**

The pioneer must have a positive message to share and be able to communicate it in a manner that will attract and captivate people. A powerful public preaching ministry is essential.

**e) Ministry.**

Preaching is not the only aspect of ministry needed to pioneer a new congregation. The worker also needs ministry skills such as :-

Effective prayer ministry.
A healing and deliverance ministry.
Counselling ability.

**f) The support of the Workers.**

Significant financial demands are integral to Church Planting and the sponsors, together with the workers should determine beforehand how the required budget may be met. Some items in the budget might be :-
Rental for accommodation of workers and families.
Rental of suitable meeting place.
Operating expenses.
Financial support of the worker.

**g) The supervision of the Workers.**

Most pioneer workers are novices and need good supervision, guidance and encouragement. This is one of the reasons the daughter church style is good. The senior pastor of the sponsoring church can give pastoral oversight to the pioneer worker.

## 5. THE "CENTRES OF SERVICE" CONCEPT.

I personally believe that in the great harvest of the next few years the churches that will be planted will be different from contemporary traditional churches in several ways. I shall share some of the features that I feel will be different.

**a) Less "Religious."**

The new style of church will not be concerned with religious facades and appearances. It will abandon much of the religious ritual presently associated with churches. Its style will be more simplistic, realistic, practical, and meaningful.

**b) Less Denominational emphasis.**

There will be a tremendous increase in "Independent Churches" that will relate to each other in fellowship rather than by institutional affiliations. Local churches will also relate to each other by geographical proximity rather than because of denominational or doctrinal affinities.



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**c) Less emphasis on Church Buildings.**

Congregations will be less concerned with church buildings and will tend to meet in non-religious type facilities, utilising ware-houses, social clubs, public buildings etc.

**d) A Polarisation between the True Church and the false.**

It is presently difficult at times to perceive the distinction between "Christianity," and "Christendom." But there will dramatic developments that will clearly high-light the differences.

**e) More Lay Ministers involved.**

Modern Churches tend to have a clear demarcation between their "clergy" and "laity," but in the end time Church of Christ there will be no such distinctions. The ministry will not be restricted to "ordained ministers," but will comprise of an army of labourers that the Holy Spirit will recruit from the ranks of Christian lay persons, e.g. business men and women, school teachers, house wives etc.

**f) More Charismatically Oriented.**

The giftings of the reapers will not be those gained in seminaries or colleges but those endowed by the Holy Spirit. Ministers of the true church will be far more dependent on the power of the Spirit than on any human accomplishments or skills.

**g) More Cultural Authenticity.**

The indications of Western Colonialism, which are all too evident in the church today, will recede dramatically and be replaced by authentic cultural indicators. For example, the church in China has already become very distinctly, the Chinese Church. It has a distinctly different style and appearance to that church which was originally planted by Western Missionaries.

**The Church in China today,**

**HAS A CHINESE FACE,**

and that is one of several reasons why it is flourishing and growing at such a pace. It could never have attained this growth rate had it remained a church with a Western face.

**h) More Community Service related.**

The churches that the Holy Spirit will plant all over the world will have the Biblical New Testament church as their model. One of the outstanding features of that church was its impact upon the social structure of its day.

The believers of the future church will be a Kingdom of priests who will cause a massive Kingdom impact on their respective societies. They will not live their Christian lives in separateness and isolation from the main stream of their community, locked in the ivory towers of their ornate church buildings. They will be out amongst their peers, impacting their communities and bringing the life of the Kingdom to bear upon their humanistic societies.

Whilst teaching in the Philippines recently I believe that God gave me a prophetic glimpse of a new kind of Christian ministry that He wants to foster. I have been challenging Church Planters with that vision ever since and am taking this opportunity to share the concept with **YOU**.

The vision relates to the founding of what I am calling **"CENTRES OF SERVICE."** i.e. Centres that are founded in order to realistically serve the needs of the community.



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Instead of pioneering of a "Church', in the traditional sense, with the usual "church activities" **the vision is to establish a centre that can offer various legitimate services to the community.** The pioneer goes into the new area with a clear purpose, to serve that community in the Name of Jesus.

The concept is based on the realisation that Jesus, our ultimate role model, came into this world as a servant. (Phil.2:1-5.) He said, "I am not come to be served, but to serve." As His disciples we also are to be servants in His Name. This should be uppermost in our minds as we plan to move into a new community.

**Serving the Community.**

The pioneer minister might initially conduct a door to door survey of every home in the target area. He would present himself at the door and announce, "My name is..... and I am calling on every house in the area in an endeavour to identify the social and spiritual needs of this community. I wonder if you would kindly assist me by answering a few simple questions?

Firstly, could I have your family name please?
Do you have any children? How many?
Are they boys or girls, and what ages are they?
How many of them are presently at school?
Are you experiencing any problems with which we can help you?
What kind of program or facilities might help your children?
Would a 'child minding program' help you manage your family affairs better?
Would an English language class help them?
Would a literacy class help them?
Would any of them like to attend some guitar lessons?
Would your children benefit if a youth club were opened?

There are many activities of this nature that someone in your team could conduct which would be helpful and beneficial to local youngsters.
Once you have them attending your centre, the barriers are broken.

**You could commence a :-**

- Marriage Guidance Centre.
- Family Planning Centre.
- English Language Centre.
- Social Centre for lonely people.
- Child Minding Centre or kindergarten.

By engaging in a program such as the one I am suggesting, several things would be accomplished.

- You could introduce yourself to every family in town.
- You could make numerous friendly contacts.
- The people see that you are here to try to help them.
- You appear as someone genuinely interested in their welfare.
- Your friendly, helpful image is established.
- They realise that you are not a religious freak.
- You meet them at the level of their interests and needs.

By being able to direct people to the Centre, towards a variety of activities in which they or their family may be interested, people get to know where you are located.



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It makes the centre of your activities much more approachable. People realise that you are not here simply to peddle religion, or "Pie in the sky when you die." You are a real person, interested in the real needs of their lives.

**What kind of a church would you like to attend?**

You should also include some "church related" questions in your survey. You could ask :-

- What is the reason why you do not attend a church?
- What kind of a church would you like to attend?
- What can we, as a local church do for you?

**There are as many Keys as there are doors.**

There are many ways and methods that one might use in order to plant a new church. We need to use our sanctified imagination and let the Holy Spirit share His tactics with us. **Jesus has the "Key of David, He opens doors that no man can close, and closes doors that no man can open." (Rev. 3: 7, 8.)**

**Always remember that, "No door is locked if you have the right key."**

If God wants you in a certain place, then NO man can keep you out.

## LEARNING ACTIVITIES:

1. **Briefly describe 3 of the Church Planting methods discussed in this chapter.**
2. **Which style best fits your ministry and why?**



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Church Planting Institute
Biblical Principles Of Church Planting

**Chapter Eleven**

# POWER EVANGELISM IN CHURCH PLANTING

As we search the Scriptures for principles relating to effective Church Planting we cannot ignore the important part that power evangelism played in the birth and growth of the early church. Throughout the book of Acts, we see multiple examples of the effectiveness of power encounters and the manner in which such encounters

- opened doors of utterance,
- attracted large crowds of people, and
- helped to establish the church in numerous new areas.

The effectiveness of Power Evangelism is certainly not restricted to Bible days. There are many modern examples of the effective employment of this Bible ordained ministry and its effectiveness in breaking into new areas of witness and church planting. The great twentieth century revival in Latin America, has been powerfully sponsored by supernatural signs and wonders. The phenomenal growth of the Charismatically endowed churches in South America are an indisputable evidence of several things:-

- The power of God has not been withdrawn from the church.
- Miracles are still being evidenced in the 20th Century.
- Power Evangelism is still the most effective method of breaking new ground.

## 1. POWER EVANGELISM AS EXERCISED BY JESUS.

Jesus is our supreme role model for every aspect of our life. This is certainly true in respect of our ministry. He is our supreme Biblical Model. No Christian would ever want to dispute that. He is also our finest example as a Minister of God. As we seek to be fashioned in His image we must acknowledge that the supernatural aspect of His life is undeniable. If we would wish to pattern our ministry on His, then we must believe to see the supernatural manifested in our ministry.

**He is our**

Glorious Example.

- Wonderful Inspiration.
- Main Motivation factor.

## 2. WHY DID JESUS HEAL THE SICK?

### a) To fulfil His prophetic ministry.

Matthew tells us that, "He healed them all, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet, saying, 'Himself took our infirmities and carried our sicknesses' ." (Isaiah. 53: 4-6. Matt. :16,17)

### b) To express His compassion.

Numerous scriptures speak of the compassion of Jesus motivating Him to meet the great needs of the people. Jesus was "moved with compassion, and healed their sicknesses." (Matt. 14:14. 20:34. Mk. 1:40, 41. 5:19. 9:22.)

### c) To convey the mercy of God.

Speaking of Epaphroditus, Paul says, "The Lord had mercy on him, and on me also, and He healed Epaphroditus." (Phil. 2:27)



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**d) To prove that God had truly sent Him.**

The healings and miracles that accompanied the ministry of Jesus were said to be signs or confirmations that God had sent Him, approved Him and was with Him. Peter calls Him, "A Man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by Him in the midst of you." (Acts. 2:22.)

**e) To destroy the works of the Devil.**

Sickness is a work of the devil and Jesus was manifested to destroy it.

"For this purpose was the Son of God manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil." (1 John. 3:8)

"How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth , with the Holy Ghost and power, who went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed of the devil for God was with Him." ( Acts. 10: 38.)

**f) To manifest the works of God.**

"That the works of God might be manifest in Him, I must work the works of Him that sent me while it is day." (John.9: 1-7.)

**g) To manifest the Glory of God.**

The mighty works of God were performed by Jesus that His Father might be glorified. Standing before the tomb of Lazarus, Jesus said to Martha, "If you would believe you would see the Glory of God."
(John. 11 :40)
These are all excellent reason why we should desire to emulate Jesus and minister healing to the sick and afflicted.
They are mighty indicators that the Kingdom has arrived, and they should accompany our ministries.

## 3. THE GREAT COMMISSION INCLUDES HEALING THE SICK. (Mark 16: 15-22)

"Go ye therefore into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature and these signs shall follow them that believe. In my Name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them. they shall lay hands on the sick and they shall recover. And they went forth and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following. Amen."

"Jesus went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed of the devil, for God was with Him." (Acts. 10 :38)

Healing manifestations and miracles :-

- Will accompany those who "GO," into all the world to preach the Gospel.
- Confirmed the validity of the Gospel to unbelievers.
- Laid the foundations of the early church world wide.

## 4. WE MUST "GO."

In order to see the fulfilment of this promise we must first be prepared to GO out and preach the Gospel. God blesses our going because.

- It is a step of Obedience.
- It is a step of Faith.



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**Some preachers never see the signs**

**following their ministry**

**BECAUSE THEY NEVER "GO"**

**IN OBEDIENCE TO GOD BY FAITH.**

The early disciples were men of faith and obedience. They began to do what Jesus had commanded them, going into all the world and preaching the Gospel everywhere, and God accompanied them to confirm their message with signs and wonders. God is still the same today. If we will obey Him, we can expect Him to confirm His Word with miracles and healings.

The particular methodology outlined in Mark. 16 :18. "they shall lay hands on the sick and they shall recover," can be identified as "Evangelistic Healing."
This is the method commanded by Jesus for those who would go into all the world to preach the Gospel to every creature.
This is one of the signs that He said would accompany them.

- Go into all the world, preach the Gospel to every creature.
- These signs shall follow them that believe.
- In My Name they shall cast out devils.
  They shall lay hands on the sick and they shall recover.

"and they went out and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them, and confirming the Word with signs following."

## 5. HOW TO HEAL THE SICK.

The Ministry of Healing is not reserved to a select few who are perceived to have "the gift of healing."
Nor to a minority of preachers who are renowned as healing evangelists.

Jesus said that these signs would follow :-

**Those who go out to preach the Gospel.**

The Gospel is the "Good News" about Jesus. An integral part of that good news is that

- "He has borne our sicknesses and carried our diseases."
- Jesus bore our sicknesses as well as our sins.
- He has provided healing as well as forgiveness.
- He healed the sick throughout His earthly ministry.
- He commissioned His disciples to heal the sick.
- He is the same, yesterday, today and forever.

"Then He called His twelve disciples together, and gave them power and authority over all devils, and to cure diseases, and He sent them forth to preach the Kingdom of God, and to heal the sick." Luke 9: 1, 2.

"and they departed and went through the towns, preaching the Good News, and healing everywhere." Luke. 9: 6.

**He has never withdrawn that Commission.**

The Good News is that Jesus is alive.
That He still has power to save, and to heal the sick.
Some preachers preach the bad news, instead of the good news.
They preach that Jesus no longer manifests His power.
They preach that miracles ceased with the death of the apostles.
They explain away the miracles of the Bible.



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They explain why it is futile to believe for miracles today.

The Bible says that FAITH COMES BY HEARING THE WORD OF GOD. (Rom. 10:17.)
But when these preachers are through, faith doesn't come, " it leaves.

Some preachers never mention or encourage faith.
Some undermine and destroy peoples· faith.
Some excuse the need for real faith.
But these preachers never see signs or wonders, or healings.
And the people to whom they preach never receive healing.

Jesus always encouraged people to believe.
"Said I not to you that if you would believe you would see the Glory of God?"

**Paul's preaching always stimulated faith.**

Acts. 14: 8-10.

"And there sat a certain man at Lystra, crippled in his feet from his mother's womb, who had never walked. The same man heard Paul speak; Who steadfastly looking at him and perceiving that he had faith to be healed, said with a loud voice, "Stand upright on your feet!" And he leaped and walked."
As the man listened to Paul, faith began to grow in his heart.
When Paul realised this, he further encouraged him to exercise that faith.
He commanded him to "stand upright on your feet."

**Your Word of Authority.**

Paul's preaching inspired faith.
We must never be afraid to preach in a manner that inspires faith.
We must declare the Good News of the Kingdom of God.
We must also encourage people to believe and to exercise their faith.
We should encourage them to do things that they could not previously do.

## 6. PRAYING THE PRAYER OF FAITH.

"And the prayer of faith shall save the Sick, and the Lord shall raise him up." (James. 5: 15)

The Bible makes it clear that prayer is only effective when it is offered in faith.

"But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed. For let not that man think that he shall receive anything from the Lord." (James. 1: 6,7)

**The Prayer of Faith.**

**a) Is based solely on God's Word.**

True faith is not moved or motivated by anything but God's Word.
It is not based on sense knowledge, feelings, or human knowledge.
It stands solely on what God declares.
It does not have its own ideas or theories. It subscribes to the truth of God's Word.
It does not build doctrine on what it understands, but on what God declares.

**b) Faith knows the Will of God.**

Faith knows the Will of God in respect of healing because it accepts what His Word declares.

**c) Faith has a definite, specific objective.**

Bible type faith does not waver before diagnoses, or prognoses. It stands upon God's Word that "with God nothing shall be impossible."
Faith's asking, believing, and receiving is specific not vague or abstract.



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Some preachers never know when their prayer has been answered because they never asked for anything specific.

**d) Faith has the right motive.**

Faith does not act for its own benefit or fulfilment.
It operates with the right, pure motives.

**e) Faith has a bold confession.**

Faith is not afraid to boldly declare what God has already declared.

**f) Faith's actions agree with its confession.**

Faith is not only strong on talk, it is also strong on action.
Faith does what it says, acts like it talks.

**g) Faith Asks and "Receives."**

Faith does not only pray to God, it determines to receive from Him too.

**h) Faith continues steadfastly.**

If the answer to faith's prayer is not evident immediately, faith persists until that answer comes.

**i) Faith gives the glory to God.**

Abraham, "Staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God, and being fully persuaded that what He had promised, He was able also to perform." (Romans. 4 : 20, 21)

**Principles that produce Healings.**

**a) Preaching the Word of God.**

Apostolic preaching was Christ exalting.
They preached that Jesus is Lord.
Lord of creation.
Lord of redemption.
Lord over Satan.
Lord over sin, sickness and demons.

**b) Encouraging people's faith.**

"Then Peter said, ' Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have give I thee. In the Name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk.' And he took him by the right hand and lifted him up; and immediately his feet and ankle bones received strength." (Acts. 3:6, 7)

**c) Exercising spiritual authority.**

"And His Name, through faith in His Name, has made this man strong.yes the faith which is by Him, has given him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all." (Acts. 3: 16)

**d) Speaking with authority by the power of the Spirit.**

"Then Peter, filled with the Holy Ghost, said to them.." (Acts. 4: 8)

The Apostles did not speak with enticing words of human wisdom, but with the power and demonstration of the Spirit.

**e) Acting with holy boldness.**

They were familiar with God's healing covenant.
They were eye witnesses of Christ's healing ministry.
They possessed a positive assurance of faith.
They acted with pure motives.



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**f) They performed many signs and wonders.**

Miracles dramatise the Gospel presentation.
Miracles authenticate the validity of the Gospel.
Miracles attract the multitudes.

**g) Miracles establish people in the Faith.**

"My speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of men's wisdom, but in the demonstration of the Spirit and in power: that your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God." (1 Cor. 2: 4,5)

**8. THEY SHALL RECOVER. (Mark. 16: 18)**

Not all healings are immediate or instantaneous. This was true in Bible days and it is true today.
In Luke 17 : 12- 15. we find Jesus cleansing ten lepers of whom it is said, "And it came to pass that as they went they were healed."

## LEARNING ACTIVITIES.

1. **What three things did power evangelism accomplish in the early church?**
2. **State three of the reasons why Jesus healed the sick.**
3. **Explain why those three things should encouraged us to seek to emulate Him.**
4. **Why might we expect that obeying the Great Commission would be accompanied by Signs and Wonders?**
5. **Please give three characteristics of the Prayer of faith.**
6. **Please state three things that would help people to be healed.**



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**Chapter Twelve**

# ESTABLISHING THE CHURCH

"May the God of all grace, who has called us to share His eternal glory, by Christ Jesus, after that you have suffered a while, make you complete, stablish, strengthen and settle you. To whom be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen." (1 Pet. 5 : 10, 11)

This scripture has a particular application to the theme we are presently considering. i.e. establishing a new fellowship.

## THE GOD OF ALL GRACE.

If we have managed to bring a new fellowship of believers into being, it is the grace of God that has accomplished this. Only He is able to accomplish such a task. We therefore need to keep this in mind and to realise that the future of this work too, is all in His capable hands.
We cannot take any credit for what has been accomplished.
Nor should we be too intensely concerned about the future of it.
It is the Lord's work, and He is responsible for it.

## AFTER YOU HAVE SUFFERED A WHILE.

The initial time of establishing a new congregation is not always easy. There are many potential problems to be faced. Many situations to be prayerfully resolved.

A church is comprised of people, and where there are people there are usually problems to be resolved. But this is all part of the process of growing up together into Christ Jesus. Such problems should not be ignored or swept under the carpet, but faced in faith and love. As we allow the Holy Spirit to successfully steer us through this period, we will give Him opportunity to put the seal of God upon this newly birthed fellowship.

This early period is extremely critical. We are laying the foundations for this fellowship that will influence it for many years to come. I have personally observed over many years that the foundations of a church are extremely important. Some churches never recover from bad decisions that are made during the initial formation of the fellowship. Be sensitive to this challenge and determine to lay good, solid, enduring foundations.

## MAKE YOU COMPLETE.

The word rendered "complete" is frequently translated "perfect" in other versions. But in this context, complete is very appropriate. It conveys the idea of completeness, togetherness, harmony, oneness, unity, integration. These are all factors that a new group of believers should hold high on their list of priorities. If these ingredients are part of the foundations, this Church has the right foundation upon which to build a strong congregation.

## STABLISH.

This word is linked to establish, stabilise, to make firm and steadfast.
It can well be applied to the foundations of a building. If these are not adequate then whatever is built upon them is in danger of collapsing.



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**STRENGTHEN.**

This word may be applied to the building that one might erect on the firm foundations. It needs to be a robust, strong, building. To withstand adverse weather, winds and cyclones.

**SETTLE YOU.**

The original word translated settle is certainly applicable to the whole idea of laying a good foundation. However, a biblical word study will reveal that its roots are also linked to some other concepts that are also important to our theme. Some of the ideas within the root word are —advise, commend, appoint, ordain, and set forth. These are all concepts to which we shall be referring briefly as we consider some of those matters that are essential to laying a good foundation.

**LET US NOW CONSIDER BRIEFLY SOME OF THE ESSENTIAL FACTORS.**

**1. FIRM FOUNDATIONS.**

**a) Salvation.**

You must make be sure that the nucleus of people who will form the basis of this fellowship are all truly born again. There are some doctrinal issues about which we may "agree to differ" but this is not one of them. In our manual on soul winning we have emphasised the need to have a solid, biblically based assurance of true salvation. Take all the converts through this material. Dialogue with them. Draw them out. Have each one make a clear confession of faith and give vital testimony to this fact.

This is particularly important when you begin to appoint office bearers in the church. Sometimes there may be an initial shortage of people qualified and adept at the various tasks that must be undertaken. This may tempt you to appoint someone who is not a true believer and wholly committed to Christ, and to Christian ethics. You can make all kinds of problems for yourself and the church in this way.

**b) The Bible.**

Please ensure right from the outset, that your people are exposed to the teachings of God·s Word. Aim to be a "Bible based Church."
Make Bible study and teaching a priority.
Plan to build this fellowship around the truths of God's Word.

**c) Fellowship.**

Here is a word with numerous connotations, some of which are not necessarily biblical. The biblical word translated fellowship, is "Koinonia," which essentially implies commitment to a partnership. A good marriage can be a fine illustration of this, " where two persons are completely committed each to the other.

**So look for commitment from the people.**

- Commitment firstly to God and His Kingdom.
- Commitment to Jesus, His teachings and His person.
- Commitment to Biblical principles and ethics.
- Commitment to fellow members of the Body of Christ.

Commitment to those believers who are part of the local Body of which you are a member.

**Fellowship together can take many forms :-**

- Congregational celebration.
- House church inter-action.



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- Communal relaxation.

**d) Prayer.**

The members of the early church continued steadfastly in several things one of which was united prayers.
Their prayer meetings became the power house for their activities.
"More things are wrought by prayer than this world dreams of."

**e) Evangelism.**

Immediately after the founding of a church, particularly when that church has been founded through some form of evangelism, is the time to begin encouraging the continuance of a powerful evangelistic influence.

Don't let the new converts' ardour cool off. Don't let their zeal wane. Whilst they are still in the fervour of their first love lay a strong emphasis on witnessing and leading people to Christ. This is the time when many of the people still have close ties with friends who are not yet Christians. Encourage them to maintain contact with their friends and bring them along to church.

## 2. LEADERSHIP.

Good leadership is essential to effective growth and development in a local church.
If you have pioneered a new church but do not plan to remain indefinitely :

**a) Do not leave the church too soon.**

Whilst the church is in the enthusiasm of early growth try to encourage that pattern as long as possible. The spirit of revival and growth is exciting and attractive. While ever a fire is burning, people will want to come and warm themselves there.

**b) Do not stay there too long.**

However, there is also a danger that you may stay too long. Remember that the ministry that is successful in opening up a new area is not always the one that is suited to remain there. In the initial stages of a building project, the 'bull dozers' have an important role to play, but once the foundations are laid and the building begins to take shape, those same 'bull dozers' can cause a lot of damage. Once the evangelist has done his work, a shepherd needs to take over. It is a different ministry entirely.

Nevertheless it is often the case that the pioneer also becomes the pastor. I would say that in the planting of smaller churches, e.g. house churches, this is frequently the case and has proven eminently successful.

**c) Make sure that good leadership is in place before you leave.**

If it is your purpose to move on once the church has been founded take good care to ensure that adequate leadership is in place before you leave. Any delay in replacing the leadership can be disastrous. The new believers are often quite vulnerable at this stage and do need a shepherd.

**d) Ordain the new leadership to their task.**

As the founder of the new church, you need to pass on your mantle, and give your blessing to the new leader and the people need to be aware of this. They need to know that the new leader has your confidence and your blessing. Do whatever you can to have them transfer their loyalty from you to the incoming leader.

**e) Be supportive and helpful in every way.**

If you leave the area always be positive in your attitude towards the new leader. Should any of the people continue to contact you, strongly encourage them in their loyalty to



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the new leader. If there are any real problems there, make contact with your replacement and not with the local members.

## 3. CHURCH MEMBERSHIP.

There are two aspects to church membership,

### a) spiritual.

This concerns God's role in adding people to His Church.
The Church of the firstborn have their names written in Heaven. (Heb.12:22-24)

"But they are written in the Lamb's book of life." Rev. 21: 27

"and the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved." (Acts.2:47)

This "adding to the Church" by the Lord is a spiritual activity of the Holy Spirit in which He sovereignly adds people to a church, bonding them to the other members who are part of that fellowship. Once God has done this we need to beware that "what God has joined together, no man should tear asunder." Some Christians move much too easily from one church to another, frequently without seeking the Lord's permission to do so. There is definitely a function in which God adds people to a particular fellowship and we need to observe and honour His wisdom in doing so.

### b) natural.

Some Christians are suspicious and unconvinced about the need to assume some kind of legal membership of a particular church. They believe it to be unscriptural. However there are numerous indications in the Bible that books were kept and that people's names were recorded in them.

The Israelites had their names recorded in the books of their nation.
The growth of the early church was recorded statistically.

Jesus commenced with twelve disciples.
Then He ordained a further seventy.
More than 500 saw Him ascend into Heaven.
3,000 were added on the Day of Pentecost.
A further 5,000 were added in Acts.4:4.

There is a very definite advantage in having a properly constituted membership to which the members are legally joined.

- It is a measure of commitment.
- There is security in such a commitment.
- Discipline can be properly administered when necessary.
- Legal responsibilities can be properly discharged.
- Business undertakings and commitments can be legally undertaken.

N.B. In certain circumstances, because of political or religious restrictions, it is unwise to keep formal records or lists of members or adherents. In such circumstances refrain from doing so.

## 4. DISCIPLESHIP.

Each local church is responsible before God for the effective discipling of its members.

This is one of the most important functions of the Apostolic ministries which God places in the Church.



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"And He, (Christ) gave to the Church Apostles, Prophets, Pastors, Teachers and Evangelists, to prepare and equip the saints to do the work of the ministry and edify the Body." (Eph. 4: 11,12)

- Discipleship is the apprenticeship system of the church.
- Jesus spent most of His ministry discipling 12 men.
- They in turn were to commit what they had learned to faithful men who shall be able to teach others also. ( 2 Tim. 2:2.)
- Discipleship implies teaching by example as well as word.
- Discipleship demands discipline.
- The Church Planting Training Program is a form of Discipleship training.

## 5. STEWARDSHIP AND FINANCES.

It is important to approach this subject positively as early as possible in the life of the new congregation. It is essential that the people, as a congregation, hold a right and biblical concept of financial stewardship. Withholding God's proper financial due, can cause Him to withhold His blessings upon a church. (Malachai. 3: 8-12.)

Understanding the divine principle that "it is more blessed to give than to receive," can release great blessing into a life or congregation. Conversely, the failure to understand and practice this may "close the windows of Heaven."
It is also extremely important for a church to understand their responsibility to minister to their leadership in material blessings. "If we have sown unto you in spiritual things, is it a great thing if we shall reap your carnal things?"
( 1 Cor. 9 :11.)
"If the Gentiles have been made partakers of their spiritual things, they are under obligation to minister to them in spiritual things." ( Rom. 15 : 27.)

**Some biblical principles about giving.**

1. Should give ourselves to the Lord first. (2 Cor. 8 :5)
2. Give willingly. (2 Cor. 8 : 3,12)
3. Give cheerfully. (2 Cor. 9 : 7)
4. Give generously. (2 Cor. 8:2. 9:13)
5. Give proportionately. (2 Cor. 9 :6. 8: 14,15)
6. Give regularly. (1 Cor. 16 : 1,2)
7. Give systematically. (2 Cor. 9 : 7)
8. Give lovingly. (2 Cor. 8 : 24)
9. Give thankfully. (2 Cor. 9 : 11,12)
10. Give unto the Lord and His saints. (2 Cor. 9 : 12, 13)

## 6. FACILITIES AND BUILDINGS.

Soon after the formation of a new congregation it is likely that the matter of a church building or facility will be raised. This frequently occurs because of the problems often associated with renting or leasing premises such as:

- Inconsistent availability.
- Unsuitable atmosphere.
- Rising rental charges.
- The necessity to move equipment in and out.
- Having to move from place to place.

These are all very real problems and promote an understandable desire to acquire permanent premises.



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The main problem in acquiring by building or purchasing a permanent facility is the matter of finances, (or lack of!) The new fellowship that has no lack of finances is fortunate indeed. In most places contemporary situations the cost of land and of building has become a serious problem for most churches. Where the decision to build or purchase is taken too soon it is frequently true that other important matters must suffer financial privation.

**My advice would be :-**

- Rent or lease as long as it is possible.
- Prioritise the need to take care of the leader and his family.
- Prioritise other responsibilities and challenges.
- Do not undertake a large loan too early. Some fellowships, burdened with paying off a large loan, neglect other important commitments.

A congregation is in a far better position to acquire their own premises when the congregation has grown beyond say 300 members.

When the decision to build or buy is to be made, several factors should be borne in mind.

**a) Visibility.**

Endeavour to get some place that is conspicuous so that people are aware of your existence. In such a position you may also be able to have some appropriate signs to arrest public attention and advertise your presence.

**b) Accessibility.**

Try to locate yourself in a position that is accessible and easy to reach. If there is public transport available, try to get adjacent to this. People must be able to reach your facility without too much difficulty.

**c) Size.**

If you are building or purchasing, endeavour to acquire a facility that will give you room to expand. Or build something that is easily extended to accommodate a greater number of people. Many churches purchase something that meets their immediate needs and then when they grow and need more space the price required is exorbitant. Remember that land and building costs are probably never going to decrease.

**d) Appropriateness to the community.**

You must also bear in mind the nature of the community you are called to reach and let your building be appropriate to the life style and culture of the people.

**e) Put flexibility into your building.**

The more frequently a church building can be used for legitimate and edifying activities, the more valuable that building is to its owners. It is sad to see some church buildings standing virtually idle for six days each week. Make your building flexible to accommodate numerous activities other than the straight "preaching to the people" model.

**f) Don't aim to make your building too orthodox.**

The traditional image and style of a church building, to suit a preacher and congregation, is severely limiting and restrictive. It really serves no useful purpose to build in that "traditional church style." People today are not impressed with the churchy style. In fact the style frequently reflects a mentality that is antiquated and obsolete. There is a severe limitation on the kind of activities you can successfully conduct in such a building.



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**g) Reflecting good stewardship.**

I am distressed about some churches who invest large amounts of finance in lavish premises. So much money is tied up in bricks and mortar and is unavailable for the real task of the church with is evangelism and missions.

Jesus did NOT commission us to erect buildings and certainly not lavish, expensive ones that divert millions of dollars into real estate. It is a tragedy to see millions of people under-nourished and starving in some parts of the world whilst the church in other places, is spending mega dollars on elaborate buildings. God will one day judge us on our stewardship and what we did with the resources we controlled.

I have heard Dr. Ralph Mahoney make a powerful statement on many occasions and I subscribe to it whole-heartedly. He says,

**"Put your money into the Message,**

**not the mortar."**

## 7. PLANT A VISION FOR GROWTH AND EXPANSION.

Every church should be alive and growing. Not only within its own four walls, but into its Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and to the uttermost parts of the world.

The vision and faith for growth should be sown from the commencement. The people should be made aware of their Divinely given calling to proclaim the Kingdom of God and see it expanded everywhere. Every believer should be an evangelist and every church an evangelistic centre.

The healthiest churches are those in which the people are kept fully occupied in the work of the ministry. The more people in any congregation who are active, the more that church will thrive in every way. Don't encourage the people to be spectators, but participators.

**"Do the work of an Evangelist**

**and make full proof of your ministry!"**

## LEARNING ACTIVITIES:

1. **Give three of the ingredients required for a firm foundation.**
2. **Please state three principles to be observed in appointing new leadership.**
3. **Comment briefly on the two aspects of church membership.**
4. **State five biblical injunctions concerning giving.**
5. **What are three factors to look for in the choice of a building?**



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**CONCLUSION**

# WALKING WHERE THE SAINTS HAVE TROD

As a church planter, you are in good company. You are following the footsteps of the pioneers of our Faith. You are following the example of some of the greatest people in the Bible and in the history of the Church.

1. **JESUS WAS THE GREATEST CHURCH PLANTER.**

   He sowed the seed of His own life to reap the harvest of souls who would constitute the Church down through the ages.

2. **THE APOSTLES WERE ALL CHURCH PLANTERS.**

   Following the birthing and establishing of the early Church in Jerusalem, Judea, and Samaria, the apostles spread out across the world in a vast missionary program that took the Good News to every part of the then known world. Many of them died on the mission field having preached the Gospel and founded churches in numerous lands.

3. **MANY OF THE EARLY CHURCH FATHERS WERE CHURCH PLANTERS.**

   Many of the most illustrious characters of church history gave their lives to plant churches in the far flung corners of this earth. The great pioneers of the Faith have carried the Gospel faithfully to the four corners of the world. As a modern church planter, you join this esteemed company of men and women who have been called by God to sow the good seed of the Kingdom and to raise up companies of believers to own and proclaim the Name of Jesus.

## THE SPIRIT OF THE PIONEERS.

As a modern Church Planter you need the same spirit as those pioneers of the Faith who have gone before you. Proclaiming the Gospel is still a demanding and challenging task that requires a dedicated, sacrificial and courageous person.

Thank God that spirit is still available. The same spirit that motivated the Early Church, and those who followed them, is still available today. There is a great army of men and women in the church today who are consecrated to the work of the Gospel and to planting churches wherever the opportunity presents itself. I am privileged to know some of these wonderful people. Blessed to have visited and ministered in some sixty nations around the world where these wonderful people are laying their lives on the line in order to see the glorious Gospel of Christ spread far and wide and to see companies of believers coming into being in every nation under heaven.

There is really no mystery about just what constitutes this dynamic spirit. It is the spirit of :-

1. **THE LIVING CHRIST.**

   We are not simply going forth in Christ's Name, to tell the world about Him. We are going in the power of His indwelling presence in our lives. His life within us constrains (drives, compels and urges) us. He is not only going forth WITH us. He goes forth IN us. As we allow His spirit within to direct us, He powerfully encourages us to reach out to the lost.



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2. **THE LIVING WORD.**

The Word of God is a missionary manual. From Genesis to Revelation it interprets and reinforces our awareness of the missionary heart of God. Day by day as we feed on it, it turns our attention to the needs of lost mankind, and the burden of the Father's heart to reach them with the Good News.

3. **THE LOVE OF GOD SHED ABROAD IN OUR HEARTS BY THE HOLY GHOST.**

God's love is not weak or sterile, it is vital, pulsating, and powerful. It is not a love that quietly sympathises but one that reaches out with great compassion to a world of men and women who are living and dying without Christ and without hope.

4. **THE ANOINTING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.**

If the anointing of the Spirit does anything, it makes witnesses. It was the Pentecostal anointing that urged the early church to every part of their world and it is that same anointing that has birthed thousands of new churches all over Latin America, Africa and S.E. Asia in this century. The dynamic church of the future.

5. **THE SPIRIT OF EVANGELISM.**

A passion to win the souls of men lights the fire of evangelism in the heart of those whom God has called to proclaim His Gospel. It is a consuming and burning passion that nothing can quench except the fulfilment of the task and the supreme satisfaction of bringing men and women to the saving knowledge of Christ.

6. **THE SPIRIT OF MISSIONARY ZEAL.**

It was the spirit of missionary zeal that sustained Jesus in His hour of greatest testing. In the garden of Gethsemane where He sweat great drops of blood and cried, "Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me, nevertheless, not mine but your Will be done." It is that same spirit of Missionary zeal that has persuaded thousands to leave home and family, travel across the world and incarnate themselves into another culture, with the sole purpose of bringing the message of Christ to that people.

7. **AN ATTITUDE OF SELFLESSNESS.**

Jesus sets the supreme example of selflessness and requires His followers and disciples to imitate Him. This is particularly necessary for Church Planters whose personal ambitions are laid down in order to pour out their lives for others. Happy is that congregation whose apostle is a living example of Christ's selflessness and who through travail brings to birth a fellowship of people in the same mould.

8. **SELF SACRIFICE.**

I doubt if any person has ever brought a new congregation into being without some measure of sacrifice. It seems like this is part of the price that has to be paid in order to see a body of true believers brought into being. In my minds eye I can visualise and recall some of the sacrificial Church Planters it has been my privilege and joy to know. Men and women who have gladly sacrificed many legitimate things in order to pursue their God given calling of planting new congregations of born again believers. I feel humbled at the very memory of them, enduring all kinds of personal privation and living under primitive conditions, ostracised and despised for the Name of Jesus and for the unspeakable joy of bringing people into His Kingdom and into His Body -the Church.



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## 9. COURAGE

It frequently takes nothing less than raw courage to labour for Christ and the Gospel in some areas of this world. In nations where the government is militantly anti-Christian. Or the pre-dominant religion is anti-Christian. Where all kinds of discrimination and prejudice make it difficult to even be a Christian and those whose purpose it is to establish new companies of Christians often do so at the risk of their own lives.

In Hebrews 11: 32-40. the writer eulogises the "heroes of faith," saying of them, "of whom the world was not worthy." I feel the same way about many of the courageous Church Planters I have been privileged to know. Evangelists, their wives and families, who have sacrificed and forsaken all for Christ. Travelling many miles, sometimes into hostile and uncongenial territory, to make Christ known and to help build His Church on earth.

I humbly salute every one of them, and what is incalculably more important, The Lord salutes them and will one day proudly say :-

**"Well done, good and faithful servant,**

**enter into the Joy of your Lord."**



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**POSTSCRIPT**

# THE EXCITING FUTURE

We are presently living in days that are both exciting and frightening. Exciting because the Kingdom of God is expanding mightily.
Frightening because accelerated change is transpiring everywhere. International issues are changing at a rate too fast to keep pace with.

The natural mind is in a state of alarm wondering, "Where will it all end? What other familiar land marks will be removed, and what will all these powerful changes eventually bring to the world?"

One of the things that is transpiring is that more doors are opening for preaching of the Gospel throughout the earth. Nations that have been closed to the Gospel for some seventy years are now accessible again. Right across the former Soviet Union, doors of opportunity are opening and the Gospel is being proclaimed with amazing results.

This is a foretaste of something that will occur across the whole world in the relatively near future. Just as rapidly as events that brought down the Berlin wall, re-united Germany and liberated the Eastern European nations from their Marxist Masters, the winds of change will sweep through the rest of the world. Other great nations will suddenly open to the Gospel. Countries that have been isolated and insulated by political and religious prejudice for centuries will suddenly be accessible.

Jesus predicted that these days, prior to His return, would be typified by accelerated change. (Matt. 24 : 22.) The prophets also foretold that these would be days of harvest, when the Holy Spirit will be poured out copiously on all flesh. Between now and the time that Jesus returns, missionary activity, soul winning, and church planting will flourish across the face of the earth. Christ will return to an effective, expanding, victorious church comprised of vast multitudes of people from every nation, race, tribe and people group. How privileged we are to be amongst the reapers, gathering in the harvest of end times.



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Biblical Principles Of Church Planting



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