

**Modalities and Sodalities:
Church and Mission in Relationship**
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I. On the individual level, what should the relationship between the church-planter and the church be?

A. The spectrum of possible relationships:

DESIRABILITY	TYPE OF RELATIONSHIP	DESCRIPTION
Undesired	Autocratic	Unsolicited superintendence
Desirable	Advisory	Counsel upon request
	Fellowship	Mutual help and encouragement
	Contact	Periodic communication
Undesirable	Broken	Complete breakdown

B. In the NT, we may note the relationship between Paul and his churches: fellowship

1. Paul felt a continuing responsibility for the well-being of the new church.
2. The new churches saw Paul as a special man whose advice was not to be ignored.
3. The churches that Paul planted continued to participate in his ongoing ministry (with finances and prayer).

II. The New Testament picture of the relationship between the new church and other churches in the same denomination (or fellowship):

- A. The churches saw their common bond (Acts 15:1-2)
- B. They regularly sent greetings to one another (Rom. 16:16)
- C. They cooperated in the famine relief project (Rom, 15:26 and 1 Cor. 16:1-3)
- D. They sent representatives to each other (Acts 15:1-2)
- E. They supported the apostles as they moved on to other fields (Phil. 4:15-16)
- F. They shared letters from the apostles (Col. 4:16)
- G. They encouraged one another (2 Cor. 1:24)
- H. They cooperated together in evangelism (1 Thess. 1:8)

III. What should the relationship between church and mission be like? Two opposing views of the spectrum of possibilities may be noted (adapted from Hesselgrave, Planting Churches Cross-Culturally, p. 414):

Fusion	Separation
Mission is the responsibility of the church, missions have no basis for maintaining their separate existence; missionary personnel and organizations should be incorporated into the churches they establish.	A primary purpose for the organization of missions has been to evangelize the world and plant new churches; if missions are merged with the churches they establish, this ministry will be impeded or aborted; missions must maintain a position of equal partnership with the churches in order to carry out their proper function.

N.B. This whole issue is simply a larger form of the church/para-local church debate.

- A. Terminology: what are modalities and sodalities? The terms are from anthropology, and were introduced to church growth by Ralph D. Winter in 1971 (Winter, The Warp and Woof, pp. 52-62)

Modality	Sodality
<p>The church</p> <p>A group which is not restricted; it has no sex or age barriers to membership--it includes members from the entire age-sex spectrum of the normal human community.</p> <p>Vertically-structured organizations that include men and women, young and old</p> <p>Preserves the unity of the human community.</p> <p>More organizational hierarchy resulting in less initiative taking being allowed--better at pre-serving all the fruit produced.</p>	<p>The mission (or para-local church)</p> <p>A task-oriented group whose membership is restricted: it does not span the whole age-group spectrum of the normal human community.</p> <p>Horizontally-structured organizations that are made up of people with special expertise or interests--such as missions, evangelistic associations, seminaries, etc.</p> <p>Preserves the diversity of the human community.</p> <p>More initiative allowed; can have less control--better at initiating the fruit-producing process in new ways and reaching totally unexposed sectors of society.</p>

- B. According to Winter, history has shown us a basic principle: *Churches need missions, because modalities need sodalities* (Winter, The Warp and Woof, p. 62). One of the reasons why the Protestant church was so ineffective in mission early on was that it totally rejected the monastery orders of the Catholic church, and rejected the concept of sodalities with it. It was not until the day of William Carey that effective sodalities were seen in the Protestant side of Christianity.
- C. In the NT, we see this pattern:
 1. The NT church was as much a modality then as it is now
 2. Paul's missionary band formed a sodality which effectively spread the church. Note here that his sodality was commissioned by a local church and returned to report to them. While on the field, however, the band appeared independent of the

directions of the church.

- D. As Winter points out, both patterns in the NT are based on earlier Jewish models (the synagogue and wandering proselytizing bands). He notes, "In fact, the profound missiological implication of all this is that the New Testament is trying to show us *how to borrow effective patterns*; it is trying to free all future missionaries from the need to follow the precise *forms* of the Jewish synagogue and Jewish missionary band, and yet to allow them to choose comparable indigenous structures in the countless new situations across history and around the world--structures which correspond faithfully to the *function* of the patterns Paul employed, if not their *form!*" (Winter, "The Two Structures", p. 123)
- IV. The relationship between the new church and the mission agency: A suggested pattern of development in mission/church relations:
- A. The mission **starts** the church as a pioneer.
- B. The mission **nurtures** the new church as a parent.
- C. The mission **works alongside** the church as a partner.
- D. The mission is **under the direction** of the church as a participant (while it continues pioneering, parenting, and partnering churches in new fields).

Multiplication and Church Growth

All too often "too much emphasis has been placed upon multiplying converts--and not nearly enough emphasis has been placed in multiplying congregations."

--David Hesselgrave

- I. Multiplication: the method to use
- A. The "mother church" mentality
1. We need to develop this more!
 2. No church is an end in itself--it must see its task of planting and raising more churches.
 3. Every small group Bible study has the potential to become a new church. We must not jealously hold on to our members!
- If we have a mobilized church, we will constantly be replacing those who leave to start other churches.
- B. The question of the best size.
1. How big is too big?

2. The need to feel wanted (belongingness).

3. Should a church divide (not split!)?

II. Paul, the church planter

A. Paul's basic strategy: to establish congregations

B. Paul's time framework: an average of a few months

C. Paul's vision: reach the world through planting churches

III. Do we have a vision for planting churches?

A. The best way to learn is by doing!

B. Multiplying congregations grow even faster than multiplying individuals. By planting one multiplying church per year, we could plant over 1,000 new churches in 10 years!